

Chennai, India:

Tamil Nadu Green Climate Company's Meendum Manjappai Campaign



THE CHALLENGE

The state of Tamil Nadu banned single-use plastics in 2019 due to plastic-related water pollution and plastic burning. Therefore, **an alternative to plastic bags was needed.**



HOW IT WORKS

The Tamil Nadu Green Climate Company (TNGCC) started the Meendum Manjappai campaign to make cloth bags available at an affordable price. They are inspired by the South Indian tradition of “manjappai” yellow cloth bags, traditionally given out at ceremonies such as weddings.

The Tamil Nadu state government created TNGCC as a Special Purpose Vehicle to **facilitate sustainability-related partnerships and projects.**

After the campaign started, a TNGCC official saw an unrelated vending machine demonstration and posted the idea of using it for the campaign on social media. Several start-ups responded and then developed self-funded prototypes.

The city of Chennai, TNGCC, and others created a **special task force.** They signed an agreement with the vending machine companies for all bags to be sourced from women's ‘self-help groups’ to create good, **green job opportunities.**

By 2023, there were roughly 60 vending machines in Chennai, with more planned.

Model:

Public-Private Partnerships

Chennai is cementing a state-wide single-use plastic ban by linking **small women-led** enterprises and start-ups to create vending machines supplied with sustainable shopping bags.



LESSONS

Vending machines were not part of the original plan, but the **team's agility** enabled them to successfully solve the problem of bag distribution. Being **open to the unexpected** can enable innovation.

Likewise, considering the end-user when designing campaigns is key. Plastic is cheap and an alternative must be accessible and affordable to create a viable business model. By **engaging the community**, and creating **good green jobs for women**, the campaign has received a positive response.