

# 'PETALLISTS'

## WISH YOU AN ECO-FRIENDLY HOLI

- People with psychiatric disabilities involved in the production of eco-friendly colours using dry and discarded flowers are being called 'Petallists'
- These psychiatric patients do everything – from segregating to processing of the flowers



Illustration • Amit Bandre

**“The patients were trained to segregate them first based on the colours and then cut them using scissors and remove the pollen, which is very important as they can alter the tone of the colours. They were assigned the task depending on their ability as not everybody here can hold scissors without harming themselves**

— M V Maithreyi, a volunteer

• Sridevi S

**T**his year, celebrate Holi by adding colours to the lives of people with psychiatric disabilities. Patients attending daycare services at Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, NIMHANS, have harnessed discarded flowers to come up with eco-friendly, safe to-use and natural colours for the festival.

The colours are made with natural ingredients and are hence, eco-friendly. This was done in collaboration with Craftizen foundation, an NGO, and with assistance from Richmond fellowship society, Bengaluru. The profit from sales of these colours will be shared with the psychiatric patients involved in the production.

The psychiatric patients processed the flowers that were sourced from marriages halls, temples, and community halls for free over the last few months. From segregating them based on colours, sorting out petals from leaves and stalks, removing pollen from a few flowers to drying the petals, they did all the work. The petals were then sent to Craftizen for crushing them and bring out colourful powders out of them.

M V Maithreyi a volunteer and instructor for the initiative, said, “The patients were trained to segregate them first based on the colours and then cut them using scissors and remove the pollen, which is very important as they can alter the tone of the colours. They were assigned the task depending on their ability as not everybody here can hold scissors without harming themselves.”

“During the process, the patients were seen enjoying touching the flowers, smelling them and identifying colours. Separating the flowers based on their colours helped patients identify things,” adds Maithreyi, who personally oversaw every patient during the process.

Dr T Sivakumar from NIMHANS said, “Over 30 people are involved in this of which 10 are from Children Home of Mental Retardation and others are chronic in-patients of NIMHANS. Flowers were brought to the centre by volunteers.”



#ecofriendlyholi

### From trash to cash

**Available colours:** Yellow, orange, pink, blue and green

**Cost:** ₹125 for a pack of 100 gms.

**Where:** PRS sales counter, next to Nandini milk booth, NIMHANS OPD

**When:** Till March 1

“One of our attenders (Swachata staff) Lakshamma would bring the dry flowers every day from temples near her house in Byrasandra in a polythene bag. She did it purely out of affection towards patients,” Sivakumar added.

Mayura, founder of Craftizen foundation, said, “The initiative was started in a small scale last year. Only 50 kg of holi colour powder was produced last year. Owing to good response, we pushed ourselves harder and have tried to make it ten times bigger this time. So far, the response has been good.”

According to her, the process of segregating petals according to colours helps improve their concentration and attention. “In fact, we have given a name to the people who participated in this. We call them ‘Petallists,’” Mayura said smiling.

Some of the flowers used include rose, chrysanthemums and marigold.

