

No Plastic Sachets: Odisha District Sets Up Vending Machine For Fortified Milk!

The milk ATM in Berhampur has a carrying capacity of 500 litres. One litre of milk is sold at Rs 40 and the consumer take out a minimum of 250 ml of milk at Rs 10.

by Gopi Karelia August 20, 2019, 3:43 pm

Intending to do away with plastic pouch menace, companies and state governments are coming up with Milk ATMs where a user can put in money and procure milk in their containers, thus eliminating the need for a pouch.

And Ganjam district in Odisha is the latest region to install a milk vending machine to discourage the purchase of plastic milk pouches. District Collector Amruta Kulange led the project in collaboration with the Greater Ganjam Gajapati Co-operative Milk Producers' Union and Tata Steel Ltd. It was during the implementation of the plastic ban in the district when experts and people raised concerns about plastic milk pouches.

Our administration was spreading awareness about the harmful effects of one-time disposable plastic items when people questioned the use of milk pouches. After some research, we decided to install milk ATMs to reduce plastic pouch waste generation, Kulange tells The Better India.



The administration tied with up 7,200 dairy farmers through the milk cooperative to supply milk in the ATM which has a carrying capacity of 500 litres. Customers can buy one litre of milk at Rs 40, and the minimum amount that can be procured is 250 ml Rs 10.

The Rs 6 lakh milk ATM, financed by Tata group through their CSR funds, was started a little over a month ago near Gate Bazar in Berhampur, Odisha. On average, the ATM dispenses 250 litres of pasteurised milk daily. The users consist of students, wage labourers and households.

Wanting to tackle the issue of plastic milk pouches and bottles, Maharashtra became the first and only state in the country to introduce a buyback policy for milk pouches and PET bottles where a customer will be charged extra 50 paise for a milk pouch and Re for a plastic bottle. This money gets refunded once the pouch is returned to the retailer you bought it from. [Read more here.](#)



State governments in India need to scale up their recycling game as plastic is ubiquitous, and despite recycling systems in place, not all plastic gets recycled.

“Not all milk and buttermilk pouches are picked up by rag pickers. Those that are soiled have a lesser value. As a result, they idle on landfills for years and when they catch fire, as it often happens in summers, the chlorinated plastic on burning produces cancer causing-furans and dioxins,” Chitra Mukherjee, head of programmes, Chintan NGO told [India Today](#).

Welcoming the move, Girish Prajapati, a daily-wage labourer, said that the ATM helps with his hunger pangs, “I usually work at odd hours, either early morning or late in the night when the shops are shut. The best part is that I do not have to buy the entire milk pouch. Two hundred fifty ml for Rs 10 at any time of the day is a great deal for me.”

The district administration will soon open another milk ATM in MKCG Medical College and Hospital for the patients and visitors. Other ATMs will be installed in public places that the administration is currently identifying.



“It is a feasible solution and a win-win situation for all. Plastic pouches are avoided, and quality milk is provided at standardised rates. It is getting a positive response from the people,” Kulange adds.