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## Civic body to train women in napkin making

AURANGABAD: The woman and child welfare committee of the Aurangabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) has approved a proposal to give training to over 500 women in making sanitary napkins. The plan aims at empowering members of self-help groups and other women belonging to the economically weaker sections of the society.

Committee president Prajatka Bhale said the AMC was planning 45 days' training, including 15 days of practicals, for the women to create new employment opportunities for them. "Initially we will focus on the manufacturing part. Later, we will create a special platform for marketing of the products. For this, we are trying to install sanitary napkin deposing vending machines at various locations."

"We are encouraging members of all the AMC-associated SHGs to take active part in the training. Other women may also join the course at subsidized rates," Bhale added.

Premlata Karad, in charge of the women and child welfare department in the AMC, said, "Some reputed institutions have expressed their willingness to run the programme according to our requirements. We are also exploring other options."

When asked about the fees, Karad said the project was at an initial state and the actual cost had not been finalised. She, however, added that the candidates will have to pay 10% of the total training charges.

Karad said the project would create an employment opportunity for the women and they could sell the products in the open market. "Those interested in selling it under one umbrella will be provided assistance," she added.

SHG's candidates in the age group of 18 to 45 years can participate in the programme for which the civic body has planned an expenditure of Rs 9.85 lakh. The AMC will provide additional funds for procuring vending machines in the second phase.

Another senior official in the women and child welfare department said they were looking for vending machine suppliers. "Recently, we have come across a supplier who is ready to design the vending machine as per our requirement... The machines would cost around Rs 30,000 each."

The AMC may install six to seven vending machines at strategic locations.