

HUL salves environmental woes and devotees' troubles at the Kumbh Mela

NANDANA JAMES

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The tripled budget of over ₹4,200 crore for this year's Kumbh Mela may have grabbed eyeballs, but certain sombre impact of the Mela have remained obscured.

Efforts by Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) ensure that such impact, especially on the environment, are tackled.

The mass ritual bathing in the Sangam river, believed to cleanse sins, is one of the most famous traditions at the Mela.

But, when performed by the 150 million devotees, with them camping by the banks as well, it translates to woes for the river.

According to reports, in 2013 event pollution levels reached grave

Boat Activity



HUL's 'Swachhata Ki Sawari' aims at keeping the rivers clean

levels. What stands out about HUL's activations and the seemingly mundane chores it entails, is the novel solutions they it offers.

Ask Raj Kishore Ojha, a 42-year-old farmer from Jamtha village in Uttar Pradesh, who is ecstatic to have stumbled upon

the Wheel detergent brand's 'Wheel Wash-o-cycle'.

The limited means for washing clothes render the river a cesspool, while also making it difficult for them to wear fresh clothes every day.

"In Haridwar, where I had attended the Mela be-

fore, it was a huge challenge to wash clothes, especially as we only carry a bundle of 5-6 pairs with us. Now, it has become easy as they provide buckets, water, detergent and the washing facility," said an eager Ojha over phone. A simple, easy-to-use device, the Wheel Wash-o-cycle uses no electricity, saves water and ensures that the surrounding area is not polluted through the provision of a drainage system.

HUL has set up two stations with over 20 such installations to wash clothes, using Wheel detergent powder, provided free. More than 10,000 devotees have used it so far, according to HUL.

HUL's 'Swachhata Ki Sawari' solution also aims at keeping the rivers

clean by attaching two nets on to the sides of a hundred boats used to ferry passengers to and from the Sangam.

Cleanliness drive

Women at the Mela can find solace in not having to worry about their wet saris clinging on to their bodies after taking the dip.

HUL brand Hamam, in collaboration with brand partner Ogilvy India, is providing waterproof saris, free of cost, to address this. Until February 4, 5,000 women have used the waterproof sarees.

"I am very relieved that my sari doesn't come in the way of offering prayers anymore," said Asha Gupta, a 58-year-old housewife from Lucknow.