

Self-help groups' products being sold under brand name

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Pune: Nine products made by women's self-help groups in and around Pune will now be available under the Bhimthadi brand at six corporate offices.

Known to provide a lucrative platform to SHGs, the well-known Bhimthadi Jatra, an annual mega rural carnival, has gone a step ahead with an eponymous brand that has tied up with the Software Exporters' Association of Pune (SEAP), to allow better marketability and exposure to the women, who have undergone training to improve packaging of their products, said Susanda Pawar, a trustee of the Baramati-based Agricultural Development Trust, the organisers of the Bhimthadi Jatra in Pune every year.

The first such outlet, selling pickles, spices and other culinary items, was inaugurated at Qlogic India's campus at ICC Trade Towers on Wednesday. In next few weeks, the outlet will shift to the campuses of Persistent Systems and Redknee in Kalyaninagar.

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project to understand the requirement of the consumers in a better way. This will provide us the necessary guidelines regarding our plans to launch Bhimthadi as a retail brand of women's SHGs," said Pawar, at a press conference on Wednesday.

The outlet will allow corporate employees to buy and use products made by women, most of those who have come up the hard way. "Apart from providing space to set up their stalls, we would also be encouraging our employees to try products by SHGs at Bhimthadi which have now turned catering contractors on certain special occasions," said Gaurav Mehra, president of SEAP.

The launch of this outlet on

a corporate campus will be a big boost to the women involved in these activities, said Saeed Pawar, chief coordinator of Bhimthadi Jatra. "The Agricultural Development Trust has access to over 3,000 women's SHGs, but has hand-picked only 20-odd such groups for this pilot project. Most of these SHGs have been associated with Bhimthadi Jatra since its inception in 2006. Over the years, they've been exposed to competition from other SHGs from various states and have thus, realised and understood how best they can improve their products, in terms of packaging and content. Participation at Bhimthadi Jatra has certainly increased their confidence," said Pawar.

The mega rural carnival will be held this December at the College of Agriculture grounds. "It will comprise 500 stalls by 500 women's self-help groups from Maharashtra and other states. This year, we are expecting a footfall of around 4.5 lakh visitors. We are also working on introducing lifestyle products, for instance, 'ghongadi,' quilts and other items," said Saeed Pawar.