HEALTHY NEWS

Inventor of Hand-Cranked Washing Machines Donates the Time-Saving Device to Iraqi Refugees

By bestfolkmedicine · 14/10/2021 · 2 min read



70 percent of the world's population doesn't have access to an electric washing machine. So, to clean their clothes, people hand-wash them using available water.

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This is a time-consuming task and it's mostly done by women. Therefore, the British engineer Navjot Sawhney developed the hand-cranked and efficient washing machine which is easy to operate.

Through his organization The Washing Machine Project, he's started distributing the design to refugees and displaced people in Iraq.

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Who Is Sawhney and Why Is the Washing Machine Project so Important?

Sawhney grew up in London; however, his family fled India in 1947. On his website bio, you can read that this is the inspiration behind his efforts to use his degree in engineering and experience to help displaced people.

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He left his engineering job to volunteer in India and he said how he noticed the neighbors struggling with hand-washing their clothes.

This is when he started working on the hand-cranked machine. It evolved from a salad-spinner to a compact machine with a barrel drum. Named Divya, this machine uses half the amount of water than hand-washing one load of clothes.

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The Divya Is Already Easing Life for Iraqi Women & Families

Conflicts in the region as of 2014 contributed to the refugee crisis, especially in the Kurdistan Region. A lot of camps have thousands of people who're displaced from Iraq or neighboring nations without access to water or electricity.

Hand washing, according to the *Washing Machine Project*, consumes around 50 percent of the family's water allowance. Washing for a family could take up to 20 hours per week. This chore wastes resources and precious time.

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Sawhney explains that hand-washing is painful and restrictive.

On the other hand, with the Divya, women who're the primary washers will get more time to rest and dedicate their time to a more important task. It doesn't require electricity to work, which is suitable for areas in the world where access to electricity is low.

He went to Iraq with the pilot batch of the hand-cranked machines made in the UK. He emphasized one women's situation.

This Yazidi lady has been in the camp since 2016. Three of her family are still held captive and she said how she's been waiting for one of these machines for a month.

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Sawhney emphasizes that the dignity of clean clothes is universal as well as uplifting women and their opportunities. In turn, whole communities are uplifted.

Sources:

BBC

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