

Once a darling of students

Business



Once a darling of students, pens now only plastic waste! PTI Mumbai, Aug 8 (PTI) Treasured by many students once upon a time, pens are now quickly turning into plastic waste as the thrift practise of refilling them is dying a slow death. A far cry from till the early 1990's, when writing instruments, in their earlier avatar of fountain pens, had to be recharged from an ink bottle frequently, most of the users now end up throwing away branded pens as they avoid refilling at Rs 3 to buy a new one for as low as Rs 5.

Besides, use-and-throw pens are also much in demand with dirt-cheap prices beginning from Rs 2. " We have noticed that 80 per cent of the Indian consumers buy pens worth below Rs 10. And since these pens are cheap, they die well before its time," Deepak Jalan, Managing Director of Linc Pen ; Plastics Ltd told PTI.

One of the top three players in the organised writing instrument industry in the country, Linc struggles to sell only 30 refills against every 100 pens. It can therefore be presumed that roughly 70 per cent of such pens get discarded off early," he says. With longer life a decade earlier, even the nondescript of pens were the prized possession of many a students, for whom holding their favourite fountain pen between their fingers used to be a memorable experience reflecting timeless elegance, personalisation and sentimentality.

Nikita Bhatt, a 33-year-old advertising professional in the city, who has preserved her pen collection from her student days, boasts of precious memories attached to the writing instruments. I had an emotional attachment with my pens. These days people might throw them away when

it needs a refill, but I would love refilling the barrel of my favourite fountain pen even while writing examinations,” she recalls.

Professor Parul Dave Mukherji, dean of the arts and aesthetics department of Jawaharlal Nehru University at New Delhi, regrets that the relationship between the pen and the student has seen a decline in the last few years. “ In a way, pens are almost fading away.

The attachment is no more there, its vanishing fast as pens become a disposable object. But once it used to be a precious object while holding it in between your fingers,” she says adding that the choice of pens also reflect upon the quality of writing. “ I somehow feel that if you are not serious about the pen you use, you are also not serious about writing.

People have become very casual about words and language, similar to their attitude towards pens,” the professor says.