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## Duo rides bamboo bikes to educate girls

By Akhila Damodaran | Published: 26th July 2016 06:26 AM Last Updated: 26th July 2016 06:26 AM

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Summet Paringe and Prisiliya Madan practised riding these bicycles in the hills before they kicked off their journey on July 14

BENGALURU: Summet Paringe and Prisiliya Madan are riding bamboo cycles from Kanyakumari to Kashmir to create awareness about and raise funds for girl education.

The duo, who passed through the city recently, will cover around 4,400 km in 70 days to crowdfund the Gurgaon-based NGO iimpact, which supports girl education. The goal is to raise `50 lakh, and they have raised more than a fifth so far.

On an average, they say, they cover between 90 and 100 km a day.

They say communication is a problem in parts of the country where people do not speak English or Hindi.

Summet says, "People get curious when they see us riding bamboo bikes. They come and ask us about them. We try to educate them about it and the importance of girl child education."

They are riding bamboo bikes for the first time. They practised for about a month, riding in the hills for, before kicking off their K2K journey on July 14.

Summet says, "The bamboo bike is as steady as a steel one. But it soaks up vibration."

This ride will also test the efficiency of bamboo bikes. Arun Cherian, who worked with bamboo bikes about eight years ago in Columbia University, says his experiment was not a success.

He says, "We sent the bikes to Africa but they couldn't compete with the price of steel bikes from China. Also, they need something they can use every day. To use bamboo, it needs to be petrified properly. Otherwise, it will break."

Moreover, though they seem green, the process of making them is not, he admits.

The cyclists say they rode through rough terrain in Tamil Nadu at 44 degree Celsius. There has been no damage or tear in the bamboo frame of the bike.

"We will be riding them now in the rains in Karnataka and also in extreme cold weather. I can handle their maintenance. They have been processed well, and are sturdy," says Summet.

Prisiliya adds, "It is lighter than steel bikes."

They say the journey has been memorable. Prisiliya says, "The school children come to us when they see us. They shake hands and cheer us on. That motivates me."

Summet adds, "They are fascinated seeing a different kind of bike."

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