

GRAZIA | SPOTLIGHT

Who: Divya Ravichandran

Doing her bit by: Helping organisations move to zero-waste practices.

Tell me more: While you're bopping to buzzing tracks at the NH7 Weekender in Meghalaya or swaying to some mellow tunes at the Mahindra Blues Festival in Mumbai, there's a nifty little organisation making sure those booze cups and plates don't amount to a colossal heap. Skrap, a start-up company founded by Ravichandran, provides end-to-end solid waste management consultation and implementation for offices, events and restaurants. So how did it all begin? "The massive fire that broke out in the Deonar dumping ground in 2015 prompted me to start taking more responsibility for the waste I was generating and the manner of its disposal. I started segregating my waste diligently, set up a composter at home, and identified a recycler who would accept my recyclable waste. After a few months of experimenting and learning, I was able to turn my home into zero waste-to-landfill by reducing my daily garbage from one kg a day to next to nothing," says Ravichandran.

Post her personal discovery, Ravichandran urged friends and family to adopt a similar lifestyle in order to reduce their garbage crises. She approached offices and corporates where she implemented zero-waste projects that built awareness about waste segregation, changed behaviour about resource consumption, and



eventually reduced landfill trash by 90 per cent. With a small team of just four, Skrap's portfolio boasts clients such as YouTube FanFest, SBI Green Marathon, Insider.in, Only Much Louder, Media iQ Digital, and Toybank.

"We created a comprehensive plan for the NH7 Weekender in Pune where we successfully diverted 85 per cent of the 10 tonnes of waste generated at the event. This was recycled, composted, reused, donated, or converted into fuel (biogas/polyfuel). We made their food courts a plastic-free zone, where vendors only used compostable serving wares."

Skrap's endeavours had a similarly stellar outcome at the Mahindra Blues Festival where 90 per cent of the 2,600 kgs of waste generated was diverted away from the landfills. For the road ahead Ravichandran aims to make sustainability a norm at companies by conducting awareness workshops that discuss responsible alternatives for individuals to adopt.

Who: Rhea Singhal

Doing her bit by: Manufacturing eco-friendly food packaging.

Tell me more: It's not like we've not heard it before: Plastic containers can release chemicals into the foods and liquids we store in them. Plus, the fact that your average disposable plastic bottle will take around 450 years or more to decompose. Joining the global fight against plastic pollution is Rhea Singhal's company Ecoware that makes eco-friendly food packaging. From tableware and cutlery to even biodegradable garbage bags and takeaway packaging, Ecoware is working towards helping you discard not just plastic, but also paper. "We use agri-waste like wheat or rice crop," says Singhal, a pharmacologist who worked with Pfizer in the UK before moving back to India, only to be alarmed at the quantity of plastic that people used in their everyday lives. "It's basically

plant biomass, the leftover crop after the processing of rice, wheat or sugarcane. It's a simple zero waste process. What's formed is 100 percent compostable, and turns into soil in 90 days." The beauty is that the products can sustain temperatures from 20-180 degrees centigrade, so it can go in the freezer as well as the microwave.

Part of the resurgence of clean technology has been a concern for the environment but a significant driver lies in how economics have improved. Ecoware's locally manufactured range is priced at par with that of good quality plastics. A pack of 20 12-inch plates, for instance, costs ₹ 158 while 20 square bowls are ₹ 48. "Pricing isn't a challenge for us anymore as much as visibility and awareness is. Even if standard regulations exist in our country, they are not enforced. But there are a lot more responsible consumers today, and that is great."

