

6 CHANGEMAKERS



Highlights of the three zero-waste events. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Zero-waste, a new component in event planning

Three families conduct social functions in a manner that none of the attendees will forget. They received guidance from 'Ecoconnectors'

L. KANTHIMATHI

While planning their daughter's wedding, Geetha Ravishankar and G. Ravi Shankar wanted it to be remembered in a special way by everyone who would attend it. They wanted to make it a zero-waste event.

Similarly, S. Vasumathi and G. Sundaram made an earnest effort to have the waste generated at their daughter's wedding segregated and sent to their rightful place.

K. Bisveshwaran made arrangements so that his son's *upanayanam* function would not leave behind any waste.

All the three families succeeded in their efforts, and they were guided by Ecoconnectors, a four-member group that is committed to promoting environment-friendly practices and has a decade of experience in waste segregation and composting.

"In the first place, we educated caterers and cleaners, as a large portion of waste that is gener-

ated has to do with food. We explained to the catering unit to keep aside vegetable and fruit peels. The plastic sachets of the groceries were kept apart. As plantain leaves take a long time to decompose, we stopped it from going to the composting unit. So, the leftovers were removed and the plantain leaves given a rinse by having them dipped in a tub of water and they were then sent to the poor cattle rearers as fodder for the cattle. The cattle rearers happily accepted them. Similarly, the coconut shells and husks were separated. The flowers used for decoration were also set aside. All the decomposable waste was sent to the composting units of Greater Chennai Corporation and the non-decomposable waste was sent to private recycling units," says Sumithra Srikanth, a member of Ecoconnectors.

Members of Ecocon-



nectors say it great experience helping these families with waste management at their functions. "Solid Waste Management Bye-Laws, 2016, of the Greater Chennai Corporation states that organisers of functions, celebrations and meetings are expected to segregate the waste they generate. But how many of us are aware of

this duty. People have to be educated about it. Proprietors of halls should ensure that their customers get to know what is expected of them in terms of disposing of their waste. Besides, the owners of the halls should know in which Ward of Greater Chennai Corporation their hall is located, and should also be aware of the GCC composting units located

In the first place, we educated caterers and cleaners, as a large portion of the waste that is generated has to do with food

event, they are not willing to spare a small sum towards disposing of the waste they generate.

Another member of Ecoconnectors, C.R. Ashok, says "It is important that while organising a function, the family should have a team dedicated to taking care of the proper disposal of waste. It should be foremost in the minds of those organising the event."

Ecoconnectors say they only educate and guide people, and the job of disposing of the waste in a responsible manner lies with the organisers of the event.

To know more about Ecoconnectors, visit <https://www.ecoconnectors.com/>

