

KNIGHTS IN RECYCLABLE ARMOUR

The millennials have inherited a dying earth. Humankind's toxic footprint has not spared any part of the planet. With countless crises just around the corner, these girls are out to secure a sustainable future

By Sakshi Agarwal



GARVITA GULHATI

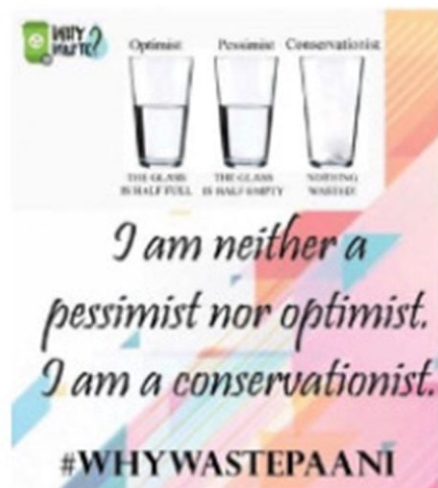
19, Bengaluru

She launched a campaign called 'Why Waste?' to stop people throwing away half-full glasses of water in restaurants

Three years ago, Bengaluru-based teenager Garvita Gulhati learnt, to her absolute shock, that water left behind in glasses at restaurants amounts to the wastage of 14 million litres annually. That very day, she began turning gears to establish her own venture, 'Why Waste?', which campaigns for eateries to make a conscious effort to conserve water, chiefly by filling

Further, through a short video, they train the waiters on how to explain to customers the motive behind the policy in a courteous manner. They put up posters and stickers in the premises. Lastly, to cover all bases, they also offer solutions to how water left behind can be reused.

Her endeavour aims to implement this policy primarily in fine-dining restaurants, for she has observed that



Above and facing page: Samples of the posters and graphics that Garvita creates; right: with her team of volunteers at a restaurant



only half the glass with water at the time of first serving guests.

She recruited volunteers who now, on a cyclic basis, visit different restaurants. They explain the issue that they are targeting – water conservation – and ask the restaurant manager what the business is doing to conserve water, if anything at all. Subsequently, they introduce the idea of the half-glass policy and request that it be implemented.

luxury sometimes necessitates the maximum wastage.

Based out of Bengaluru, these young people have successfully implemented this policy in over a hundred restaurants in their city. They have also expanded to Delhi and Mumbai, and are attempting to spread their reach to Ahmedabad and Hyderabad. Garvita has also begun an online petition to ensure this policy is implemented nationally by the

National Restaurants Authority of India. You can support her at change.org/glasshalffull. Lastly, through networking, 'Why Waste?' has recruited volunteers to pioneer this policy in Sri Lanka as well.

The campaign has required Garvita to put in all her efforts after college hours. But she has no regrets: "Not going for parties or sacrificing my entertainment time for work-

cartoons that provoke one to think about environmental conservation, which she puts up on her Facebook and Instagram handles @whywaste-org. She strongly believes, and rightly so, that there is no single product, service or method that can miraculously serve the planet. Instead, conservation can only be successful as the culmination of the small and varied efforts by all individuals



ing towards the environment didn't feel like 'sacrifice'. I just knew it was my job and I did it without thinking twice," says the 19-year-old student of PES University, Bengaluru. "People are empathetic about social and humanitarian issues, but fail to see how injudicious use of natural resources is hurting the planet and us," she says. "This is the mindset I want to change."

Garvita has developed a series of

inhabiting it. The most trivial ways in which we waste an essential resource such as water must be identified and dealt with at the micro level.

For this very reason, she persuaded herself to let go of her dream of becoming an architect. Instead, she has decided to become an engineer and contribute to the environmental revolution through the development of sustainable technology. Saving the world is a full-time job, after all! ■