

Full plates, zero waste

The Story Of A Movement For Plastic-free Celebrations



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Sameera Satija, founder, 'Crockery Bank For Everyone'

India generates between 4 - 9.3 million tonnes of plastic waste annually, roughly 26,000 tonnes every day with the figure rising by 30-50% during festive seasons. While this may seem overwhelming, it inspired Sameera Satija to take action. Determined to reduce the waste generated by celebrations and community gatherings, she launched Crockery Bank for Everyone, a not-for-profit initiative that allows people to borrow stainless-steel crockery for parties, weddings, langars, and more. Here's how an idea grew into a movement.

Noble intentions
In Faridabad, villages sur-

rounding the Bandhwari landfill have been facing severe crises due to unsegregated city waste and plastic pollution. In almost every household, one can find people suffering from diseases caused by the contamination of the air and groundwater. The moment Sameera Satija discovered this, she firmly decided that none of her waste will end up in the landfills. She reminisces, "The more I got to know about their misery, the more I felt bad, guilty, and sad." From a chance encounter with a cow choking on Styrofoam to gradually uncovering the health crises in Bandhwari's landfill villages, Satija's journey from being an auditor in the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India to the founder of Crockery Bank for Everyone proves that real change does not require a single dramatic moment. Rather, it requires paying attention to the small, uncomfortable truths of our day-to-day lives.

A simple operation

Satija started with educational workshops that encouraged people to reduce usage of disposable items. In 2018, she launched 'Crockery Bank For Everyone'. The initiative promotes borrowing steel utensils for events, free of charge, under the principle: Take-Use-Wash-Dry-Return. "I shelled out my savings and purchased the crockery," she smiles. The bank operates in a fairly straightforward manner. You simply call the bank to check the avail-



Talking sustainability to bring a change

ability of utensils. If they are available, a pick-up date is arranged. Afterwards, the utensils are returned, cleaned, and dried as well. This use-and-return policy makes the organisation accessible. Recognised under the 'Sustainability Vision: 2030' initiative by the Ministry of Steel, Crockery Bank for Everyone has inspired 32 similar initiatives across India.

Free of cost & toxins

"Reusable plastic products, end up in a landfill. So, controlling waste generation is crucial for creating a zero-waste event," says Satija. Moreover, the organisation promotes the use of soapnut detergents, which are environmentally friendly. The wastewater generated from these detergents can be reused to irrigate plants, further supporting the sustainability mission. Satija mentions, "It's free, free, free. Free of charge, free of garbage, and free of any toxins. So, you have to really analyse the kind of waste you are going to generate." Satija has proven that zero waste is not about elitism or extra labour, but about mending habits. After all, we do not need a small crowd making a big impact; we just need everyone making small ones instead.

Ms Klutz Steelington

That One Sterling Steel Water Bottle In Every Class

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In every class, there is an overachiever or the 'All-Rounder', the 'class clown', the 'cold shoulder', and then there is 'Ms Klutz Steelington', the steel water bottle. Ms Klutz, the noisy pal, is omnipresent. She surely has some surprising powers. She falls almost every day, yet never breaks. Does she dent, you ask? Not even slightly. Half of the noise pollution in class comes from this noisy little thing. The chatter of students is at one end, and the sound of Ms Klutz tumbling is at the other. Both disturb teachers immensely.

She behaves like one of the attention-seekers in class. Loud, clumsy, and always busy stealing everyone's attention, yet without any effort. All it takes is a single fall to turn heads. The students listen to endless stories of empires and battles, when suddenly, a steel water bottle drops and rolls across the floor, making noise loud enough to compete against cannons being fired. Attention immediately shifts from the French Revolution to Ms Klutz w. Despite her tumbles, she is loyal as a 'liquid' asset; volatile yet vital. Ms Klutz once again manages to rejuvenate everyone's minds after King Louis VI's tragic fate. It is true that she is perfectly de-

signed for any situation, whether to quench your thirst after sports or to refresh after a long speech. You must drink so much water that you could say, "I'm truly aqua-holic," and that is only possible with Ms Steelington. Another admirable thing about Ms Klutz is her nature. Even though she looks dull, silvery, and makes annoying noises, she is far better than the sweet-looking plastic bottles that silently pollute the environment. She protects nature in her own steely way. The only unpredictable thing about her is the water inside. It is either so cold that it gives you a brain freeze or so hot that it burns your tongue. And some-

times, you expect water but end up tasting your friend's vivid orange Glucon-D. It is not her fault though. She was made to preserve whatever she holds. Her motto is a cheerful one: sip, sip, hooray. From pre-nursery to class twelve, Ms Klutz Steelington stands by her owner through every lesson. Despite embarrassing falls, she remains loyal. Stick with her and drink it up, she is truly aqua-mazing, because good hydration never goes out of style. In the end, Ms Steelington teaches that life is best enjoyed well-hydrated, with every sip adding refreshment to the journey. Cheers! **GT**

