

Honour for 'No Food Waste' founder

STAFF REPORTER

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Padmanaban Gopalan, founder of No Food Waste, receiving the National Youth Award from Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Kiren Rijiju in New Delhi on Monday. | Photo Credit: **HANDOUT E MAIL**

Padmanaban Gopalan gets the National Youth Award for the year 2016-17 from Union Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs, Kiren Rijiju

Padmanaban Gopalan, founder of No Food Waste, received the National Youth Award for the year 2016-17 at a function held in New Delhi on Monday.

Speaking to *The Hindu* over phone shortly after receiving the award, Mr. Gopalan termed the award as a “great honour” for volunteers of the organisation, who are mostly youngsters. “I’m just representing [the volunteers],” he said.

The number of active volunteers involved with No Food Waste were around 3,200 spanning across 16 locations in Tamil Nadu and West Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Gopalan said. The chapters are present in Chennai, Tiruppur, Erode, Salem, Tiruchi and Krishnagiri.

Founded in 2014 in Coimbatore, No Food Waste is a food recovery and food waste management network that focuses on collecting surplus food from weddings, parties and other places to distribute among the people in need. In nearly five years since the inception, Mr. Gopalan felt that the awareness regarding prevention of food wastage

has increased. "Earlier, we had [to face] a lot of tough situations to recover the food," he said, as people were not forthcoming to donate the surplus food.

Mr. Gopalan said that the organisation has received support from the government, particularly the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and the municipal corporations in the cities where No Food Waste is currently operating. "We are working in parallel with both the government and the community," he said.

Though focusing on recovering and recycling of surplus food, the organisation is hoping to roll out a technology soon to reduce food wastage "at the production and logistics level," Mr. Gopalan said. The award was presented by Union Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs Kiren Rijju.