



Developing a Culture of Sustainable Consumption and Lifestyle through Organic Production and Consumption in Rajasthan (ProOrganic-II)

District Level Partners Orientation Meeting



Event Report

**May 03, 2018
Jaipur**

Background

India is mainly an agricultural country, where around 58 percent of the nation's population is involved in agriculture for livelihood. There is a huge untapped resource of organic farming in India. Organic farming emerged as an alternative for meeting increasing food demand, maintaining soil fertility and enhancing soil carbon pool. Promotion of organic consumption is directly proportional to consumer's right to healthy environment in various ways. Use of harmful pesticides and chemicals in agriculture is one of the major causes of environmental degradation, and is also not good for human health. The chemicals in food products adversely affect reproduction in females. Moreover, Indian society being largely patriarchal where needs of women are not prioritised, so they are prone to chemical contaminations in food. Hence, adoption of organic consumption will be beneficial to women, especially girls.

Insight into the Project

With the support from Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), CUTS International is implementing a Project 'Developing a Culture of Sustainable Consumption and Lifestyle through Organic Production and Consumption in the State of Rajasthan (ProOrganic-II)' from April 01, 2017 to March 31, 2021 in 192 *gram panchayats* of 10 selected districts of Rajasthan (India). The main objective of the project is to fill the identified gaps and sustain the acquired momentum to achieve expected outcomes for a better eco-system, by promoting organic consumption.



Source: <http://newsofrajasthan.com/two-central-ministries-will-work-together-for-agriculture-development-in-rajasthan/>

One of the basic concepts of the project is that promoting sustainable consumption and production are important aspects of sustainable lifestyle, which is largely consistent with environmental and social factors and education and empowerment of consumers. In this project, focus is on sustainable food and farming and formulating an agenda to achieve the same through promoting organic production of farm products on one hand, and promoting

organic consumption, on the other. Hence, this would ensure sustainable development in agriculture and environment sector, as a whole. The target group of the project is entire population of the 10 districts to be covered, 96 blocks and selected 192 *gram panchayats* (GPs) in the State of Rajasthan.

Creating a sustainable lifestyle takes a lifelong commitment and always requires reducing the use of non-renewable natural resources and personal resources at individual and societal level. Promoting sustainable consumption requires improved understanding and sensitisation of consumer behaviour and attitudes as per their different needs. The rationale behind promoting organic food production is that this method is more in harmony with the environment and local ecosystems.

The project aims to promote more organic consumption in 10 major agriculturally potent districts namely: Jaipur, Dausa, Kota, Udaipur, Chittorgarh, Pratapgarh, Bhilwara, Sawai Madhopur, Jodhpur and Jhalawar.

Project Objectives

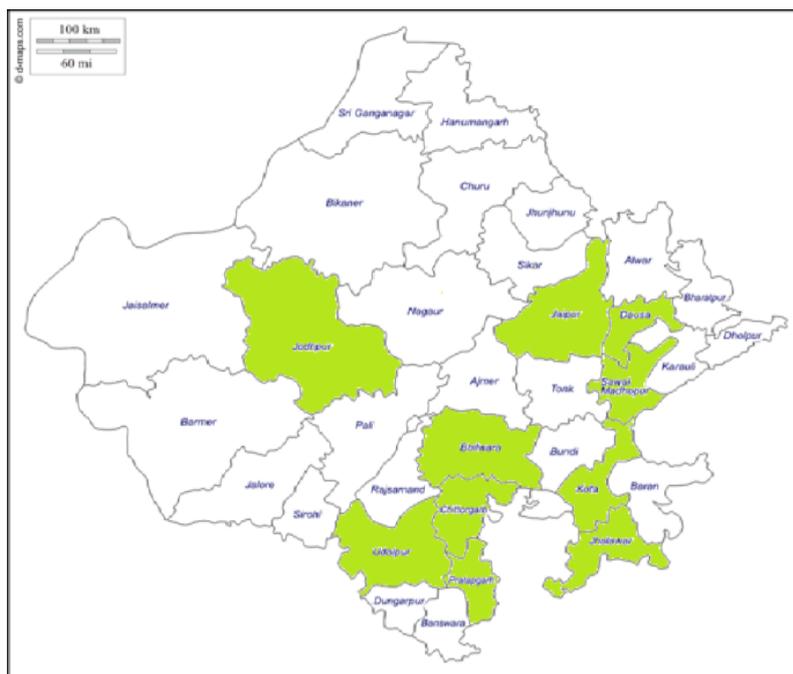
- Develop a culture of sustainable development through sensitisation, awareness and education on organic consumption and production
- Building capacity of farmers to promote organic farming
- Advocating for policies in favour of organic farming
- Setting up community seed bank and vermin composting cell with the help of farmers (long-term perspective)
- Developing organic clubs and gardens in selected schools in each district
- Creating demand of organic consumption among the consumers
- (By Green Action Week)
- Getting acquainted with organic consumption through Exposure Visits

Objectives of the Meeting

The aim of the Partner's Orientation meeting was to discuss the execution of the project 'Developing a Culture of Sustainable Consumption and Lifestyle through Organic Production and Consumption in the State of Rajasthan'. In addition, the meeting was also held to discuss the objectives of the project and to discuss way forward to commence the activities according to the work plan.

District Project Partners

1. Prayatna Samiti, Udaipur
2. Ram Krishna Shikshan Sansthan, Kota
3. Hanuman *Gram Vikas Samiti*, Dausa
4. Jagriti Sansthan, Jodhpur
5. RUDSOVOT, Sawai Madhopur
6. Samajik Vikas Sansthan, Jhalawar
7. CUTS Centre for Human Development (CHD) accountable to
8. implement project activities in Chittorgarh, Bhilwara and Pratapgarh and CUTS Centre for Action Research and Training (CART) in Jaipur district



Proceedings

Inaugural Session

Nimisha Gaur, Programme Associate, CUTS International welcomed the project partners and briefly introduced the objectives of the event i.e. to discuss mainly the methodologies to implement project activities. She also emphasised on the need of generating better ideas for the second year of Phase-II of the project so as to make it more effective and worthy.



Introductory Remarks

Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS International expressed his gratitude to the district partners for participating in the second phase of the project and shared the aims and objectives of the project in his introductory remarks. He also shared some of the major outcomes of the project, implemented during 2013-17, which were basically woven around three components.



Saxena highlighted three components of the project comprising: educating consumers about the adverse effects of pesticides and chemicals; generating awareness and demand, promoting organic consumption and production by sensitising farmers and advocating with the Government for having a policy in place for supporting organic farming.

Sharing useful information about the new phase 'ProOrganic-II', Saxena highlighted its major objectives to develop a culture of sustainable development and safe/healthy environment. While defining sustainable consumption, Saxena mentioned that any product related/service related functions should not have adverse impact on earth. The present model of development is demanding perpetual growth. Hence, there is a need to adopt sustainable production and consumption.

Discussion

Rajdeep Pareek, Project Officer, CUTS International rendered a presentation on 'Future Activities on Sustainable Consumption'. The theme of the presentation was 'The Way Forward 2017-2021'. He discussed intensively about the objectives, activities and work plan of the project. Pareek explained that 192 *gram panchayats* would be involved in project activities in 10 district areas, but the major focus will be on developing organic clubs in selected two schools in each district focussing on promoting organic farming and consumption.



This year, two districts amongst of ten will be chosen for women-specific farmer training and exposure visits where 50 women farmers will be given an opportunity to learn and practice organic farming. Further, he also shared innovative ideas for developing a culture of sustainable consumption in Rajasthan to promote organic production. He discussed all project activities accomplished with the partners and clarified the raised queries.

Project Activities at a Glance

- Awareness campaign on sustainable consumption (every year)
- Green Action Week (every year)
- Establishment of Organic Compost Cell (in II & IV year)
- Formation of organic clubs and developing organic gardens in schools (in II & III year)
- Training and Exposure Visit of Farmers (in II & III year at State level and IV year at national level)
- Farmer's Training (one training for women group specifically)
- State Level Stakeholder's Consultation Meeting (every year)

Project Activities from a Broader Perspective

Partner's Orientation for District Partner

To discuss the objectives of project and how to initiate the activities in accordance with the defined work plan

Partner's Orientation for Jaipur District Partners

To discuss the objectives of the project and way forward to initiate activities as per the work plan

Preparation of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Material

Hand-outs and posters in vernacular language will be produced for distribution during the awareness generation activities

Awareness Campaign on Sustainable Consumption

There will be awareness campaigns in selected 198 *gram panchayats* of target districts. The objective is to sustain the acquired momentum of awareness in project areas and to enhance outreach in urban and semi-urban areas in project districts. Increased awareness is expected to result in increased consumer demand, which will raise demand for availability and affordability of organic products contributing towards decreasing health hazards to consumers.

Green Action Week

This year, the theme of the Green Action Week is going to be 'Sharing Communities'. The topic of the new theme was discussed with the district partners during the orientation meet and their ideas were also invited on the new theme.

Establishment of Organic Compost Cell

One organic compost cell is going to establish in each district on farmers' farms and products will be distributed among the farmers who want to switch over from chemical farming to organic farming. Organic compost cell can be the vermin composting unit, *Azola* unit compost pit or organic input unit.

Formation of Organic Clubs and Developing Organic Gardens in Schools

Organic kitchen gardens will be developed in each district and organic clubs are going to be made in the schools to create awareness for organic farming among the students and teachers. Organic farming practice will take place in these gardens and students will learn how to create kitchen garden at their home.

Training and Exposure Visit of Farmers

There will be ten district level trainings of farmers on 'Next Generation of Organic Issues'. These issues include organic certification, market linkages, etc. The participants will be selected 40-50 farmers from targeted areas in the district, having already initiated organic farming or are planning to do the same. This is to fill the communication gap of earlier phase and to train more new farmers. In second and third year of the project, Exposure Visit will be conducted at the state level. In the fourth year, it will be held at national level.

Farmer's Training especially for Women's Group)

One such activity, especially for women participants will be organised because as it is known to everyone that 80 percent of the agriculture work is carried out by female farmers so there is a need to educate them about organic farming and sustainable consumption.

State Level Stakeholder's Consultation Meeting

One such meeting will be organised to discuss the impact and outcomes of the project. This is required for the sustainability of the project and to replicate the objectives of the same. Representatives of consumer and community-based organisations, social action groups, local producers and traders of organic products, media and policymakers will be invited to this consultation meeting. The participants will be inspired and oriented to adopt organic consumption and show the model success.

Budget (Second Year Activities)

The project team also discussed the Budget details with the project partners and briefed them about its allocation for various activities.

Vote of Thanks

Kunwar Dheer Singh, Programme Associate of CUTS delivered vote of thanks to all the participants. He also mentioned that the partners will continue to communicate regularly with the farmers regarding adoption of organic agriculture. Eventually, this would help CUTS endeavors to meet the defined goals of the project and also nurture the project as an ideal model organic farming to replicate.