

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

Event Report

Block Level Partners' Orientation Meeting

Jaipur, May 04, 2018



Background

India is mainly an agricultural country, where around 58 percent of the nation's population is involved in agriculture for their livelihood. There are huge untapped resources 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 this 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 entitled, 'Developing a Culture of Sustainable Consumption and Lifestyle through Organic Production and Consumption in the State of Rajasthan (ProOrganic-II)' from April 01, 2017-March 31, 2021 in 192 *gram panchayats* of 10 selected districts of Rajasthan (India). The main objective of the project is to fill identified gaps and sustain the acquired momentum to achieve expected outcomes for a better eco-system by promoting organic consumption.

One of the basic concepts of the project is to promote sustainable consumption and production, which are important aspects of sustainable lifestyle and largely consistent with environmental and social factors; education and empowerment of consumers. In this project, the 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. The target of the project is to cover 10 districts, 96 blocks and selected 192 *gram panchayats* in 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.

Objectives of the Project

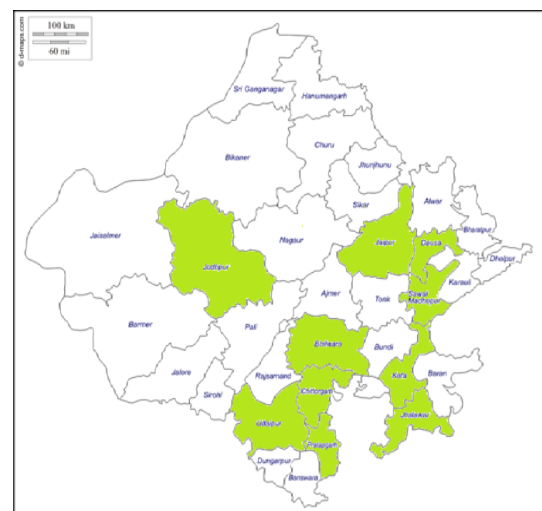
- Develop a culture of Sustainable Development through sensitisation awareness and education on organic consumption and production
- Build capacity of farmers to promote organic farming
- Advocate policies in favour of organic farming
- Set community seed bank and vermin composting cell with the help of farmers (Long- term perspective)
- Develop organic clubs and gardens in selected schools in each district
- Create a demand of organic consumption among consumers (by Green Action Week)
- Get acquainted with organic consumption through exposure visits

Objectives of the Meeting

The aim of the meeting was to discuss the execution of the project. In addition, the meeting was also held to discuss objectives of the project and discuss way forward to commence activities according to the work plan.

Block Project Partners

1. *Gramin Aarthik Samudayik* Pune; *Nirman evam Vikas Sansthan*, Jaipur (Block-Sanganer, Bassi and Jamwa Ramgarh)
2. Awareness Training and Motivation for Action (ATMA), Jagmalpura, Jorpura, Jobner, Jaipur (Block-Sambhar, Jhotwara and Sahapura)
3. *Sangrash Sansthan*, Dhandholi, Dudu, Jaipur (Block-Dudu)



4. Centre for Rural Development & Consultants Society, Thali, Chaksu, Jaipur (Block-Chaksu)
5. *Shree Dev Gou Seva Evam Gramin Vikas Samiti*, Heerapura, Chittora Renwal, Phagi, Jaipur (Block-Phagi)
6. *Nehru Yuva Mandal*, Anantpura, Jaitpura, Chomu, Jaipur (Block-Govindgarh and Jalsu)
7. *Shorya Samaj Sevi Avam Sway Vayavsay Prashikashan Sansthan*, Tonk Phatak, Jaipur (Block-Amer)
8. *Lok Sahbhagi Sansthan*, Kooploda, Med, Viratnagar, Jaipur (Block-Virat Nagar, Kotputli, Paota)

Inaugural Session

Nimisha Gaur, Programme Associate, CUTS International welcomed the project partners and briefly introduced the objectives of the event, i.e. to discuss 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.



Introductory Remarks

Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS International expressed his gratitude towards district partners for participating in the second phase of the project. He provided a brief overview 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.



While 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. Defining sustainable consumption, Saxena mentioned that any product/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, Programme Officer, CUTS International delivered a presentation on 'Future Activities on Sustainable Consumption'. He discussed 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 major focus will be on developing organic clubs in selected two schools in each district focusing on promoting organic farming and consumption. This year, two districts out of 10 will be chosen for women-specific farmer training and exposure visits where 50 women farmers will be provided 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 shed light on all project activities accomplished with partners and suitably answered all raised queries.

Project Activities at a Glance

- Partner's Orientation for District Partners
- Partner's Orientation for Jaipur District's Block Partners
- Preparation of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials
- Awareness campaign on Sustainable Consumption
- Green Action Week
- Establishment of Organic Compost Cell
- Formation of organic clubs and developing organic gardens in schools
- Training and Exposure Visit of Farmers
- Farmer's Training (One Training for Women Group Specifically)
- State Level Stakeholder's Consultation Meeting

Project Activities from a broader perspective

- **Partner's Orientation for District Partners:** To discuss objectives of project and how to initiate activities in accordance with the defined work plan.
- **Partner's Orientation for Jaipur District Partners:** To discuss 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 published for distribution during the awareness generation.
- **Awareness Campaign on Sustainable Consumption:** There will be awareness campaigns in selected 192 *gram panchayats* of target districts. The objective is to sustain the acquired momentum of awareness in project areas and 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:** The theme of the Green Action Week will be 'Sharing Communities'. The topic of the new theme was discussed with all block partners during the orientation meeting and their ideas on the same were sought.
- **Establishment of Organic Compost Cell:** Five organic compost cells are going to be established in each district on farmers' farms and products will

be distributed among farmers who want to switch over from chemical to organic farming. Organic compost cell could 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 schools to create awareness for organic farming among 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 10 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 districts, having already initiated organic farming or are planning to do the same. This is to fill the communication gap of earlier phase and train more new farmers. In second and third year of the project, an 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's participants will be organised. It is a well-known fact that 80 percent of agriculture work is carried out by female farmers; hence 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 sustainability of the project and replication of its objectives. Representatives of consumer and community-based organisations, social action groups, local producers and traders of organic products, media and policymakers will be invited to participate in the meeting. The participants will be inspired and oriented to adopt organic consumption and show the model success.

Budget (Second Year Activities)

In the second year of this phase, only village level awareness workshop's budget was discussed with block partners. Budget for the rest of activities will be discussed with the partners separately, who will be selected by the team to conduct the activities.

Vote of Thanks

Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Programme Officer, CUTS International proposed vote of thanks to all participants. He also mentioned that partners will continue to communicate regularly with farmers regarding adoption of organic agriculture. This would help CUTS' endeavours to meet the defined goals of the project and also nurture it as an ideal model on organic farming to replicate.