

Visit of officials from Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC)

June 03-05, 2013, Jaipur, India

Background

Eva Eiderström (Head of Department, Shop and Act Green-Good Environmental Choice Ecolabel), Sara Nilsson, Programme Officer, Sustainable Consumption and Annelie Andersson, Staff in-charge, Green Action Week Cooperation from Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) visited CUTS, Jaipur during June 03-05, 2013.

Objective: *The purpose of the visit was to explore the possibility of collaboration between SSNC and CUTS on sustainable consumption-related issues under the Green Action Fund.*

Commencement of Visit:

Introduction and Discussion:

First day of SSNC team visit on June 03, 2013 was commenced with initial interaction with George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS and Head, CUTS CART at CART conference hall. He briefed them about the organisation, various projects, expertise, activities, etc. Later on officials were introduced to the Consumer Protection and Good Governance team, which was followed by with the screening of the documentary entitled, 'CUTS' 30 Years of Social Change' and detailed discussions about CUTS work, projects, activities (especially implemented by CART). SSNC team enquired about the process of developing and functioning of any NGO in India, CUTS working and its network and its work on sustainable consumption and environmental issues etc.



SSNC team interacting with CART team

Discussions were followed by the presentation about SSNC made by Sara Nilsson. She told that the organisation was founded in year 1909 with the strength of 192000 members and 270 local branches. It was established with objectives of preserving all natural life, promoting public health, working towards global solidarity. Eva Eiderström informed about the work under the Green Action Fund. She further informed that the theme changes every second year and for the year 2013 and 2014 the theme is *Organic Food and Farming for All – Consumers and Farmers for Food Security, Safe and Sustainable Food*. The aim is to encourage more consumers to buy products from organic farming.

The team also met Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS and few other colleagues and had detailed discussions about CUTS, its success and various activities.

Field Visit at Chittorgarh

Objective: The basic objective of the visit was to interact with CUTS Centre for Human Development (CUTS CHD) staff and know about the functioning of the Centre, and to interact with the local farmers and enquire about the basic concept of organic farming.

On June 04, 2013, team along with George Cheriyan and Abhimanyu Singh (Project Officer, CUTS) visited CHD, Chittorgarh to interact with farmers as a part of their field visit. CHD staff welcomed the guests and the Centre Coordinator gave a brief power point presentation about the working of the Centre and various programmes undertaken by it. The presentation lasted for around an hour and there were certain queries which were well addressed by Cheriyan and Centre Coordinator of CHD.

The team left for village *Boikheda* to interact with farmers and a meeting was organised with a gathering of around 30 farmers. Farmers briefed them about various cropping patterns they use to follow and also mentioned about the use of chemicals and pesticides. They also stated that earlier they used to do traditional farming but after the green revolution they adopted modern techniques of farming. On asking whether they see any difference between traditional and modern farming, they answered that the quantity of the crop has increased but the quality has decreased significantly. And the land is also becoming less fertile. They also said that they used to do natural farming but only for their own consumption, and that too, in lesser amount. On being asked if they are willing to adopt organic farming they said that they are ready provided they will get a good market and profits.



SSNC team raising queries to local farmers on organic farming and visiting the farm

Some organic products, such as biscuits and cookies were distributed by the SSNC team to farmers as sample. Further, the team also visited the field and saw crops which were grown. A visit to Chittorgarh fort was also organised.

Visit to iCED

On June 05, 2013 SSNC team along with George Cheriyan and Jaishree Soni (Project Officer, CUTS) visited International Centre for Environment Audit and Sustainable Development (iCED) at Jaipur. The team had detailed interaction with officials from iCED – S K Dadhich, Ex. Engineer, Civil & Project Manager; Bobby Vijayakkar, Consultatnt; Manoj Kumar, Assistant Administration Officer; Anupam Shrivastav, Assistant Administration Officer and other staff. While briefing about iCED officials, they told that the Centre has been set up by the CAG and seeks to establish a global Centre of Excellence to improve accountability and governance in the area of environment and sustainable development, they further informed about the objectives of establishment of the centre, such as capacity building through training, knowledge dissemination and sharing, to be a Centre for Environment Policy Research, to offer professional certification on environmental studies, and other important role of iCED.

S K Dadhich explained key features of the green building and said that 'Energy Conservation Building Code 2006' norms were being applied for energy efficient design and construction of the building. The building also aims to achieve Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA).



Team discussing about functioning of iCED

SSNC team raised several queries regarding ISO certification of iCED, future role and challenges. The main challenges were – security of foreign participants, providing training on new emerging subject/issues.

The team visited an outlet, which sell organic products. They enquired about the certification and variety of products, product selling, etc., and also purchased various products.



Team enquiring about organic products at outlet

The team visited CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment (CUTS CITEE) and had good interaction and discussion on eco-labelling work with Archana Jatkar, Coordinator & Deputy Head, CUTS CITEE. She informed about various projects which are under implementation and completed. The team raised several queries, which were suitably answered by Jatkar.

De-briefing and Conclusion

Amarjeet Singh, Project Coordinator, CUTS made a presentation on 'Organic Farming Scenario in India'. He explained factors boosting organic farming, system of organic certification, informed about government Initiatives, challenges in this field and areas of possible collaboration between CUTS and SSNC.



Amarjeet making presentation on Organic Farming Scenario in India

The presentation was followed by the de-briefing discussion on working together in the area of organic farming. The meeting was concluded with the decision to submit a detailed proposal on organic farming to SSNC for about two years and which may be further extended.