

National Consultation

“Sustainable Consumption and Production in India: A Consumer Perspective”

Background Note

Introduction

Sustainable Development Goal 12 is about "Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)". It is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015. SCP concerns material use, hazardous chemicals and waste, sustainable business practices, and consumer behaviour. With increasing use of natural resources, air, water, soil pollution, and ever-growing amount of waste, it is clear that our current way of consumption and production has to change fundamentally. To reach the goal, world leaders have agreed on targets, such as improved resource efficiency, reduced waste and better awareness of sustainable lifestyles.

In 1985, the United Nations adopted a set of Guidelines for Consumer Protection which was revised in 1999 and 2015. One of the objectives of guidelines for consumer protection is to promote sustainable consumption which includes meeting the needs of present and future generations for goods and services in ways that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

Sustainable Consumption and Production

In the global market of goods and services, consumers drive the economy according to their demand and consumption patterns. They hold the power to influence production decisions, based on what goods and services they consume. If consumers prefer to buy sustainable products and services it would result in a higher demand for such products and services. Rise in demand consequently puts pressure on firms to see that they produce sustainable products and services in order to stay in business. Consumers may also opt for sustainable way of living by reducing their consumption. Therefore, the role of choices and decisions made by each and every individual forms the crucial point of influence which cannot be ignored in the process to achieve the targets of 17 SDGs.

Of all the Goals, the SDG12 aims at ensuring responsible consumption and production patterns everywhere in the world, notably by:

- halving global food waste per capita and ensuring the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources by 2030
- fighting pollution, reducing the overall waste generation, and improving the management of chemicals and toxic wastes
- supporting companies' transition to green infrastructures and practices
- making sure everyone everywhere is fully informed of ways to live in harmony with nature and eventually adopts thoughtful habits



The very objective of this goal is also highlighted in the text of the UNGCP which states that unsustainable patterns of production and consumption are the main cause of the continuing deterioration of the environment and all Member States should focus on promoting sustainable consumption patterns.

Therefore, participation of consumers becomes paramount to ensure a more sustainable and inclusive development. Governments across the globe should consider improving the laws and policies to better fulfil their commitments of Agenda 2030 and at the same time consider the consumer protection dimension while devising and implementing their development strategies.

CUTS Study on SCP

CUTS in partnership with Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) conducted a study mainly looking at SDG 12 from consumer perspective based on The United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (UNGCP). This study is to frame the understanding of concept of SCP beyond the SDG 12 and expand it beyond its current environment dimension. The concept shall be studied taking consideration of its presence in UN guidelines for Consumer Protection under from the perspective of sustainable consumption and production.

Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh are covered under the study. CUTS visited targeted states and gathered the information from different stakeholders across the states, regarding SDG12 related policies and programmes from consumer perspective.

National Consultation

To share the finding of study and gather crucial inputs from relevant stakeholder, CUTS is organising a National Consultation at New Delhi on March 18, 2021. The main objective of the National Consultation is to disseminate the key finding of the study with specific focus on the National scenario as well as practices and learning from five targeted states.

The discussion will also include best practices, case studies from different parts of the country in relation to SDG 12. Representatives from the various government departments, organisation working on sustainable consumption, consumer protection from Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan Uttar Pradesh and NCR are invited to take part in the consultation.
