

About CART

Established in 1983 as a small voluntary group of concerned citizens, Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) expanded its activities and CUTS CART was set up in 1996 as a programme centre to pursue the cause of common consumers, initially being undertaken by CUTS as the mandate.

The programmes of the Centre are primarily aimed at generating awareness, creating a more responsible society and encouraging changes at the policy level by advocating with the government machinery and sensitising it to the issues of concern of the common man. The Centre has spearheaded several campaigns and pioneered consumer empowerment.

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Pandemic will have a severe negative impact on achieving the targets of SDGs

The COVID-19 pandemic will have severe negative impacts on achieving the targets of most of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, while unlocking and reconnecting, pandemic offers countries an opportunity to rebuild recovery plans that will reverse current trends and change the consumption and production patterns towards a more sustainable future, concluded experts in a webinar organised by CUTS International on August 26, 2020.

As per the Asia Pacific SDG progress report 2020, the Asia-Pacific region is unlikely to meet any of the SDGs without concerted efforts by all stakeholders. Conditions in 2030 are predicted to be worse on 20 percent of SDG indicators than the status in 2015. The region is struggling to achieve progress in SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) and SDG 13 (climate action) the region is not even moving in the right direction.



The pandemic had brought 'immediate relief' in areas related to SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 14 (life below water) and SDG 15 (life on land). The global CO₂ emission was reduced by 17 percent during the lockdown. The first time after World War II, the global energy demand was reduced. India had seen a 30 percent reduction in energy consumption.

There was a drastic reduction in air pollution. The pandemic had resulted in a tremendous increase in plastic consumption. The sale of global disposable masks increased from US\$800mn in 2019 to US\$166bn in June 2020.

Since education had gone online, the use of electronic gadgets increased tremendously, the sale of laptops in the state of Kerala itself increased by 400 percent. Use of personal vehicles, due to lack of public transport and physical distancing norms, increased to more than the pre-pandemic levels. This increased consumption will have severe negative impacts on achieving the targets of SDG12.

The main objective of the webinar was to assess the negative impact of the pandemic on SDG12 and suggest ways to move forward to achieve the set targets by 2030. Experts, such as Archana Datta, (Project Coordinator for India for SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Advocacy Coordination, UN Environment Programme India Office); Eva Eiderström (Director, Department of Ecolabelling and Green Consumption, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, Stockholm); Usha Titus, (Principal Secretary, Department of Environment, Government of Kerala); Joy Elamon (Director General, Kerala Institute of Local Administration) spoke in the webinar. George Cheriyan delivered the opening address and moderated the webinar.

It was deliberated by various experts that States are taking actions towards sustainable consumption and production (SCP). However, many achievements are not being reported. Climate change is the indicator of consumption patterns of society as a whole. The need for a circular economy to be developed and institutionalised was highlighted.

More than 100 representatives from 23 states of India and 12 countries United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and attended the webinar. The need for continuous advocacy with the government to build recovery plans that will reverse current trends and change the consumption patterns is the key take away from the webinar.

Awareness Campaign on Good Hygienic Practices in Rajasthan

CUTS International, as part of its COVID response activities, carried out a massive awareness campaign in the State from July 01-15, 2020. The campaign was formally launched in Chittorgarh on July 01, 2020. The first phase of the campaign successfully concluded on July 15, 2020, with the participation of various stakeholder representatives and the common public.

As part of ongoing projects of CUTS, which is being implemented in various districts of the state, awareness activities related to the pandemic were organised. The target districts were Jaipur, Dausa, Sawai Madhopur, Bhilwara, Chittorgarh, Pratapgarh, Udaipur, Kota, Jhalawar, Jodhpur and Banswara. In addition to educating the target population through various means, sanitising kits consisting of materials such as masks, sanitisers, soaps, etc. were also distributed.

“In the context of increasing cases of COVID-19, the purpose of the campaign was to educate people residing in villages, hamlets, mainly the rural population about good hygienic practices, physical distance maintaining habits, providing tips for safe food practices and other basic health tips. The public was apprised of the need to remain alert, follow all health protocols and save them from getting infected”, said George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International.



He further stated that people are not taking this pandemic seriously, especially in rural areas. They are moving around without wearing masks, the crowd is gathering in marriages and other functions, proving a conducive environment for the virus to spread. Therefore, there is an urgent need to make the people aware of the measures to prevent the spread of the virus to save themselves, their families and the community from this pandemic.

The state-level launch of the activities was held in Chittorgarh and events were held in various districts. Various dignitaries such as Ankit Kumar Singh, District Collector, Bansawara; Mukesh Kalal, Additional District Collector Chittorgarh; Sarita Singh, Additional Superintendent of Police Chittorgarh; Sanjeev Sharma, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Kota; Ratan Lal Regar, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Jodhpur; Sanket Modi, Deputy Labour Commissioner, Bhilwara; B. L. Jat, Scientist, KVK, Dausa released the IEC materials of the campaign.

Green Action Week took off in Rajasthan

Green Action Week (GAW), Rajasthan was launched with a community level introductory meeting for kitchen garden on September 28, 2020, at Jagannathpuri in Jaipur. George Cheriyan, Nimisha Gaur and Rajdeep Pareek attended the meeting.

The theme for this year is ‘Sharing Community’. Amit Sharma, a subject expert oriented the participants about the techniques of kitchen gardening. Cheriyan distributed kitchen garden kits (five vegetables and medicinal seeds, HDPE pots, one gardening equipment) to all the participants. Two more Introductory meetings were organised at Paanchyawala and Sanganer respectively on September 30, 2020.

GAW 2020 is observed from September 28-October 04, 2020. GAW activities got kick-started in other districts of Rajasthan as well mainly in the ProOrganic II target districts, and Banswara, which have been attended online by project team members. Most of the district partners also observed GAW with various activities.



Elimination of TFAs from India by 2022

A national webinar on 'Eliminating TFAs from India by 2022: Challenges and Way Forward' was organised on August 06, 2020. Sunil Bakshi, Head (Codex/Regulations/International Cooperation), FSSAI, New Delhi; Eram S. Rao Associate Professor, Food Technology, Bhaskaracharya College of Applied Sciences, University of Delhi; Rachita Gupta, National Professional Officer, Nutrition at WHO Country Office for India; Lopa Ghosh, India Country Coordinator, Global Health Advocacy Incubator, New Delhi were key speakers.

Cheriyen moderated the webinar, which was attended by around 65 delegates from across the country, including health experts, representatives from national and international organisations, industry, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, Indian Council of Medical Research, Indian Medical Association, academic and research.

Role of Organic Farming in Dealing with the Pandemic

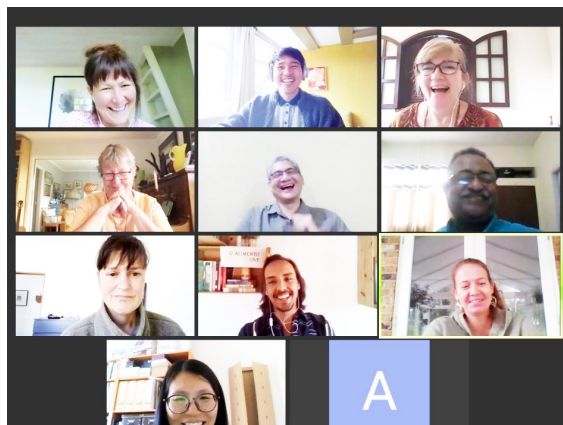
A webinar on 'Role of Organic Products/Organic Farming in Dealing with the Pandemic' was held on August 21, 2020. The main speakers were S K Sharma, Zonal Director, Research, Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture and Technology, Udaipur; A K Sharma, Principal Scientist, Central Arid Zone Research



Institute, Jodhpur; Virendra Parihar, Programme Producer, DD Kisaan Channel, Doordarshan Kendra, Jaipur; and Rohit Jain, Secretary, Organic Farming Association of India. Deepak Saxena moderated the webinar.

More than 103 people participated, which included farmers from project districts, NGO representatives, government officials and students of agriculture universities.

Global Think Tank on Sustainable Consumption



The virtual meeting of the Think Tank Group was held on September 08-10, 2020. Cheriyen represented CUTS. This was in continuation of the meeting held in June 2020.

The meeting focused on moving beyond discussion to action on the priorities which the group identified in the June meeting. The highlights of the meeting were Spotlight presentation from each of the countries bringing inspiration/challenge to the group, discussions on engagement with Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative in the future, Anthology, etc.

Cheriyen made a presentation on the 'Impact of the Pandemic on Sustainable Consumption', which was appreciated by all and kick-started the detailed discussion on how the pandemic is changing sustainable consumption.

Observing World Heart Day

CUTS observed the World Heart Day on September 29, 2020 and conducted a sample online survey in 12 districts among common consumers on general awareness about trans fats, its harmful effects, sources, and the role of FSSAI in regulating the Trans fatty acids sector and relevant law-making, etc.



The results that emerged out of the survey were very well showcased by the national media, PTI, UNI, APN news agencies. Several online newspaper editions covered the survey findings which became national news.

Promoting Organic Consumption in Rajasthan

ProOrganic activities commenced in all the project districts from July-September 2020. Five block level awareness campaigns were also held in the project districts. At another end, 8 knowledge sharing meetings on community-managed seed cells were organised. A total of 32 compost units were set up in all the project districts.



WEBINARS

- Amit Babu attended a National e-Conference on Sustainable Development organised by St. Aloysius Institute of Technology Education, Jabalpur on July 01, 2020.
- Amar Deep Singh and Amit Babu attended a webinar on Managing Urban Solid Waste organised by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in association with the Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi on July 03, 2020.
- Satyapal Singh attended a webinar on 'There is no place like home: Cities making sustainable living a reality' organised by United Nations Environment Programme on July 07, 2020.
- George Cheriyan and Deepak Saxena attended a webinar on 'Building Consumer Trust in E-Commerce and the Platform Economy' hosted by Consumers International at the 'World Economic Forum Multistakeholder' on July 08, 2020.
- Simi TB attended a webinar on SDG Acceleration Actions to Build Back Better organised by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs on July 14, 2020. She also attended a webinar on Local Governments for Sustainable Development - Good Practices from Kerala, National Webinar Series: Effective Intervention of Local Governments in Water Conservation, organised by Haritha Kerala Mission, along with KILA and Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation on July 11, 2020.
- George Cheriyan attended the 16th Meeting of the 'Food Hygiene, Safety Management and Other Systems Sectional Committee, FAD 15' of the Bureau of Indian Standards held on July 22, 23 & 24, 2020.
- Rajdeep Pareek attended a webinar on 'Scientific Approach to Pest Management: Shift from Molecules to Management Systems' organised by Green Academy and Alliance for Sustainable & Holistic Approach on July 30, 2020.
- Deepak Saxena and Madhu Sudan Sharma attended a webinar on 'Rural Healthcare: Issues and Opportunities in Post COVID-19 World', organised by HCL and PHFI, Public Health Foundation of India on August 07, 2020.
- George Cheriyan and Aradhana Gupta attended a National Webinar Series on Consumer Protection Act 2019, Rule & Regulations organised by Chair on Consumer Law & Practice, National Law School of India University, Bangalore from August 21-26, 2020.
- George Cheriyan and Madhu Sudan Sharma participated in a Virtual Stakeholder Validation Workshop of 'India: Country Procurement Assessment Report, on August 27, 2020, organised by the World Bank and Ministry of Finance, Government of India.
- Deepak Saxena, Rajdeep Pareek and Nimisha Gaur attended a webinar on 'Organic & Natural Farming in India' organised by CSE on September 08, 2020. The main speaker in the webinar was Rajiv Kumar, Vice-Chairperson, Niti Aayog.
- George Cheriyan, Gauhar Mehmood and Madan Lal Keer attended the Partners Meet of Save the Children West Hub States (Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh & Rajasthan) and spoke about CUTS work on child rights, on September 07, 2020.
- Madhu Sudan Sharma participated in a webinar organised by WHEEL Foundation on 'Providing Tele Medicine in Rural Areas: Role of CSOs and way forward' on September 18, 2020.
- Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended the online event on the release of Monograph on 'Improving connectivity inside the Buildings' and a Whitepaper on Smart Cities in India: Framework for ICT Infrastructure' on September 22, 2020.



CART IN MEDIA

