

Developing a Culture of Sustainable Consumption and Lifestyle through Organic Production and Consumption in the State of Rajasthan (ProOrganic-Bridge Year)

A Communique-VII



'ProOrganic' project was initiated in November 2013 to promote organic consumption in the State of Rajasthan. The objective of this phase of the project was to create demand among consumers for organic products and sensitize farmers to shift towards organic farming and advocacy on issues related to organic farming. The phase was concluded in March 2017, with major activities being accomplished in three years like Awareness Generation Campaigns, Organic Fairs, Farmer's Training and Exposure Visits, and Consultations apart from research components in the project area.

This phase of the project had a deep impact as a remarkable increase in organic farming was observed in the State. In addition, there was also a hike in demand for organic products by the consumers.

Looking at the success of Phase-I, the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) further agreed to extend its support for another four years to implement phase-II of the 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, to March 31, 2021, at 192 *gram panchayats* (in 10 selected districts of Rajasthan). One of the basic ideas of this phase II was to promote sustainable consumption and production, which are essential aspects of a sustainable regime. This is broadly consistent with the environmental and social factors and education and empowerment of consumers.

After the successful phase II in March, 2021, it was a Bridge Year from April 2021 to December 2021 and the limitations and restrictions continued similar to 2020 due to second wave pandemic lockdown in the initial months as a result of which, work got delayed by three months again and ultimately could not physically start until July, 2021 with consultants' orientation on July 02, 2021.

Despite all obstructions, the team took up the challenge with the successful implementation of as many as 92 activities under bridge year of ProOrganic alone in just six months period, which excludes five state-level consultations on SDG-12 and plenty of activities under GAW, Rajasthan and India. This was remarkable indeed, simply due to the dedication and strong will of the project team.

Details about the project can be accessed at:

<https://cuts-cart.org/developing-a-culture-of-sustainable-consumption-and-lifestyle-through-organic-production-and-consumption-in-state-of-rajasthan-proorganic-ii/>

Consultants' Orientation – A Formal Kick Start of the Bridge Year 2021

Like every year, the activities formally started with a consultants' orientation to set a direction to promote organic farming and consumption. Though there have been some virtual meetings from April 2021 onwards but due to the attack of Covid and the subsequent lockdown situations, the field activities could not start. Ultimately, the first offline activity in the form of 'Consultants' Orientation' was organised at Jaipur on July 02, 2021.

The main objective was to discuss various activities to be accomplished in the year 2021 along with the timeline for its completion under the project. On occasion, the key findings of the end line survey were shared with the partners and later with the media on the same day. All the district consultants, including Jaipur block partners attended the meeting.



<https://cuts-cart.org/pdf/report-district-level-consultants-orientation-bridge-year-2021.pdf>

ProOrganic Voice Reaching to District and Block Level



A grassroots awareness meeting has been one of the important activities of the project, which provided a platform to advance the project objectives down the line. In the bridge year, the campaigns were conducted at the block level and district level. In a nutshell, the objective of organising these Block and District Level Awareness Meetings (BLAM & DLAM) through camps was to educate and sensitize the public about the adverse effects of chemicals and pesticides being used in agriculture and the importance of locally available agriculture-friendly fertilisers and manures, which can be used to reduce the financial burden and hazardous impacts on the environment as well as on human beings.

In all camps, the vast participation of local farmers and consumers, traders, students, elected representatives, and consumers directly linked in agricultural authorities and related activities was witnessed. Representatives from local civil society, consumer organisations and subject experts from government and farmer clubs also took part and trained the participants on the subject with a special focus on women's participation.

There has been no mechanism as such in earlier years' activities to map the status of work done during previous years, so all earlier covered villages were revisited again in the form of representation of select farmers of each village, who were called again at Block Level Awareness Meetings (BLAMs). These BLAMs were organised in select four blocks per district only, where the villages falling under these blocks were covered. All together, there were 40 BLAMs and 10 DLAMs organised over a period of six months. In these recap meetings, the invited farmers helped provide the stock of things and the status of organic farming in their respective villages, thus helped in taking the stock of things over the last four years.

<https://cuts-cart.org/pdf/synthesis-report-of-awareness-camps-at-district-and-block-level-2021.pdf>

Summarising Farmers Through Advance Trainings

A total of nine District Level Training Programmes and Exposure Visits (FAT & EV) for farmer groups were organised during the bridge year period. The objective was to motivate farmers with some novel and technical sessions on organic farming in the training to reduce chemical uses in farming through several sessions/lectures on organic farming and related issues through subject experts and showcase some of the successful live demonstrations of organic farming for practical orientation in all 10 districts. Efforts were made to ensure the participation of farmers, especially women farmers, representing all blocks of the district.



The objective of this advance level orientation was to build the capacities of farmers and inspire them to take up organic farming through experience gained from various subject experts and live demos of organic culture. The trained farmers further envisaged that they would work as catalysts at the local level to impart their knowledge gained from orientation and exposure and were taught about the efficacy of vermicomposting and other eco-friendly methods, such as poly house farming, mulching and recycling of farm waste besides drip and other water conservation technologies during the session.

Subject experts of Agriculture Departments took these sessions, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (Agriculture Science Centres), Agriculture Universities and Colleges and Agriculture Research Institutes.

<https://cuts-cart.org/pdf/synthesis-report-farmers-advanced-training-2021.pdf>



Community Seed Cells – Moving One Step Ahead

This unique activity started on the ground in 2019-20 to train target district progressive farmers to develop skills to protect, preserve and promote indigenous seeds in organic farming. It was introduced in all the 10



targeted districts. The activities were carried forward during April-December-2021 with the same seed cell. To cover a wider area and more number of farmers in these seed cells, work was done in a focused manner.

After the initial Knowledge Sharing Meetings in all the targeted 10 districts with the selected farmers, who have switched over

from chemical to organic farming, there were Feedback Meetings (FM) organised on a three-pronged approach, that is, to discuss establishing seed cells, consider difficulties in selecting them and guide the target farmers to take it forward.

<https://cuts-cart.org/pdf/synthesis-report-community-managed-seed-cells-2021.pdf>

Combining Organic Fairs with Media Interface *A Soothing Experience*

The purpose of the District Level Organic Fairs (DLOF) and Media Interface (MIM) was to provide a platform and guidance to the farmers for selling their organic products and make them further aware of the importance of the issue and also make the consumers aware about the available organic products and its benefits by bringing both farmers and consumers on the same platform. More than 1,500 participants attended the organic fairs in 10 districts, showing the interest of organic producers and farmers in this project.

The highlights of each organic fair were stalls of organic outlets by retailers and producer farmers. Organic input outlets were also there for farmers to understand the making of low-cost input in farming. Visitors to the fairs were entertained through different cultural activities, conveying the message of adopting organic farming and products. A huge food fair was witnessed in all the nine district-level organic fairs and a good number of media persons in the media interfaces, which were organised after the fairs.

Besides, the main objective for doing media interfaces alongside organic fairs was to give momentum to the awareness campaign by spreading the importance and the positive aspects of organic consumption and production. The media interfaces also proved beneficial, which helped in connecting with media, which is the fourth pillar of our democracy and a platform to display the five year's output and outcome before them.

<https://cuts-cart.org/pdf/synthesis-report-media-interface-meetings-2021.pdf> and <https://cuts-cart.org/pdf/synthesis-report-organic-fairs-2021.pdf>



State Level Organic Fair: An Exclusive Platform



The fair organised in Jaipur was formally inaugurated by Surendra Singh Awana, an integrated farmer. He delivered a motivational speech about his journey of becoming an organic farmer and receiving several awards at the state and national levels. After that, each farmer and retailer introduced themselves, such as where do they belong from, how many years they have been doing organic farming, what all products they are producing, and most importantly, how the common consumer can contact them to order organic products.

There were 25 stalls of different organic products (organic honey, pulses, grains, spices, oil, ghee, seasonal vegetables & fruits, worship items made out of cow dung, organic pesticides and manure) brought by farmers from 10 districts. There were also stalls from the women group who had participated in 'Best out of Waste' training during Green Action Week, Rajasthan 2021. The stalls showcased products made of plastic and cloth waste, and people expressed their interest in buying plastic and cloth waste products. The fair provided an excellent platform for the women's group to sell their products. The fair received an overwhelming response.



The majority of the stakeholders, like farmers, consumers, media, government officials, organic product retailers, and NGOs working in the same field assembled on the same platform.

<https://cuts-cart.org/pdf/state-level-organic-fair-event-report-december-19-2021.pdf>

Best out of Waste-Green Action Week, Rajasthan

This year, the theme Sharing Community was targeted at urban consumers to expand the outreach in four localities (Ayodhya Nagar Extension, Neelkanth Vihar, Mahesh Nagar & Hardev Vihar) in the city of Jaipur. The major activities include Kitchen Gardening, Trainings for Best out of Waste, Community Level Stakeholders' Consultations and a District Level Stakeholders' Consultation Meeting.

The first activity commenced on September 9, 2021, and the whole campaign culminated on November 30, 2021, with Stakeholders' Consultation. Hundred kitchen gardens were the primary outcomes of this year's campaign. The maximum participation of a mixed group of people and their enthusiasm to know about organic farming (kitchen gardening) shows that the level of awareness among people is now rising as compared to previous years.

<https://cuts-cart.org/green-action-week-2021-sharing-community/>



Waste Segregation and Management to be Taken on Priority Stakeholder's Consultation on Green Action Week, Rajasthan

Waste segregation and its management is a severe concern in the city of Jaipur and now it's high time that it should be put on the top of the agenda said Jaipur Heritage Mayor Smt. Munesh Gurjar, while speaking as Chief Guest in the Stakeholder's Consultation organised by CUTS International on November 30, 2021 marking the culmination of the Green Action Week campaign of 2021 comprising of community women leaders.

Rama Chopra (Zila Pramukh, Jaipur) and Munesh Gurjar (Mayor, Jaipur) were the Chief Guests. In the technical session, V K Singhal (Chief Environment Engineer, Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board) and Soumana Das (Retd. Professor, Botany, Rajasthan University) spoke. On occasion, the best woman kitchen gardeners during the campaign were awarded a token of appreciation and memento. In the meeting, more than 55 participants attended.

<https://cuts-cart.org/pdf/state-level-stakeholders-consultation-gaw-november-30-2021.pdf>



Gap in the Distribution of Resources and Consumption Needs to be Reduced Green Action Week India Campaign

CUTS implemented GAW India Campaign 2021 on 'Sharing Community' in partnership with the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation. The project was initiated in June 2021 and concluded in December 2021. The campaign aimed to promote strong community collaboration, while increasing access to goods and services without further stressing the planetary boundaries.

This year, an overwhelming response was received from CSOs and 47 individual consultants of various organisations from different parts of the country applied for GAW India. All 12 selected consultants organised the GAW India activities in their respective areas. Before commencing activities, a round of consultation was held with all partners about the theme and local issues. The Sharing Community Awareness Generation Campaign has significantly influenced the younger generation and professionals, promoting sustainable consumerism. Students, professionals and other participants in GAW-2021 activities presented their recommendations and ideas for a Greener World. They are willing to adopt the concept of sharing to alleviate the strain on the Earth.



To mark the conclusion of the year's campaign, a Consultants' Meet was organised to share the learning among all GAW partners and evaluate partner organisations' activities at Jaipur on December 10, 2021. All 12 consultants presented their activities in the meeting, followed by an open discussion. The participants critically analysed each presentation of partners for its impact, effectiveness and outreach. Challenges faced by the partners were also discussed during the meeting. The sustainability of the campaign is important and all need to be kept engaged in the related activities and discussions to address the issue within their local context.

<https://cuts-cart.org/pdf/report-gaw-india-2021.pdf>

Sustainable Consumption & Production – A Consumer Perspective

In partnership with Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), CUTS study mainly looked at SDG 12 from a consumer perspective based on the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection.

The study was to frame the understanding of the concept of SCP beyond the SDG 12 and expand it beyond its current environment dimension. To share the study finding and gather crucial inputs from relevant stakeholders, CUTS had organised State Level Consultation on SDG 12 in all the five target state capitals.



The first State Level Consultation on SDG 12 was organised in collaboration with Consumer Guild at Lucknow, UP, on July 29, 2021. Anand Mishra, Director, Dept of Planning; Dr. SK Chauhan, Director, Dept. of Food Processing and A K Gupta, Add. Director, Regional Centre for Urban & Environment Studies, MoHUA, were the main speakers. The second State Level Consultation on SDG 12 was

organised in collaboration with the Department of Planning, Government of Himachal Pradesh and Plan Foundation at Shimla on August 18, 2021. While Akshay Sood, Secretary, Department of Finance, was the chief guest, Basu Sood, Advisor Planning, spoke as a special guest. The third State Level Stakeholder Consultation on SDG 12 was organised in collaboration with State Planning Commission (SPC), Chhatisgarh and Anmol Foundation at Raipur on September 30, 2021. Ajay Singh, Vice Chairman, SPC, was the chief guest of programme and delivered the inaugural address. The fourth State Level Stakeholder Consultation on SDG 12 was organised in collaboration with NITI Aayog, Government of India, at Jaipur on October 27, 2021. Sundar Narayan Mishra, Senior Consultant SDGs, NITI Aayog, addressed programme as a keynote speaker. Anand Mohan (IFS), Member Secretary, Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board, Government of Rajasthan, was the special guest. D.K. Gupta, Professor, SKN Agriculture University; Hitballabh Sharma, Deputy Secretary, Department of Rural Development; Punita Singh, Joint Director, Department of Tourism and Shafaqat Hussain, Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF, spoke about SDG 12 and its progress in the context of Rajasthan in the panel discussion. The fifth and the final State Level Stakeholder Consultation on SDG 12 was organised in collaboration with the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA), at Thiruvananthapuram on November 16, 2021. Joy Elamon, Director General, KILA, welcomed the participants.

<https://cuts-cart.org/sustainable-consumption-and-production-in-india-a-consumer-perspective/>

Anticipating a Long Journey to Witness Chemical-Free Farming in Rajasthan ProOrganic Bridge Year-State Level Stakeholders' Consultation

Still a long way to achieve the desired outcome of achieving a chemical free farming in Rajasthan as said by George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International. Cheriyan spoke at a Stakeholders' Consultation organised by CUTS International under its ongoing project 'ProOrganic', which aims to promote organic farming consumption and production in the state.

The bridge year, 2021, concluded with the State Level Stakeholders' Consultation on December 20, 2021, at Jaipur. As usual, the objective of this annual stakeholders' consultation was to apprise the stakeholders about the activities accomplished during the year and discuss the future course of action. Dr. S.K. Jain, Director, Rajasthan State Seed & Organic Certification Agency, Jaipur; Dr. A.S. Baloda, Director of the Rajasthan Agriculture Research Institute and Dr. Om Prakash, ex-Director of Jaipur Doordarshan were the key speakers in the consultation besides George Cheriyan. More than 50 participants comprising farmers, consumers, and media from 10 targeted districts of Rajasthan took part in the consultation.



<https://cuts-cart.org/pdf/state-level-consultation-on-december-20-2021.pdf>

Addi onal Ac vi es/Ini a ves

- Y World Environment Day, 2021, was observed with a na onal-level webinar on June 5, 2021. As speaker Sara Nilson, Programme Manager, SSNC, spoke on the global perspec ve of sustainable consump on. Bethan Laughlin, Sustainable Consump on Lead, Consumers Interna onal, spoke about ecosystem restora on and the role of consumers. Dr. K. Anand, Co-founder of Junglescapes Charitable Trust, presented a na onal perspec ve of ecosystem restora on; Aman Singh, Founder Krapavis highlighted grassroots level interven on to address ecosystem degrada on. Pradeep Mehta, Secretary General, delivered opening remarks on the importance of ecosystem restora on in the pandemic. George Cherian, Director of CUTS moderated the discussion and highlighted the relevance of the webinar topic and the gravity of the situa on in our country. The virtual webinar was a ended by almost 170 plus par cipants represen ng 23 states and 11 di erent countries who are mostly experts working in the environment and sustainable development issues, agriculture sector, government representa ves, and civil society organisa ons across the country and abroad.
- Y Rajdeep Pareek a ended a webinar organised by Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture & Technology on April 16, 2021 on 'Climate Resilient Agriculture for Food and Health Security.'
- Y Mee ng of ProOrganic Consultants with Naubat Baja Community Missed Call Radio was organised virtually, sponsored by Jeevan Ashram Sansthan on April 29, 2021. Naubat Baja Community Radio, makes people aware on di erent government schemes.
- Y In con nua on of a Zoom mee ng organised with Naubat Baja Community Missed Call Radio on April 29, 2021, the first mee ng in the series tled "Organic Farming, Challenges and Opportuni es" was organised on May 24, 2021. Progressive farmer O. P. Pareek, a district consultant for Dausa, was the main speaker at this mee ng.
- Y A webinar was organised again on June 13, 2021 jointly by CUTS and Jeevan Ashram Sansthan under its Naubat Baja Missed Call Radio. The main speakers in the webinar were A ar Singh Meena, Deputy Director Agriculture; Shailendra Chauhan, AGM, NABARD; Deepika Saini, Quality Manager, RSOCA; O P Pareek, Progressive Farmer from Dausa and Babu Khan, Progressive Farmer from Jodhpur.
- Y In the series of similar programmes, another webinar was organised on June 27, 2021, tled 'Organic Farming- Myths and Facts'. The two main speakers were Arun Sharma, Senior Scien st, CAZRI, Jodhpur and Neeraj Kumar Prajapa , Bicycle Man of Indian Agriculture.

Increasing Prac ce of Organic Produc on and Consump on in Rajasthan *An Endline Survey*

Around 97.4 percent of consumers were found aware that chemical input-based food products are harmful for health compared to 86 percent of the same set of consumers in 2017. Similarly, the percentage of organic farming farmers has risen to 23 percent from 19 percent from the same group of farmers in 2017, which is a pleasant outcome. These are some of the key highlights of the study that were revealed through an end-line survey conducted by CUTS Interna onal under its ProOrganic project.

The end-line research aimed to gauge the impact seen over the last four years of interven on as part of the CUTS project outcome, comparing these with the baseline results and findings under the same project.

The detailed report can be viewed at:

https://cuts-cart.org/pdf/Endline_Survey_Report-2021.pdf



