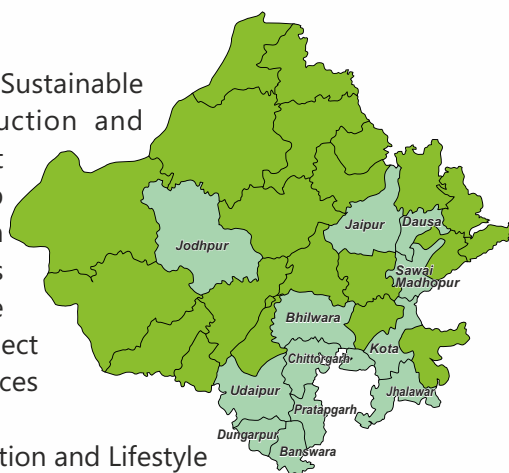


Developing a Culture of Sustainable Consumption and Lifestyle Through Promoting Organic Consumption and Production and Adopting Sustainable Consumption Practices by Engaging Consumers in the State of Rajasthan, India (ProScop) 2022-26

A Communique-VIII

ProScop: An Overview

CUTS has been involved in Developing a Culture of Sustainable Consumption and Lifestyle through Organic Production and Consumption in Rajasthan since October 2013, which got concluded in December 2021. The work had made a deep impact and contributed in promoting organic consumption in the state. Looking at the success and to further consolidate its work on the issues, CUTS with the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) has designed an ambitious five years project clubbing sustainable consumption & production, and practices together in its intervention.



The project 'Developing a Culture of Sustainable Consumption and Lifestyle Through Promoting Organic Consumption and Production and Adopting Sustainable Consumption Practices by Engaging Consumers in the State of Rajasthan, India' (ProScop) is being implemented in 12 targeted districts of Rajasthan for five years, commencing from January 1, 2022.

ProOrganic

In the new phase, taking our experience and the network created as our strength, we plan to escalate work on organic consumption and production with an addition of two more districts, thus making it to 12 now. The purpose of carrying our work in the present 10 districts is not only to consolidate the already set base, which was created more than eight years back and has started yielding results at the ground but also to strengthen it by further working with an innovative approach keeping all the stakeholders in the loop.

This is a better time when the state governments and the Government of India have also started showing their inclination towards organic culture work throughout the country. The expected outcome is to convert selected villages in each of these target districts into 100 per cent organic villages. The activities are in progress.

Sustainable Consumption and Production

Specific activities focusing on Sustainable Consumption & Production (SCP) are being conducted in the seven selected cities of Rajasthan. A consumer perception survey (CPS) has been conducted to understand the perception, practices and patterns of consumption. Through the intervention, local consumers and stakeholders are being sensitised towards sustainable lifestyles and consumption by organising stakeholder sensitisation programmes in all divisions of Rajasthan. This approach will be an advocacy tool to streamline existing policies of the government and push for more dedicated efforts to support sustainable consumption and production from the consumer perspective in the state.

Heading Towards New Phase – A Ray of New Hope

To set a direction to promote organic farming and sustainable consumption, project activities started with a State Level Project Launch cum Consultants' Orientation on April 12, 2022. Padma Shri award-winning Farmer Jagdish Pareek was the chief guest.

Other key dignitaries were Hanuman Mal Dhaka, Additional Commissioner, Department of Agriculture; A S Baloda, Director, Rajasthan Agriculture Research Institute (RARI) and Surendra Awana, a progressive farmer.

This launch was to inform all concerned stakeholders about the project activities, objectives, and their possible role in the successful implementation of the project.



Setting New Directions

An orientation for district consultants was organised. The purpose of the orientation meeting was not only to orient the partners on the proposed activities of that particular year within the prescribed time frame, target groups, and areas and set direction but also to brief all

the field team to implement the activities to bring changes through the intervention at the ground level.

Strengthening the Voice of Organic Consumption at the Grassroots

To take forward the movement and make consumers/farmers aware of organic products and influence their buying/farming habits, Village Level Awareness Campaigns have been an important and continuous activity. The activity was conducted at 48 villages (*gram panchayats*).

It was around 50 participants on average participated in each camp, which included farmers, village-level traders, elected representatives, people directly/indirectly involved in agriculture, consumers, local officials, experts, youth groups, self-help groups (SHGs), and local civil society organisations (CSOs) among others.

A total of 2,500 participants attended these activities during the reporting period, out of which, nearly 47 per cent of them were women participants. Media played a vital role in wider outreach.



Organic Clubs and Gardens – Roots Gets Deepened



Starting healthy habits at an early age is the way forward. To inculcate the culture of sustainable consumption right from childhood, 12 organic clubs and gardens were developed in selected schools in 12 target districts during 2022-23.

A group of 25-30 children were given the responsibility to develop organic gardens. This unique activity was evaluated through constant visits by project team members in all 12 gardens.

Community Seed Cell Management Concept Further Consolidates

This was the fourth year in succession of this unique activity to protect, preserve and promote different indigenous seeds, which are existing in our country in organic farming. This year, the main purpose was only to strengthen the existing seed cell, which was established last year.

The initial 'Knowledge Sharing Meetings' in all the targeted 12 districts with the selected farmers focused on their experience and knowledge-sharing with new farmers, who have just joined the cell.

Later in the 'Feedback Meetings' at the same places with group leaders and other farmers, the discussions focused mainly on the progress and the future strategies for taking this work forward. These strengthened seed cells are anticipated to be another activity of addressing community sharing in future.



Organic Fairs – An Useful Platform for Consumers and Farmers

The purpose of the fair is to provide a platform and guidance to the farmers for selling their organic products and make them aware of the importance of the issue. Also, raise awareness among the consumers about available organic products and their benefits by bringing both farmers and consumers on the same platform.

These fairs have helped not only the producers but also retailers and consumers to share their thoughts and experiences on a common platform. During the year, a total of 12 organic fairs were conducted in 12 targeted districts.



Model Organic Village – A Wider Appreciation and Support

To set an example for other nearby villages/farmers to adopt organic farming, one village was selected to make a Model Organic Village. Kitchen garden training was organised in the sets of selected villages to be converted as 'Model Organic Villages' in all the districts.

A total of 22 kitchen garden training were organised with a two days agenda of orientation, demonstration, and seed kit distribution to the selected women participants in the training.

This was the first activity with an ambitious target of a model organic village in the project. This model organic village can be an exposure to other administrative persons at the *panchayat* level to replicate in their area as well.



A Platform for Sharing Experience and Achievements – Stakeholders' Consultation

Before embarking on the decisive stage of a project, it is quite apt to discuss the pros and cons of the activities done at the previous stage so that the most efficient route to achieve the targets in an optimum way can be identified. The State Level Stakeholder Consultation was held at Jaipur on March 14, 2023.

A total of 65 participants comprising district partners and their farmers, all the stakeholders like government officials, Agriculture University, Agriculture Research University, Agriculture Science Centre, NGOs, CSOs and media participated.



Awareness for Urban Population – Green Action Week, Rajasthan

'Sharing Community' was the theme for the campaign in 2022. Since 2018, the campaign had focussed on encouraging cultures of sharing and collaboration among urban consumers.



This year, the campaign discussed and implemented ways to bring equal and sustainable access to goods and services to benefit the people and the planet through sharing and collaboration.

This campaign helped create a network of organisations working on sustainable consumption and strengthen the collective advocacy for rebuilding recovery plans that will

reverse current trends and change consumption patterns towards a more sustainable future. Consumers were trained to imbibe the habit of sharing and kitchen gardens were developed in four different target communities of Jaipur. The best women kitchen gardeners were awarded a token of appreciation and memento during the campaign. .

The Message of Sharing Goes Wider – GAW, India Campaign

To spread the campaign, CUTS has been implementing GAW activities in other parts of India with the support of state-level networking organisations for the last few years.

A total of 49 organisations applied for this year's GAW, India. Out of these, 14 organisations were shortlisted after rounds of scrutiny. A WhatsApp Group was created for incorporating all 14 partners and the project team to share event reports and media coverage and regular interaction.

Out of the total 14 organisations, activities in nine states were physically monitored by the CUTS project team, mainly their state-level stakeholders' consultations. To evaluate the campaign of the year and present the highlights of the campaign, a consultant meeting was organised in Jaipur on December 15, 2022, with the participation of representatives of all the partner organisations, where the partners showcased their performance in the respective areas through presentations.



Stakeholders Sensitisation Programmes Under SCP

The first Stakeholders' Sensitisation Programme was organised at Jodhpur under ProScop SCP Project on September 29, 2022, followed by the second at Kota District on November 18, 2022. The third programme in the series was organised at Bharatpur on December 01, 2022. The fourth in the series was organised at Bhilwara on January 24, 2023, followed by the fifth at Chittorgarh on January 25, 2023, the sixth at Rajgarh, Churu on February 17, 2023, and the last at Jaipur on February 24, 2023.

The stakeholders in all these included representatives from CSOs, NGOs, government officials from municipal corporations, electricity departments, pollution control boards and public representatives and media.



Human Action & Commercial Activities Responsible for Environmental Degradation

SCP is a matter of concern as we have the constraint of time and the scale of the task is high. Human action is responsible for the degradation of the environment specifically commercial activities are the main cause of environmental degradation. The population is increasing and the economy is also growing but at the same time, it is affecting our eco-system. Any development in society should be balanced with our ecosystem. These are some of the thoughts reflected by Ajitabh Sharma, Chairman & Managing Director, Jaipur City Transport Services Limited (JCTSL) in a state-level consultation meeting organised by CUTS International at Jaipur on March 29, 2023.



Vijay Sharma, Regional Officer, of Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board said, we all need to understand that we must work for sustainability and as a regulator we need to ensure sustainability. Vikram Raghav, State Technical Consultant SDG, Department of *Panchayati Raj* spoke about the sustainable

development goals and how they emerged out of Millennium Development Goals. He spoke about the three pillars of sustainable development, that is, social, environmental and economic.

Himani Tiwari, State Nodal Person, Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) spoke about the SBM initiatives undertaken by their DLB Department and recruitment of the environmental engineers by the DLB for the preservation of nature.

Amar Deep Singh, Senior Programme Officer, CUTS mentioned the study mainly looked at SDG 12 from a consumer perspective based on the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (UNGCP). He mentioned that awareness generation is required at all levels regarding sustainable consumption. Revival of the Ecolabel scheme and wider coverage of the BEE Star level is also required. He added that mandatory segregation of waste should be implemented in the cities with immediate effect and state government should focus on sustainable consumption policies and link with other schemes.

In the beginning, Amrat Singh, Director, CUTS welcomed the participants and delivered opening remarks. More than 50 participants attended the meeting including representatives of various government departments, organisations working on sustainable consumption and consumer protection, civil societies, and resident associations from different parts of Rajasthan.

Women to Play a Pivotal Role in Generating Awareness in the Spirit of Sharing

To re-establish the spirit of sharing in our society, along with bringing awareness in society, women have to come forward because only women can bring change in society. The above views were expressed by Jaipur Municipal Corporation Heritage Mayor Munesh Gurjar in the state-level workshop organised by CUTS International under Green Action Week (GAW) Rajasthan on November 23, 2022.

On this occasion, Director of CUTS, George Cheriyan said to promote sustainable consumption, CUTS is running this campaign in 14 different states of India apart from Rajasthan. He said the main focus of this



year's campaign was single-use plastic pollution, which has also been completely banned by the Government of India from July 2022. There are three billion metric tonnes of plastic pollution in India, of which only 9 percent is recycled.

KC Meena, Member Secretary of Rajasthan State Biodiversity Board said consumerism is increasing, and there is a need to reduce it. Meena emphasised adopting the culture of cycling. He said by adopting a lifestyle of simple living and high thinking, the use of natural resources can be limited. Vijay Sharma, Regional Officer of Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board said in 2011, an Act was brought to ban plastic. Common people have to be aware not to use plastic.

Nimali Singh, Syndicate member and Professor in the Department of Home Science, University of Rajasthan, said even today, there is a tendency to share goods and services in villages. She explained the activities, through which this feeling can be increased in the urban area.

Nimisha Sharma, GAW Campaign Programm Coordinator presented activities done under the campaign. She said women from four communities participated enthusiastically in the training for 'Wealth Out of Waste', developing kitchen gardens among others. In the programme, products were exhibited, also training by women was organised. Prizes were given to the best-performing participants.

Manifestation for Environmental Defenders 'Light4Defenders'

December 10 is earmarked as the anniversary of the Universal Human Rights Declaration. To honour the hundreds of environmental defenders, who are killed every year, a small manifestation was organised by lighting candles and joined in a digital manifestation by uploading a photo of candle lighting on social media under the joint hashtag #Light4Defenders.



Visit of Nils from SSNC

Nils Viklund, Programme Manager, Chemicals, SSNC, Sweden visited CUTS from December 12-15, 2022 to review the progress and get updates on the ProScop project. The schedule of the visit started with an introductory and review meeting with the project team on the first day of his visit that is, December 12, 2022.

Followed by a field visit on December 13, 2022, to a proposed model organic village Devthala in Nindola panchayat, Govindgarh block of Jaipur district along with George Cheriyan and Rajdeep Pareek and met with progressive organic farmers of the village. On the third day, December 14, 2022, Viklund along with Deepak Saxena and Rajdeep Pareek visited Lalsot block in Dausa district to see a few organic gardens in the schools, organic farms and kitchen gardens developed by women in Thaloj village.



Additional Activities/Initiatives

SSNC Virtual Meeting-Kick-starting the Global Programme of 2022-26

- Deepak Saxena, Amar Deep Singh, Rajdeep Pareek, Nimisha Sharma and Amit Babu represented CUTS in the kick-start meeting organised by SSNC on April 19, 2022. Karin Lexén Secretary General SSNC and Johanna Sandahl, Chairperson of the Board SSNC welcomed all the participants. An overview of the global programme 2022-2026 was shared by Linn Persson, Head of the International Department, SSNC. The 'Advancing Gender and Environmental Justice through People-Powered Sustainable Consumption and Production' session was taken by Jennifer del Rosario-Malonzo, Executive Director, IBON International. Melissa Fourie, Executive Director, CER and Thobeka Gumede, Attorney, CER spoke on 'Using Environmental Rights to Support the Climate Justice Movement in South Africa'.
- Rajdeep Pareek and Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended a seminar on 'Paramparik Krishi Evam Poshan Swaraaj Sammelan' at Jaipur organised by Vaagdhara organisation on May 9-10, 2022. The Chief Guest of the event was Lalchand Kataria, Agriculture Minister, Government of Rajasthan, and Mahendra Singh Malviya, Minister of Water Resources, Government of Rajasthan. It was attended by NGO representatives working on agriculture issues and concerned stakeholders and farmers of the state.
- Rajdeep Pareek attended two virtual meetings with the member organisations of National Coalition of Natural Farming to discuss the role of *gram panchayats* and the MNREGA scheme promoting organic farming in Rajasthan on July 08 and 15, 2022.
- George Cheriyan and Rajdeep Pareek participated in a National Workshop & Exhibition on Organic Urban farming organised by Kanoria PG College, Jaipur in collaboration with International Society of Life Sciences and the University of Rajasthan held on January 27, 2023.

