

## Event Report Earth Day, 2022

April 22, 2022

# “On Earth Day, CUTS demands effective implementation of Ecomark scheme in India”



## Background

The Earth Day 2022 theme is "Invest in Our Planet", which not only means talking about our individual actions to make Earth cleaner but also about how we spend our money on companies that take sustainable production seriously.

Recently in the World Economic Forum, the world took note of our country's global call to ditch throwaway consumerism and shift to circular economy. Such bold initiative by the

government could accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production (SCP), especially when reasonable pressure mounts on the country that has the second largest population in the world, to play a leading role in driving attainment of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 12.

Currently, India performs poorly on overall sustainability, our country has slipped three spots from last year's 117 to rank 120 on the 17 SDGs adopted as a part of the 2030 agenda by 192 United Nations member states in 2015. Like in most other developing economies, the Covid-19 pandemic have done severe negative impacts on achieving the targets of most of the SDGs. While both the central and state governments are taking actions towards SCP, meeting targets of any SDG should never be seen as the sole responsibility of the government, even the private players like businesses and the citizens of the country have their own crucial role. But for fulfilling such roles they need to be firmly handheld and facilitated with suitable tools that encourage the behavioural change of producers and consumers towards long-term sustainability.

While we have numerous policies and programs to boost sustainability, till date the country has failed effectively to use ecolabel, which significantly aid in promoting and encouraging SCP and a tool that rest of the world have well utilised. Recognising the true potential of an ecolabel even our Prime Minister had spoken in the past for the need to revive and promote “Ecomark” scheme – our national ecolabel that was established in 1991 and with focus on waste utilisation products. But inspite of this thrust to revive from the highest authority, it has failed to pick up and still lies dormant or non-existence.

For sustainable consumption to happen, the government need to ensure that the market provides consumers with sustainable choices that are reliable and trust worthy. Regrettably, today the market shelves are overtaken by products of various brands that position themselves as ‘*sustainable*’, ‘*environment friendly*’, ‘*eco-friendly*’, ‘*Recyclable*’ etc., whereas in actual they don’t. They are merely taking advantage of the changing consumer behaviour and green marketing their products to push their sales. For consumers to be sure that the products they choose can be trusted and have a proven environmental benefit a reliable ecolabel is a must. There are a number of other public benefits derived from ecolabelling schemes.

So, CUTS team organised physical event with social workers, youth and citizen at Mother Earth sculpture site at Jaipur. It would be an opportunity for all of us to understand ground reality with regard to our national ecolabelling scheme – “Ecomark”.

## Proceedings

CUTS observed Earth Day 2022 at Mother Earth sculpture site at Jaipur today on April 22, 2022 to demand for an effective Ecomark in India. Ecomarks are important for promotion of sustainable consumption and production policy which aims at reducing the negative impact of consumption and production on the environment, health, climate and natural resources.

Mother Earth sculpture is at the capital city of Jaipur, in the State of Rajasthan. It was installed and dedicated at the central Jawahar Circle, next to the Patrika Gate in September, 2020. The objective of Mother Earth Project (MEP) is to raise awareness of the climate emergency, MEP installs an edition of Mother Earth sculptures in major cities around the world. This sculpture acts as the physical footprint of MEP and creates sites for sustainability events. As well, MEP supports the creation of Mother Earth Murals in communities worldwide, as a constant visual reminder of our planet's focus on a more sustainable future.

During event, CUTS demands for an effective Ecomark in India, which is important for promotion of sustainable consumption and production policy which aims at reducing the negative impact of consumption and production on the environment, health, climate and natural resources. Even, Prime Minister had spoken in the past for the need to revive and promote the "Ecomark" scheme; our national ecolabel that was established in 1991 and with focus on waste utilisation products. But in spite of this thrust to revive from the highest authority, it has failed to pick up and still lies dormant or non-existence.

Ecomark scheme was launched in 1991 by the Ministry of Environment & Forest, Govt of India to easily identify environment friendly products. The label is awarded to consumer goods, which meet the specified environmental criteria and the quality requirements of Indian standards. Ecomark is identified by the symbol of Matka (earthen pot) said Amar Deep Singh, Senior Programme Officer, CUTS.

The scheme has not been able to take off as expected due to a number of reasons, including the absence of support through government procurement. Government and concern agencies need to implement scheme in effective manner and should create awareness to increase consumer demands. Neither producers nor consumers are either aware of its existence or willing to go for this label.

The public's increasing awareness of environmental issues has led to expanding demand for environmentally friendly products. The Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India responded by offering the Ecomark scheme. In India eco-labelling scheme known as 'Ecomark' It was first issued in 1991. Ecomarks are markings on product packaging or in e-catalogs that

can quickly and easily identify items that fulfil particular environmental performance requirements. Ecomark is a certification mark issued by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) for items that are environmentally friendly and meet the BIS's standards.

For sustainable consumption to happen, the government need to ensure that the market provides consumers with sustainable choices that are reliable and trust worthy. Today the market shelves are overtaken by products that position themselves as 'sustainable', 'environment friendly', 'eco-friendly', 'Recyclable' etc., whereas in actual they don't. They are merely taking advantage of the changing consumer behaviour to push their sales. A reliable ecolabel is a must for consumers to be sure that the products they choose can be trusted and have a proven environmental benefit.

However, the Ecomark scheme in India is not popular. Based on CUTS research, Involvement and support from environmental and consumer NGOs and also the media are other key factors that have contributed to increasing the level of consumer awareness regarding environmentally preferable products in most other countries. In a country where consumer awareness of environmental issues is low, it is difficult to convince companies that there is any advantage to be gained from an eco-label. Some initial awareness education is vital prior to, or in conjunction with, the re-introduction of eco-labelling. Beyond eco-label recognition by consumers in the form of household products, institutional and industrial purchases of eco-labelled products are a key success indicator.

CUTS is a global advocacy group and think thank working for sustainable consumption for many years. The site of Mother Earth sculpture was chosen because of its relevance. Sculpture acts as a symbol of Sustainability and helps to raise awareness of our need to save the planet for future generations.

## Media Coverage

HOME BUSINESS DIVINE ENTERTAINMENT LITERATURE HEALTH

**Voice of Jaipur**

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<https://voiceofjaipur.com/7665>



**चमकता राजस्थान बाड़ी धौलपुर (रामदास तरुण संवाददाता)**

जयपुर कट्स जयपुर द्वारा विश्व पृथ्वी दिवस 2022 के अवसर पर एक जागरूकता कार्यक्रम का आयोजन मदर अर्थ एक्लचर जयपुर में किया गया। इस अवसर पर कट्स ने इकोमार्क की प्रभावशाली क्रियान्वित की मांग उठाई। यह एक वार्षिक आयोजन है जिसे विश्व भर में पर्यावरण संरक्षण के लिए समर्थन करने के लिए आयोजित किया जाता है। कट्स द्वारा उपभोक्ताओं को बहुत लंबे समय से ईको - लेबलिंग इकोमार्क के बारे में जागरूक किया जा रहा है उपभोक्ता जागरूकता बढ़ाने के लिए भारत सरकार ने पर्यावरण अनुकूल उत्पादों की आसान पहचान के लिए 1991 में ईको लेबलिंग स्कीम को प्रारंभ इकोमार्क के लिए प्रतीक लोगों के रूप में मिट्टी के मटके को चुना गया था। यह एक प्रतीक चिन्ह लोगों के रूप में अपना पर्यावरणीय संदेश देता है। लेकिन सरकार द्वारा प्रभावशाली कदम नहीं उठाने के कारण यह स्कीम आम लोगों के बीच प्रचलित नहीं हो पाई इसके संबंध जागरूकता भी बहुत कम देखने को मिलती है। हमारी सरकारी नीति निर्धारकों को इको मार्क स्कीम के व्यवहार में लाने और प्रचलित करने हेतु ठोस कदम उठाने की आवश्यकता है।

