

## Event Report

# Partners' Meet Green Action Week (India) 2018



December 14, 2018, Jaipur, India

## Background

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The Green Action Week (GAW) Fund-India is a joint partnership established between the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) and CUTS International in 2018. The purpose of the grant is to fund short-term campaigning activities to raise consumer awareness on environmental issues. For over 20 years, SSNC has conducted an annual 'Shop and Act Green' campaign in Sweden, of which the focal point Green Action Week, has led to very good results. The campaign always takes place during the first week of October. It always promotes the consumer has an alternative choice, different ways of consuming and acting and where it is possible for the consumer to make a difference. GAW is a global campaign to promote sustainable consumption. In 2018, 46 civil society organisations (CSO's) from 30 countries participated globally.

Under the GAW 2018 campaign, 'Sharing Community' was the theme to promote the sustainable consumption. Access to goods and services are unequal and planetary boundaries are being beached. Campaign wants to ignite cultures of sharing and collaboration, as a way to create sustainable access for more people and at the same time reduce stress on the planet. It would be an attempt to challenges the norm of private ownership and consumerism through creation of strong, collaborating communities.

12 partner organisations from 11 states of India were selected by CUTS for implementing the campaign in their respective areas. Partners conducted various activities in October 2018, focusing on the theme. To evaluate activities conducted by partner organisations of GAW India, a meeting was held at Jaipur on December 14, 2018. Out of 12 partners, 11 participated in the meeting.

## Proceedings

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**Amar Deep Singh, Senior Programme Officer, CUTS** welcomed the partners of GAW India 2018. He presented the overview of the project through a power point presentation. He mentioned that the objective of the meeting is to share ideas, evaluate and analyse activities conducted during the GAW on the theme of 'Sharing Community'. He said that GAW is to make valuable contribution towards achieving sustainable development and reducing poverty by promoting worldwide awareness and advocacy activities, which encourage sustainable patterns of consumption.

The specific objective of the campaign is to strengthen the role that consumer and environmental organisations play to raise awareness on environmental and other impacts of consumption and promote sustainable consumption amongst consumers, policymakers and other key stakeholders. He mentioned highlights of the GAW and activities conducted in 11 states of India. He further stated that the theme of the campaign is very relevant in the Indian context and many NGOs participated in the campaign, though only 12 were selected.

**George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International** explained the context of the theme 'Sharing Community'. As per UN Guidelines on Consumer Protection, 'Right to Healthy Environment' is one such important right. Under this right, the UN has included Sustainable Consumption in the year 1999, which pushes for the use of goods and services which use minimal natural resources and release minimum pollution and waste in turn. He highlighted how the 'circular economy' has become a popular word in the global economy as an alternative to liner economy

Linking with the circular economy is the concept of sharing economy where assets and services are shared between two or more individuals, either free of cost or for a nominal price. He concluded by

saying that how we can share our resources instead of continuously taking from the nature and degrading the environment is a matter of concern and should be given a serious thought.

**Alexander Sjoberg, Senior Policy Adviser, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation** spoke on the theme 'Sharing Community'. He mentioned reigniting culture of sharing and collaboration to make sure that everyone has sustainable access to goods and services, while at same time reduces stress on the plants boundaries. He said that everyone needs to define themselves with the theme of sharing community. He also mentioned that there is a need of adding an eleventh "R" that is for Respect for human dignity and values and also eradicating poverty and keeping healthy environment the global entry point. He mentioned that SSNC is currently having 45 organisations in 29 countries. Besides this, he suggested that online forums can be one of the ways to solve these problems.

**Nimisha Sharma, Programme Associate, CUTS** presented activities conducted in Jaipur, Rajasthan under GAW. She mentioned that the theme of 'Sharing Community' was targeted at urban consumers in order to expand the outreach at two localities (Ramnagar and Meenavala) in the city of Jaipur. The major key activities of this year were kitchen gardening, school campaign, meetings with women groups, street plays and awareness, rallies with students, setting up compost units, community library, wall of kindness (*saanjha ki deewar*), community-level and a district level stakeholder's consultation meeting. 50 kitchen gardens and 10 compost units were main outcome of this year's campaign. The events witnessed maximum number of participation and the interest of participants about kitchen gardening and sustainable consumption show that the level of awareness among them has now increased as compared to previous years.

**Bibhu Sahu, Youth for Social Development (YSD), Odisha** delivered a power point presentation on activities conducted by YSD in Orissa. Some of the impacts of these activities are: more than 2000 people have been made aware of collaborative consumption, harmful effects of waste and plastic on health and environment and benefits of sharing community. Recommendations and plan for the provision and promotion of sharing community practice have been proposed to the local government in the multi-stakeholder dialogue. Current practices of 'sharing community' like wall of kindness, sharing ride, sharing books and food in Berhampur city have set examples of sharing goods and services to protect environment. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material prepared under this initiative is self-explanatory and has disseminated to larger audience which has enhanced their understanding on benefits of 'sharing community'.

The team learnt more about concept, benefits and practice of 'collaborative consumption' to take the campaign more effectively for sustainable consumption and environment improvement. There was active participation of CSOs, local NGOs and media to help replicate and sustain the campaign. This also created an opportunity for further discussion on 'sharing community' and sustainable consumption in Berhampur city. There was low level of awareness among citizens/consumers and civil society on concept, practice and benefits of 'collaborative consumption'. Therefore, there is a need to design and implement a strategic campaign to increase the demand for 'collaborative consumption' policies and provisions among consumers. Training should also be provided to civil society and government officials on SDG Goal-12 as its implementation will help consumers and citizens to practice and advocate for financial provisions; and technical and skill support to the government in order to implement collaborative and sustainable consumption.

**Durga Prasad Kanswal of Mount Valley Development Association (MVDA), Uttarakhand** showcased activities conducted in Uttarakhand. MVDA is a grassroots organisation working for the upliftment of Gharwal Himalayan region with the objective to motivate organic farming, conserve

adopting practices, such as use of cow dungs, vermi-compost, and ban on plastics. Awareness was created in the public regarding the eating habits, food pattern, importance of traditional food habits, recycling the waste material, traditional waste to store the seeds. A meeting was conducted with 108 Self Help Groups (SHGs) for promotion of organic farming and collective sharing methods. Presently, the organisation is focusing on conservation of traditional way of farming and aligned methodology, such as seed storage and community farming.

**Sandeep Shrivastav, Shohratgarh Environmental Society (SES), Uttar Pradesh** shed light on GAW India activities implemented in Uttar Pradesh. For GAW (India) 2018 there were certain specific objectives that is to deepen the understanding of concepts, challenges related to sustainable consumption and sharing community among citizens of Lucknow, encourage dialogue between different stakeholders on the connection between consumption and the environment, enhance critical thinking of stakeholders, such community and school going children through discussions and intellectual challenges in order to develop an online platform where community can share unwanted but useful items.

**P. ChittiBabu, Rural Action for Social Service, Andhra Pradesh**

Rural Action for Social Service (RUAFSS) is a NGO registered in 1977 working with women, children and deprived sections of the society, especially focussing on environmental issues. RUAFSS. conducted training workshop in which State Pollution Control Board participated and guidelines were provided through power point presentation and group discussion. The organisation also generated awareness about the theme 'Sharing Community' and conducted rallies on eradication of plastic and reduce environmental pollution. A public meeting was also organised, IEC material was distributed competitions were organised and prizes distributed. By conducting these above-mentioned activities, awareness was raised among the public for usage of jute bags, cloth bags etc. Co-ordinators and volunteers visited the areas where activities were conducted to obtain the feedback and take follow up of activities.

**Pradeep Nandi, National Centre for Human Settlements & Environment, Bhopal** mentioned that this NGO is working for sustainable development. The organisation conducted a workshop on 'Safer and More Sustainable Food' at Bhopal on October 24-25, 2018; Festival on October 24-25 2018; and a Workshop on Sharing Community on October 2018 respectively. This NGO is collaborating with producer companies, SHGs, Help Box and members of various citizens' group. NCHSE has created a network of progressive farmers doing organic farming and urban consumers having belief in organic food for mutual benefit and exchange information.

**Surya Nath Singh, Jan Kalyan Parishad Ambikapur, Chattisgarh** said that consumer awareness camps were organised in Sarguja district of Chattisgarh during September 15, 2018 October 15, 2018. A meeting was held with members and organisers to discuss the strategy about the implementation of programmes. The organisation raised awareness about sharing community various school rallies and workshops were conducted: slogans were made and written for the GAW 2018 and pamphlets were distributed to the public. Singh explained the importance of collective sharing for the purpose of sustainable development by citing the example of wall of kindness and also by sharing of resources within the community.

**Sanjoy Kumar Das, Mankind Awareness Platform, Tripura** said that the organisation has conducted several activities based on sharing community, such as organising signature campaign, drawing competition, state level seminar, IEC programme with MBB college students and market survey on organic food products.

Agriculture Department of Government of Tripura has agreed to support the organisation Agriculture Research Station is ready organic programme on natural farming. They encourage public to develop sharing attitude. However, there were some challenges which were faced like political motivation and influence in society effecting over mass movements, no government or public sector is planning to develop mass awareness community sharing and growth of a healthy environment. But to continue the spirit of community and mobilize the theme of “Community Sharing” from nursery school o university level, set up an eco-friendly project like plant extract products like plate, carry bags, glass etc., by spreading the message of sharing collectively the civil society will reduce the production as well as lesser commodity leading to less of harm to environment .

**Indranil Bhoumik, Association for Sustainable and Human Initiatives, Jharkhand**

The basic approach towards community sharing is raising awareness about sustainable consumption and using those items which minimum bad impact on the environment. The organisation has two goals, which are as follows – Explore, Exchange, Engage (EEE) and Reduce, Refuse, Reuse (RRR). However, there were some of the challenges which were faced as there was lack of awareness amongst the public; inadequate time and budget; and lack of scope for long term approach but in spite of all constraints, tribes live in a true sharing community since centuries and farmers are ready to explore new methods of agriculture.

Some of the achievements of the on GAW campaign 2018 are: wider participation both in terms of quality and quantity, exceptional school outreach programme and overwhelming involvement of various stakeholders: young minds, activists, politicians, journalists, thinkers, filmmakers, writers, women best-practitioners from NULM, NGOs and Church-based institutions, interactive session with marginal farmers, PRI members, direct involvement of many stalwarts including two Padma Shri awardees. Now people have agreed to follow triple ‘R’ policy, making sustainable urban usage of water, energy and food, multi-tier farming and optimisation of land usage

**Devendra Kumar, Environment & Social Research Organisation (ESRO), New Delhi** said that ESRO provides integrated solutions to complex problems by ‘community sharing approach’ in diverse areas of Environment, Health and Social Development. With the objectives of creating the behaviour of sharing in the community, the organisation looks at the needy and contributes to maintain the level of living by using their unused resources or materials, brings about a change in the society by changing the behaviour of people by involving them in this process of change, builds up behaviour potential of the community by creating participatory development and works towards sustainable development.

This campaign created the behaviour of sharing and collaboration among the local community, made them aware about all resources. Various activities were also conducted.

**Namrata Gulati, Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra, Uttarakhand** showcased activities which were conducted Plantation Drive (October 03, 2018) Environment Awareness Rally (October 05, 2018). A two-day workshop on the theme of ‘Sharing Community’ with the title *Environmental Sustainability: A road to inclusive access and consumption, consumer awareness and community sharing*. Two community Meetings were organised on November 16 & November 22-23, 2018 respectively. The impacts of these activities are: target groups, including school children and citizens understood their roles and responsibilities as consumers and took up the same in their respective villages/ward level. Nomadic tribes are also providing the much needed support on propagating their traditional knowledge, sustainable access and community sharing. The school going children were mobilised and encouraged to protect the environment.

**Ajay Vasudevrao Zarker, Vaishvik Vikas Sanshtha, Maharashtra** stated that a Workshop entitled 'Share to Save the Environment' was held in the community of Umarkhed and Pusad Block of Yavatmal district in Maharashtra during September 01, 2018-October 31, 2018. The activities conducted were: awareness rallies in Mulawa, Nagwadi and Chirangwadi villages; essay competitions at Pancha Krushna College, Mulawa; biodiversity committees formed to maintain and protect the environment; training programmes to share the idea of sharing community and capacity building, training of teachers and social workers.

Some professors shared their experiences to motivate and promote the concept of 'Sharing Community'. The 'Sharing Community' campaign was organised by college students, and street plays were held to spread the message effectively in villages. 'Sharing Community' is a unique theme, hence 'SMRUTI VAN' project has been implemented which involves plantation of trees. This project has far reaching impacts: people were ready to share 1 kg seeds from their production to needy farmers.

## Open House Session

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In the discussion, various queries were raised which were suitably answered. One of the participants raised query about policies of ministries on sharing community. Cheriyan answered that ministries do not have specific department for SDGs. NITI Aayog co-ordinates with ministries and these are dependent on the statistical data. He also mentioned that there has to be a set of national goals and targets in almost all states and not just in Haryana, Chattisgarh, Sikkim and Assam, down to the line agencies also must co-ordinate the state-level activities.

Sjoberg from SNCC opined that GAW must be linked through advocacy. Cheriyan mentioned that success has been achieved up to certain level and innovations have taken place, but still more needs to be done. Amar Deep Singh mentioned that in 2017, ideas were discussed on group. Suryanath from Chhattisgarh suggested that there must be a common platform for meeting with old and new partners and discuss training of all partners, shedding light on policies, government provisions, and new ideas of stakeholders. Sjoberg added that there must be a plan to launch webinar and a booklet in which experiences and challenges faced by partners could be mentioned and which requires good communication channel.

## Vote of Thanks

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Amar Deep Singh delivered vote of thanks to partners for attending the meeting. Cheriyan opined that better quality proposals are still required and aim of collective sharing must continue, i.e. community library and wall of kindness, targeting women groups and school assemblies for spreading awareness about collective sharing are best examples through which the campaign can be continued. Sjoberg said that more organisations should participate in the campaign to achieve the goals.

## List of Participants

S.No	Name	Organisation's Name and Address
1	Sanjoy Kumar Das	Mankind Awareness Platform (MAP), At Vidyasagar Road, PO- Jogendranagar, Agartala District, Tripura West Pin- 799004
2.	Surya Nath Singh, Director	Jan Kalyan Parishad Mohalla- Namanakala, Ring Road Ambikapur, District- Surguja- 497001 Chhatisgarh
3.	Devendra Kumar	Environment & Social Research Organisation A- 325, Gali No. 2, Near 25 Futa Road A- Block, Meet Nagar, New Delhi- 110094
4.	Indranil Bhoumik	Association for Sustainable and Humane Initiatives (ASHI) C/o- K.K. Jha, Flat No. 203-A, Sankalp Residency, Kokar, Ranchi- 834001 Jharkhand
5.	Abraham Kurien Programme Coordinator	Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development India (CESDI) Bakerhill, Kottayam- 686001, Kerala
6.	Pradeep Nandi	National Centre for Human Settlement & Environment GirishKunj, E-5/A, Arera Colony, Bhopal- 462016 (M.P.)
7.	Ajay Vasudevrao Zarker	Vaishvik Vikas Sanstha At Post- Mulawa, Ta. Uamrkhed Distt.- Yavatmal Pin- 445211
8.	Bibhu Prasad Sahu	Youth for Social Development (YSD) Plot NO. 1200/820, Govind Vihar 9th Lane, Near Ruby Eye Hospital, Lochapada, Berhampur- 760001Ganjam, Odisha India
9.	Sandeep Srivastava	Shohratgarh Environmental Society 9, PremKunj, Adarsh Colony Shohratgarh, Siddarthnagar (Uttar Pradesh) Pin- 272205
10.	Durga Prasad Kanswal	Mount Valley Development Association Village Doni, Post Office MegadharSubdivision- Ghansali, TehriGarhwal Pin- 249155 Uttarakhand
11.	P.ChittiBabu	Secretary, Rural Action for Social Service KJ Puram Village, S.K.R. Puram Post- 517 599 PalasamudrumMandal Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh
12.	Namrata Gulati	Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra (RLEK)68/1, Suryalok Colony, Rajpur Road, Dehradun- 248001 Uttarakhand
13	Alexander Sjoberg Senior Policy Adviser	Swedish Socieity for Nature Conservation (SSNC)
14.	George Cheriyan Director	CUTS International
15.	Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director	CUTS International
16.	Amar Deep Singh Senior Programme Officer	CUTS International
17.	Rajdeep Pareek Programme Officer	CUTS International



S.No	Name	Organisation's Name and Address
18.	Nimisha Gaur Programme Associate	CUTS International
19.	Akansha Choudhary Programme Associate	CUTS International
20.	Radhika Khandelwal Programme Associate	CUTS International

## Some Glimpses of the GAW Meeting (India), 2018

