

Report
Partners' Meet
Green Action Week India
2022

December 15, 2022, Jaipur, India



Background

The Green Action Week (GAW) Fund-India is a joint partnership established between the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) and CUTS International in 2020. The purpose of the grant is to fund short-term campaigning activities to raise consumer awareness of environmental issues. For over 20 years, SSNC has conducted an annual 'Shop and Act Green' campaign in Sweden, of which the focal point of Green Action Week has led to outstanding results. The campaign always takes place during the first week of October. It always promotes the consumer has a choice, different ways of consuming and acting and where the consumer can make a difference. GAW is a global campaign to promote sustainable consumption. In 2022, 58 civil society organisations (CSOs) from 33 countries participated globally.

Under the GAW 2022 campaign, 'Sharing Community' was the theme to promote sustainable consumption. Access to goods and services is unequal and planetary boundaries are being beached. The campaign wants to ignite cultures of sharing and collaboration to create sustainable access for more people and, at the same time, reduce stress on the planet. It would be an attempt to challenge the norm of private ownership and consumerism by creating strong, collaborating communities.

CUTS implemented GAW India Campaign 2022 on 'Sharing Community'. The project was initiated in June 2022 and concluded in December 2022. The campaign aims to promote strong collaboration in communities while increasing access to goods and services without further stressing the planetary boundaries. By setting examples of sharing cultures, one can learn about sustainable development and lifestyles.

This year CUTS selected 14 individual consultants of CSOs from different states of India as partners for implementing the campaign in their respective areas. Partners conducted various activities in October-November 2022 focussing on the theme. A meeting to evaluate campaign activities conducted by partner organisations of GAW India was held at Jaipur on December 15, 2022, in which 13 partners participated and presented their activities.

Proceedings

Welcome Address & Overview of the GAW India 2022 Campaign

Amar Deep Singh, Senior Programme Officer, CUTS, welcomed the partners of GAW India. He spoke about the campaign and highlighted the importance of the partner meeting. This meeting on circular economy and sustainable consumption will give us a nationwide perspective due to its outreach. He made a PowerPoint presentation and

shared past years' experience, this year's activities, challenges and highlights of the campaign.

This year, the theme for GAW 2022 is sharing community. The specific objective of the campaign is to strengthen the role that consumer and environmental organisations play in raising awareness of environmental and other impacts of consumption and promote sustainable consumption amongst consumers, policymakers and other key stakeholders. He shed light on the highlights of the GAW and activities conducted in 14 states of India. He further stated that the campaign's theme is very relevant in the Indian context and many NGOs applied for the campaign, though only 14 were selected.

Opening Address

George Cheriyan, CUTS International, welcomed all the participants and explained GAW which is a global campaign to promote sustainable consumption. GAW is an initiative by the SSNC, starting in Sweden in 1990 and growing to become an international partnership in 2010.

This year, 58 CSOs in 33 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Australia, and America will participate in the campaign. The theme since 2018 has been 'Sharing Community'. He stressed on two challenges while observing the GAW 2022, i.e., the unprecedented pandemic and the recently amended Foreign Currency Regulation Act (FCRA). He also discussed innovative ideas like best out of waste, kitchen gardens, garbage café, hydroponic farming, etc.

India is now officially the world's third-biggest e-waste generator, producing over 3.23 million metric tonnes of e-waste per year, behind the US and China. To keep this fact, during GAW 2019, CUTS installed e-waste at the prime location of Jaipur. Our partner replicated this initiative in collaboration with Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) at Berhampur, Odisha. Berhampur is the only city from Odisha to secure a Swachh Survekshan award 2022 given by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India.

COVID-9 has severely negatively impacted most of the United Nations-mandated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The pandemic impacts are visible. There is pressure to loosen up regulations on the circular economy, postpone the adoption of new measures, and increase plastic pollution (e.g., used to produce personal protective equipment). The concept of sharing community and caring for others is the need of the hour to deal with the COVID pandemic.

Experience Sharing by Partner Organisations on GAW India Campaign

Ajoy Hazarika, Consumers' Legal Protection Forum, Assam presented the activities conducted at Guwahati. It includes consumer awareness meetings with local community members; a Bicycle rally to promote sustainable transport by involving youth; demonstrations of sharing community models; an awareness programme with different community members and final stakeholders' consultation.

He stated that the campaign could generate awareness among consumers about organic food that would encourage them to shift towards organic food products and sustainable consumption. It also promotes policy and practice for promoting the use of organic food products thereby contributing towards a sustainable pattern of consumption.

Siba Prasad Routray, Utkal Youth Association for Social Development (UYASD), Odisha informed that four capacity-building camps have been organised in different areas and participants were trained about the management of old newspapers, kitchen waste, household waste, and coir materials. Four signature campaigns on 'Say No To Single Use Plastic' were organised at Badagada Brit colony, Darada, Khandagiri & Bankuala High School of Bhubaneswar. Three rallies have been organised at different places with school children, village women and youth groups.

A demonstration programme was organised at Darada of Bhubaneswar on making wealth from waste and trained 35 women farmers from three *Panchayat* of Balipatna, Bhubaneswar on the preparation of organic manure. Activities show impacts, such as empowering 300 women to work on issues of ecology, environment and micro-entrepreneurship; 5000 people were sensitised about the adverse impact of polythene; 60 PRI members got sensitised on single-use plastic; and 10 women SHG got training on paper bag making and coir crafts. 10 grassroots NGOs became active in the process waste to wealth concept.

P Chitti Babu, Rural Action for Social Service (RUAFFS), Andhra Pradesh, presented the activities conducted by RUAFFS. The activities of the campaign were organised at Chittoor city in Andhra Pradesh. RUAFFS organised a training cum workshop on Sustainable Consumption and LifeStyle Sharing Community during GAW India 2022. RUAFFS organised a public meeting at Ramanaidupalli, focussing on sustainable consumption, sensitising the public to know how to use and reduce the usage of natural resources consumption without damaging the environment. It conducted a meeting and awareness programme on sustainable consumption with students, teachers, SHGs and the community. The organisation concluded its activities by organising a stakeholder consultation.

Sanjay Sharma, Anmol Foundation Chhattisgarh, showcased activities conducted in Raipur. An effort was made to give information to the people by distributing posters in meetings, a signature and awareness campaign on sharing community, and a capacity-building camp of reuse materials. This campaign has a direct reach to 4000 people and 5000 people got information about sharing community indirectly through the campaign. The Foundation networked with various voluntary organisations, self-help groups, government departments, media, students, voluntary traders, community to join this campaign. People have shown interest in donating old things, but their maintenance and distribution are a big problem. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the campaign could not be carried out in large camps. Various institutions, CSR and local government departments should be added. Sharma concluded the activities by organising a stakeholder consultation.

Mini Sebastian, Centre for Development and Empowerment of Women (CDEW) Society, Bangalore, shed light on GAW India activities implemented in Bangalore. For GAW (India) 2022, there are certain specific objectives: strengthening neighbourhood networks, promoting community sharing, and creating awareness of eco-friendly sustainable lifestyles and eco-justice. During the GAW campaign, Doddbanahalli *gram panchayat* agreed to set up a proper waste disposal system in the school. CDEW has developed a networking system in the village to work in a sustainable environment. CDEW concluded its activities by organising a stakeholder consultation.

Mahesh Pandya, Prayavaran Mitra, Gujarat said that stakeholders consultation was organised in Ahmedabad city which was attended by stakeholders concerned with the Ban on Single-Use Plastic, Gujarat Pollution Control Board, Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industries, plastic and other waste recyclers, CSOs, academicians and youth.

Another activity was the Capacity-building Workshop for Green Catalyst on Sustainable Consumption and Waste Management. They also prepared a pamphlet related to the ban on Single-Use Plastic. The trained Green Catalysts interacted with the plastic waste pickers and informed them about government policies. He further added that the campaign created awareness and action on the ground. There is the empowerment of informal waste pickers, involvement of youth, dialogue with the future generation, stakeholders' linkages and citizen's involvement.

C Packia Lakshmi, Women Consumer Protection Association (WCPA), Tamil Nadu, conducted an awareness workshop on Hydroponic-Soil farming in 10 targeted areas. Organising the awareness-generating meeting, permission from local authorities and the district administration was a major challenge during the pandemic. WCPA will incorporate more events for rural and urban women and youth participants to protect

the planet and sustain the environment. WCPA concluded its activities by organising a stakeholder consultation.

Abhishek Srivastava, Consumer Guild, Uttar Pradesh, said that under GAW 2022, eight awareness programmes were held at Lucknow on sharing community involving educational and other institutions. This campaign has significantly impacted younger students, professionals, and others who participated in GAW-2022 activities. They have shared their ideas for a greener planet also. Media also provided more comprehensive coverage of the campaign. Consumer Guild concluded its activities by organising a state-level consultation on sustainable consumption and sharing community.

Waseem, Abhivyakti Society, Uttarakhand, said that environmental awareness generation campaigns-cum-meetings, cycle rallies and community sharing camps were organised in Dehradun. School children have made 170 eco-bricks after the campaign. They also organised a cleanliness drive under National Service Scheme (NSS) and collected 300 kgs of plastic waste from the Song River of Dehradun. The impact of sharing camp is that clothes, books and other household items are easily available to the needy, and at the same time, these items do not spread here and there in the form of household waste. Transportation of reused things, such as clothes, books, shoes, plastic and other metal utensils, and electronic gadgets from one place to another, was a tough challenge, but hired vehicles were used to do it. Abhivyakti Society concluded its activities by organising a state-level consultation on sustainable consumption and sharing community.

Jitendra Sharma, PLAN Foundation, Himachal Pradesh, stated that the organisation conducted several activities based on sharing community with support from the Women and Child Development Department, and Clothes distribution from clothes bank. During the campaign, the government imposed an election code of conduct at Shimla. The campaign is helping to build networking with self-help groups (SHGs) and women groups. PLAN Foundation concluded its activities by organising a stakeholder consultation.

Daliya Saha, Mankind Awareness Platform (MAP), Tripura showcased the activities conducted in the awareness campaign by organising quizzes, IEC materials and drawing competitions and workshops on sharing community online and physically. MAP has established a book bank in eight schools in Agartala City, and MAP has organised a two-day training on mushroom cultivation. MAP has set up Scrap Park at Agartala in collaboration with the local administration. The campaign has strengthened outreach with government departments. However, this concept will take time to implement on a large scale. MAP concluded its activities by organising a stakeholder consultation.

Ajay Vasudevrao Zarkar, Vaishvik Vikas Sanstha, Maharashtra stated that the organisation conducted several activities based on sharing community. Students from social work college decided to share things and made people aware of sharing community. Many organisations come together to plant trees and share seeds. Some government officials were not interested initially, but they agreed to work when convinced about the campaign's need. Vaishvik Vikas Sanstha concluded its activities by organising a stakeholder consultation.

Haliga Dayanand, Peace Forum, Telangana said that a campaign with SHG women groups against plastic pollution was aimed to promote the interest of all its members to attain social and economic betterment through self-help and mutual aid by the cooperative principles. Another Stakeholders' consultations meeting was aimed at the preservation of a healthy environment and ecological balance is everybody's concern. To promote environmental awareness among the people, the help of different stakeholders is needed. These stakeholders are the public, the media, NGOs environmental groups, corporations, and the government.

One stakeholders' consultation was organised by the PEACE Forum at the HASS training centre in Secunderabad under the GAW campaign. Essay writing and elocution competition conducted in classes with nearly 150 senior and junior high school children were present. She addressed the participants and declared the names of the winners: overall 6 students from the essay competition and six students from the competition were given notebooks and school bags and 10th-class students were given executive files. A seminar on the role of the judicial community in protecting and promoting environmental justice was held at Secunderabad Bar Association, Civil and Criminal Courts Secunderabad on October 28, 2022.

Nimisha Sharma, CUTS presented the activities conducted in localities in the city of Jaipur under the GAW campaign. The major key activities were 100 neighbourhood kitchen gardens, four training for 'Wealth out of Waste', two bicycle rallies, promotion of book banks, school-level meetings and four community-level stakeholder consultations. Apart from the Jaipur district, activities in other districts have been organised. District-level awareness workshops on Sharing Community have been organised at Dausa, Kota, Sawai Madhopur, Bhilwara, Chittorgarh, Pratapgarh, Jhalawar, Jodhpur, and Udaipur respectively.

Open House Session

In the discussion, participants raised several queries, which were suitably answered. Cheriyan explained the concept of sharing community and the impact of the pandemic on GAW activities. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a significant loss of human life throughout the world, and it poses an unprecedented threat to public health, food

systems, and the workplace. The pandemic has caused severe economic and social devastation. Therefore, the concept of sharing community needs to be promoted.

He discussed various modern-day examples of sharing communities. He also shed light on the CUTS initiative of the e-waste bin at Jaipur, Rajasthan and the institutional challenges of e-waste. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) control e-waste in India. He also shared Moradabad's case study on e-waste. Participants raised concerns about the city's problems, such as source segregation, door-to-door collection, waste treatment and processing and on-site organic waste management. Cheriyan shared the best practice of Sweden on waste segregation, collection, penalty and laws.

Nils Viklund, Programme Manager, SSNC interacted with the participants and asked questions during the presentations of partners. He appreciated efforts made by partner organisations to conduct relevant activities in their respective states. Grassroots-level organisations are more effective to take the ideas up to the end users. He congratulated all partner organisations to organise an effective and vibrant campaign in different parts of India.

Amar Deep Singh shared his view on sharing a community from a consumer perspective. In a unique initiative, Ambikapur municipality, Chhattisgarh, started a garbage café. There is scope for collaboration with social enterprises about sharing community and sustainable consumption and a need to revive old sustainable practices for sharing economy. Therefore, an advocacy agenda for sustainable consumption and sharing community needs to be prepared. He also mentioned that the UN has declared the year 2023 as the Year of Millet. Partners can promote the millets as part of organic farming.

Further, he shared that India is hosting the Presidency of G20 the next year. There will be several working groups on diverse topics and different states will host their working group meetings. GAW India partners can plan to be part of such groups and take part in the meetings. One of the partners Jitendra Sharma said that the next partners meet of GAW India can be organised in Shimla or other partnering states instead of Jaipur.

Vote of Thanks

Amar Deep Singh delivered a vote of thanks to the partners for attending the meeting. This time social media is one of the outreach tools for the GAW campaign, which will help in its global reach. Cheriyan said that there is a need to regularly organise this partner meet and plan activities for this campaign.

List of Participants

Sr. No	Name	Organisation's Name and Address
1	Ajoy Hazarika	Consumers Legal Protection Forum House No.48, 2nd floor, Ananda Nagar, Sixmile, Guwahati-781022, Assam
2	Mini Sabastian	CDEW Society, Sacred Heart Salesian Sisters, Avalahalli, Old Madras Road, Bandapura, Virgonagar P.O. Bangalore -560049, Karnataka
3	Mahesh Pandya	Paryavaran Mitra 502, Raj Avenue, Bhaikakanagar Road, Thaltej, Ahmedabad – 380059, Gujarat
4	Jitender Sharma	PLAN Foundation Broadway Enclave, Near UCO Bank, Sanjauli, Shimla HP 171006
5	Siba Prasad Routray	Utkal Youth Association for Social Development (UYASD) Plot No-507, Sisupalgarh; Bhubaneswar-2; District- Khordha, Orissa
6	Abhishek Srivastava	CONSUMER GUILD E-5/140, Rajaji Puram, Lucknow, 226017, UP
7	Packialakshmi chinnaveeran	WOMEN CONSUMER PROTECTION ASSOCIATION NO.81, Alagar Nagar, 5 th Street, K, Pudur, Madurai District -625007 Tamil Nadu
8	Sanjay Sharma	ANMOL FOUNDATION Sector-3, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Nagar Opposite CSEB Office P.O. Pt. Ravishanker Shukla University Raipur 492010 - Chhattisgarh
9	Chitti Babu	Rural Action for Social Service (RUAFFS) K.J.Puram (V), S.K.R.Puram (PO), V.R.Kuppam (Vai), Palasamudram (Mandal), Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh
10	Ajay Vasudevrao Zarkar	Vaishvik Vikas Sanstha Atpost Mulawa Ta. Umarched Dist. Yavatmal Pin- 445211 Maharashtra

Sr. No	Name	Organisation's Name and Address
11	Daliya Saha	Mankind Awareness Platform C/o- Advocate Daliya Saha At: Vidyasagar Road PO: Jogendra Nagar Agartala West Pin- 799 004 Tripura
12	Waseem	Abhivyakti Society Kandoli, Rajpur Road, Near-Hotel Aketa, P.O. Kandoli, Dehradun-248001 Uttarakhand
13	Haliga Dayanand	Peace Forum H.No.12-1-1119/300, III Floor C.M.Yadav Complex, Besides : Mirzalguda Bus Stop, Mirzalguda-Malkajiris, Hyderabad, Telangana
14	George Cheriyan	CUTS International
15	Amar Deep Singh	CUTS International
16	Amit Babu	CUTS International
17	Nimisha Sharma	CUTS International

Glimpses of the Partners' Meet



