

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

Event Report

**Stakeholders' Consultation
&
World Consumer Rights Day**

March 13, 2020, Jaipur



Background

India is mainly an agricultural country, where around 58 per cent of the nation's population depends on agriculture for livelihood. There is a huge untapped potential of organic farming in India. Organic farming emerged as an alternative for meeting increasing food demand, maintaining soil fertility and enhancing soil carbon pool.

The promotion of organic consumption is directly related to consumers' right to healthy environment in various ways. Use of harmful pesticides and chemicals in agriculture is one of the major causes of environmental degradation and this is also not good for human health. The chemicals in food products adversely affect reproduction system in females.

Moreover, Indian society being largely patriarchal, where needs of women are not prioritised; hence women become prone to chemical contaminations in food. Hence, adoption of organic consumption will benefit the women, especially girls.

Insight into the Project

With the support from Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), CUTS is implementing a project 'Developing a Culture of Sustainable Consumption and Lifestyle through Organic Production and Consumption in the State of Rajasthan (ProOrganic II)' from April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2021 in 192 gram panchayats of 10 selected districts of Rajasthan (India). The main objective of the project is to fill the identified gaps and sustain the acquired momentum to achieve expected outcomes of better eco-system through promotion of organic consumption.

One of the basic objectives of the project is promoting sustainable consumption and production, which are important aspects for sustainable lifestyle. These are largely consistent with environmental and social factors and education and empowerment of consumers. In this project, focus is on the aspect of sustainable food and farming and formulating an agenda to achieve it through promoting organic production of farm products on the one hand and promoting organic consumption on the other. Thus, leading towards sustainable development in the agriculture and environmental sector as a whole. The target group of the project is entire population of the covered 10 districts, 96 blocks and selected 192 gram panchayats in Rajasthan.

Creating a sustainable lifestyle takes a lifelong commitment and always requires reducing use of the non-renewable natural resources and personal resources at individual and societal level. Promoting sustainable consumption requires improved understanding and sensitisation of consumer behaviour and attitudes as per their different needs to turn the positive but passive view of sustainable consumption into an active one. The rationale behind promoting organic food production is that it is a method more in harmony with the environment and local ecosystems.

The project aims to promote more organic consumption in 10 major districts with agriculture potential namely: Bhilwara, Chittorgarh, Dausa, Jaipur, Jhalawar, Jodhpur, Kota, Pratapgarh, Sawai Madhopur and Udaipur.

Project Objectives

- Developing a culture of Sustainable Development through sensitisation awareness and education on organic consumption and production.
- Capacity building of farmers to promote organic farming.
- Advocacy for policies in favour of organic farming.
- Setting up the community seed bank and vermin composting cell with the help of farmers (long-term perspective).
- Developing of organic clubs and gardens in selected schools at each district.
- Creating a demand of organic consumption among the consumers (Green Action Week) and
- To get acquainted with organic consumption through Exposure Visits.

The State Level Stakeholders' Consultation

Before embarking on the decisive stage of a project, it is quite apt to discuss the boons and banes 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 the completion of second year of the 'ProOrganic-II'. The event was clubbed with the World Consumer Rights Day, which coincidentally happened to be on the theme "Sustainable Consumers", which is somewhere connected to our work being done under ProOrganic II project.

Welcome Address

Nimisha Sharma, Programme Associate, CUTS International compering the event welcomed all the guests, participants and other stakeholders and requested to take the seats. She also welcomed the guest speakers by giving a bouquet of natural plant to each. Before starting with the event, Nimisha urged all the participants to maintain social distancing while sitting.



Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS International welcomed all the dignitaries and delegates present. He started with the purpose of WCRD, which is being commemorated every year. Saxena said March 15 is World Consumer Rights Day, an annual occasion for celebration, impact and global solidarity within the international consumer movement. Each year consumer organisations mark the day by joining together to highlight and raise awareness of an issue that is important to consumers around the world. World Consumer Rights Day is our chance to make the biggest impact possible. Saxena further stressed on working together so that our voices calling for change are far more powerful than they would be alone.



Saxena also pinpointed the history of WCRD. The day has been chosen since it was on March 1962, when the then President of the United States of America John F Kennedy made the historical speech to the US Congress upholding Consumer Rights. The international consumer movement is now marked on March 15 every year to raise global awareness about consumer rights. In an organised way, the World Consumer Rights Day first took place on March 15, 1983 and has now become an annual event for solidarity within the international consumer movement along with creating awareness about consumer rights.

Saxena later also briefly highlighted the achievements under 'ProOrganic-II' during the specified year 2019-20.

Opening Remarks

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International in his opening address congratulated the participants on the occasion of World Consumer Rights Day. He focussed on an urgent need of a drastic action, which can address the global crises of climate change and biodiversity loss and to do this, there is a need to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, waste and resource use from across all sectors.



George stated that we are currently locked into a fossil-fuel based, high-waste model that ties growth to resource use. It is vital to change our model of consumption and do it in a way that supports rather than undermines progress on challenges of poverty, hunger, inequality, poor health and inadequate housing. Cheriyan continued by saying that these problems damage communities across the world and are felt most keenly in the global south, where climate change is having the biggest impact.

George also shared that we have currently predicted to miss the Paris agreement of keeping the temperature rise at 1.5C and miss all of the Sustainable Development Goals. He also said the Earth Overshoot Day, the day of the year, where we consume all of

earth's resources has been getting earlier and earlier. In 2019 was July 29 it had happened, whereas it used to come somewhere around October-November. It is measured by a population's demand and ecosystems' supply of resources and services. These calculations then serve as the foundation for calculating Earth Overshoot Day. He cautioned participants that if we do not take action, then as many as 700 million people will be displaced by 2030 due to water scarcity.

George also added an interesting data that atleast 30-40per cent of all food produced worldwide is lost or wasted, placing an unnecessary strain on the environment. Globally only 9 per cent of all the plastic ever produced has been recycled, 79 per cent is in landfills, dumps or the environment and 12 per cent has been incinerated affecting marine pollution and biodiversity.

He mentioned about the basic objectives of the project to create demand, to increase supply of organic products and advocacy for major changes in policies. Cheriyan said there is a need to dismantle the existing chemical fertiliser subsidy structure that supports the indiscriminate use of fertilisers and pesticides. Cheriyan stressed upon fertiliser subsidies, which are presently the second highest subsidy provided by the government of India, after food subsidy. He mentioned about the sustainable development goals (SDG) and specially SDG12, which is related to sustainable consumption. Now it is time to give back to nature for our upcoming generations. He mentioned about the organic gardens to develop mindset of the children from school time about the benefits of organic products and organic farming.

George recognised the efforts made by Government of India to develop organic gardens in each government school, which will fulfill the requirement of vegetables used in mid-day meal.

At the end of his welcome speech, George Cheriyan called for a joint action, which requires coordinated and global solutions in the consumer movement, where we can play an important role. Encouraging consumers to consume sustainably is vital, as well as ensuring infrastructure and choice is in the place for them to do that.

He also appealed to take five major decisions for all the people gathered in the event:

- Minimise the use of natural resources to save the nature.
- Stop using plastic and practice use of cloth bags.
- Planting of more trees to save the environment and wild life.
- Proper recycling of e-waste.
- Minimise the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides in agriculture.

Rajdeep Pareek, Project Officer, CUTS International, showcased the key activities conducted under 'Pro-Organic-II' for the period of 2019-20. During the presentation, activities highlighted were gram panchayat level programmes, farmers' trainings and exposure visits, media workshops, formation of organic clubs and gardens in selected schools, community managed seed cells, Organic fairs in all project districts, awareness campaign under GAW Jaipur and state level stakeholders' consultation. Further, Pareek described the objectives of this project, that is, to establish patterns of sustainable consumption leading to sustainable development, awareness generation, capacity building and training sensitisation and advocacy and also to gauge the level of awareness amongst consumers and farmers on sustainable consumption and production patterns. Pareek also shared the glimpses of these above mentioned activities. It was suggested in the recommendations that increased incentives to switch to organic farming along with easy availability of inputs, expert training, guidance and priority remunerative prices of products and restricted subsidies on chemical fertilisers would definitely promote organic production as well as consumption within the state.



Amar Deep Singh, Sr. Programme Officer, CUTS International elaborated some key work, which CUTS has been doing or has done on sustainable consumption. Amar Deep spoke about the theme 'Sustainable Consumer' and said if everyone lived the lifestyle of



the average person in Western Europe, we would need three planets to support us. Meanwhile, about one billion people live in extreme poverty, unable to access the minimum needed for a decent quality of life.

In order to protect the planet and provide fair social conditions for current and future generations, we need to think about the way we produce and consume goods and services. The aim of sustainable consumption is to increase resource efficiency and fair trade, while helping to alleviate poverty and enable everyone to enjoy a good quality of life with access to food, water, energy, medicine and more.

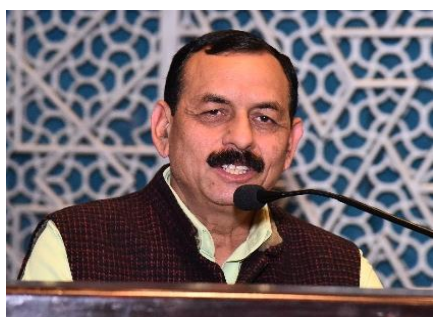


Dr. A. K. Gupta, Director, Research, SKN Agricultural University, Jobner appealed for getting back to the Indian traditional organic farming in the interest of the coming generations as it is the need of the hour. He stated this while speaking at the consultation in the capacity of key speaker. Dr. Gupta mentioned that as Rajasthan has different geographical and topographical conditions, farming and animal husbandry is itself a big challenge. He further said the indiscriminate use of pesticides and fertilisers will lead to worsening of the conditions of both environment and humans. So, to increase the biomass of the land, shift towards organic farming is a must. Gupta urged that for the success of the project, it is necessary for the government and civil society organisations (CSOs) to work together in coordination and also it is our duty to conserve the natural resources by increasing the fertility of land by adopting the organic methods so that the future generations does not suffer. He appreciated the work done by CUTS and said generally projects related to organic farming are basically farmer prospective, but in this project consumers and farmers are targeted equally so the successful rate can be increased. He mentioned that being in research area, he can say that now research on organic farming is happening more in research stations and universities and their results are also exciting. So the future time will definitely be of organic farming.



R. K. Yadvendra, Joint Director, Agriculture Department, Government of Rajasthan stressed on the lack of input availability, for which he said that in order to increase the organic farming, if optimum utilisation of available resources is made like manure and earthworms then the farmers will never face such problems and these inputs will always give quality productivity and will not affect the fertility of the land in any manner.

Yadvendra supported and encouraged the idea of 'Organic Garden', which is also a part of organic farming. He stressed on issues and problems of farmers to switch to organic way of production as they are afraid of losing the yield and revenue, therefore, advocated for the need to provide subsidy to farmers along with provision of inputs, who are willing to shift towards organic farming. He mentioned about the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, which was initiated by Government of India in 2016 and made an impact of farmers towards shifting to organic farming. Yadvendra also said Government of Rajasthan has announced to make Dungarpur 100 per cent organic in upcoming years. He stated that to promote marketing of organic products, there will be a separate corner for farmers, who are producing organic in each Mandi at district level. He also mentioned about National Soil Health Card Scheme, which is very important to know about soil fertility.



Dr. Gajendra Sharma, Assistant Research Officer at Department of Agriculture, Government of Rajasthan appreciated the efforts of CUTS and the activities completed in the project. He mentioned that in urban area concept of kitchen garden is popular. Even our purchasing habits should be health conscious. Sharma gave an example that while purchasing, we generally purchase fresh vegetables, which means they are having more pesticides in it. We prefer to purchase white coloured cauliflower, while the original color of cauliflower is light yellow. He mentioned about the increasing craze of kitchen and roof top gardens in urban areas. Sharma said people are now becoming more conscious about healthy food and they can also pay more for quality food products.

Open Discussion

During the open discussion, participants appreciated the efforts made by CUTS and farmer representatives have recommended for proper organic products market development advocacy in Rajasthan. One of the suggestions was to implement organic garden concept in all government schools in Rajasthan.

Vote of Thanks

Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Programme Officer, CUTS International expressed his gratitude on behalf of the organisation to all the eminent guests, speakers and participants for making the event a success and becoming a part of the initiative to change the face of organic farming in India. Chaturvedi thanked all the stakeholders for their active participation and concluded the event by saying that it is necessary for all of us to adopt organic lifestyle in the interest of the coming generations.

Participation

The meeting was attended by around 58 participants, including representative partners, Non-Government Organisations, media, representatives of CSOs, government departments, Agricultural University and Rajasthan Agricultural Research Institute.

As the coronavirus threat had started in the month of March, so the event was conducted with due care, although, as it was only the beginning but still the programme was organised by maintaining social distancing of participants and sanitizing of hall and participants and depicting related messages inside the hall.

Key Recommendations

- Incentives to switch to organic farming along with easy availability of inputs, expert training, guidance and priority to remunerative prices of products.
- Advertise and publicity of conventional farming to generate awareness.
- Safe marketing facilities – Develop separate market in each district for organic products.
- Animal husbandry hand-in-hand with Organic farming.
- Promote domestic consumption along with exports.
- Adopt targeted approach – Identify the area, where organic farming can be promoted and restrict the use of chemicals in those particular areas.
- Restrict subsidies on chemical fertilisers.
- The government should work hand-in-hand with local CSOs.

List of Participants

S.N.	Name	Name of the Organiation
1	Dinesh Kumar	RUDSOVOT, Bagda House, Sawai Madhopur
2	Suleman Sheikh	Gramin Manav Kalyan Shikshan Sansthan, Kachroda (Phulera), Jaipur
3	Pukhraj Acharya	Anavarat Sansthan, Jaipur
4	Radhey Shyam Teli	Vil.- Gomana, Pratapgarh
5	Shambhu Lal Teli	Gomana Darwaja, Chhoti Sadri, Pratapgarh
6	Anil Vyas	Praytna Samiti, Udaipur
7	Syoji Ram Gurjar	Sangharsh Sansthan, Dhandholi
8	Jitendra Sharma	Navjeevan Society
9	Govardhan Lal Pareek	CUTS CHD, Chittorgarh
10	Raj Sharma	SAKAR Sanshan
11	Kedar Sharma	Shri Ganesh Vidya MandirShiksha Samiti
12	Gaurav Chaturvedi	CUTS CHD, Bhilwara
13	Ghanshyam Gour	Jaivik Farmar, Dariba, Bhilwara
14	Bharat Kumar Bhati	Marudhar Ganga Society, Manaklav, Jodhpur
15	GovardhanSharma	Gramin Save Sansthan, Jadna
16	Yudhishtar Chansi	Ram Krishan Shikshan Sansthan, Bhadana, Kota
17	Nathu Ram Choudhary	Samajik Vikas Sansthan, Jhalawar
18	Mukut Bihari Gurjar	Samajik Vikas Sansthan, Jhalawar
19	Gopal Singh	Lok Sahbhagi Sansthan, Virat Nagar
20	Ram Singh Jat	Mukti Dhara, Virat Nagar
21	Manoj Jain	PEHCHAN, Shyam Nagar, Jaipur
22	Abhishek Pareek	PEHCHAN, Shyam Nagar, Jaipur
23	Dharmendra Sharma	Aprna Sodh Sansthan, Mahwa, Dausa
24	Dropadi Sharma	Shiv Shiksha Sansthan, 64/303, Sanganer, Jaipur
25	Dr. A.K. Gupta, Director, Research	SKN Agriculture University, Jobner, Jaipur
26	Praful Sharma, Business Manager	SKN Agri Business University, Jobner, Jaipur
27	Manish Sharma	DD News
28	Sunil Kumar	DD News
29	Amar Deep Singh	CUTS International, Jaipur
30	Vijay Godara	Kisan Call Centre
31	Suresh Kumar Jat	IFFCO Kisan Ltd.
32	Vinod Upadhyan	Sri Agresen Public, Jamdoli, Jaipur
33	Amit Sharma, Former Supervisor	Kisan Call Centre
34	Sohan Dayma	Gram Chetna Kendra, Khedi Milak, Jaipur
35	Nand Kishore Dubey	Laalo NGO

S.N.	Name	Name of the Organiation
36	Akhilesh Kumar	Aayam Foundation, Jaipur
37	Bhupendra Singh	Aayam Foundation, Jaipur
38	Kuldeep Sharma	Marudhar Gramodyog Sansthan, Sardar Shahar, Churu
39	Rajesh Malakar	Vikasonmukh Sansthan, Naraina
40	Dr. Amit Kumar	Kumarappa Gram Swaraj Sansthan, Jaipur
41	Vinod Kumar Sharma	ATMA Sansthan, Jagmalpura, Jobner, Jaipur
42	Ram Nivas	Bhadana, Kota
43	Simrath Ram Pathik	Marudhar Ganga Society, Manaklav, Jodhpur
44	Om Prakash Pareek	HGVS, Dausa
45	Shyam Sunder Sharma	Pragatisheel Jaivik Kisan
46	Satya Narain Sharma	Gramin Arthik Samudayik Puna Nirman evam Vikas Sansthan, Jaipur
47	Manju Sharma	Gramin Arthik Samudayik Puna Nirman evam Vikas Sansthan, Jaipur
48	Ram Kumar Bairwa	Ugriyavas Jagrati Kendra Sanstha, Ugriyavas
49	Ajay Kumar Bairwa	Ugriyavas Jagrati Kendra Sanstha, Ugriyavas
50	Man Mohan Sharma	Shiv Shikshan Sansthan, 64/303, Pratap nagar, Sanganer, Jaipur
51	Dr. Ram Bahadur Kulshreshtha	State Consumer Helpline, Deptt. of Consumer Affairs, GoR, Jaipur
52	Gajendra Sharma	
53	R.K. Yadvendra	Joint Director, Agriculture Department, GoR
54	George Cherian	CUTS International, Jaipur
55	Deepak Saxena	CUTS International, Jaipur
56	Amardeep Singh	CUTS International, Jaipur
57	Dharmendra Chaturvedi	CUTS International, Jaipur
58	Nimisha Gaur	CUTS International, Jaipur
59	Rajdeep Pareek	CUTS International, Jaipur

Programme Schedule

10.00-11.00	Registration & Tea/Coffee	
11.00-11.05	Welcome Address	Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS
11.05-11.20	Opening Address	George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS
11.20-11.40	Brief on Sustainable Consumer	Amardeep Singh, Sr Programme Officer
11.40-12.00	Presentation of Activities of ProOrganic II Accomplished in 2019	Rajdeep Pareek, Programme Officer, CUTS
12.00-12.15	Address by Special Guest	Dr. Gajendra Sharma, Assistant Research Officer, Agriculture Department Government of Rajasthan
12.15-12.30	Address by Special Guest	Dr. A K Gupta, Director (Research) S K N Agriculture University Jobner, Jaipur
12.30-12.45	Address by Special Guest	Shri R K Yadvendra, Joint Director, Agriculture Department, Government of Rajasthan
12.45-13.00	Open Interaction Session	
13.00-13.10	Vote of Thanks and Way Forward	Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Programme Officer, CUTS
13.10 onwards	Lunch	