



Green Action Week -2015

28th September - 4th October

Safer and more sustainable food for all



Executive summary

The purpose of Green Action Week Campaign 2015 – “**Safer and more Sustainable Food for All**” was to generate awareness among consumers of Ahmedabad city, Gujarat about consumer rights, consumer protection, organic food and organic farming. The objective was to encourage consumers to purchase organic foods, specially pre-packaged ones labelled ‘organic’, and thereby shift towards a sustainable pattern of consumption.

The campaign was targeted at students, parents and general consumers. With the aim of influencing consumer behaviour in favour of organic food, various activities like power point presentations, talks on local TV channels and skits by professionals were organised at various academic institutions and a huge mall in the city.

The CERC-ENVIS (Consumer Education and Research Centre-Environment Information System) Centre collaborated with consumer clubs of different schools to address the three important ‘A’s regarding organic food: (i) Authenticity, (ii) Availability and (iii) Affordability.

Context

Today, organic food has become a fad for some but a serious need to protect their health for most consumers. Emerging data indicate that many diseases like cancer, skin diseases and lifestyle diseases may be caused by eating foods loaded with chemicals/pesticides. This knowledge is pushing consumers to look for safer choices, such as organic food. But unfortunately, information on organic food is very little! There is no easy way for consumers to exercise their Right to Safe Food. In such a situation consumers may end up ‘not buying organic food’ or buying food which may not be genuinely ‘organic.’

Therefore, there is a need to educate consumers about safe and more sustainable patterns of consumption which in turn would increase the demand for organic food thereby boosting availability and affordability.



Objectives

- To generate awareness among the students and general consumers about organic food, especially pre-packaged organic food that would encourage them to shift towards organic food products.
- To advocate for promoting the use of organic food products thus contributing towards safer and more sustainable food for all.



Activities

Organized awareness programme in the following places

- D. P. High School Nava Vadaj, Ahmadabad, Gujarat on 28th September 2015
- St. Xavier's College Navarangpura Ahmadabad, Gujarat on 29th September 2015
- Super Mall- Alpha Mall Vastrapur, Ahmadabad, Gujarat on 30th September
- V. R. Shah Memorial High School Vasna, Ahmadabad, Gujarat on 1st October 2015
- Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation (GMDC) Ground on 2nd October 2015
- A TV Talk on Harmful effects of chemicals and pesticides in food.

A presentation was made with relevant case studies for students. They were informed about organic food, organic farming, differences between organic and non-organic food and the benefits of organic food. They were explained how organic food has the least adverse impact on the environment and which chemicals are used in conventional farming and how they affect our health and environment. The importance of organic labels and how to identify organic food with the help of labels was also described along with the importance of certification and its procedures. Organic labels of different organisations and certifying agencies available across the world were shown.

More than 250 students, academic staff of the schools and parents participated in the programme from each school and college.



D. P. High School Nava Vadaj, Ahmadabad, Gujarat



Xavier's College Navarangpura Ahmadabad, Gujarat



Super Mall- Alpha Mall Vastrapur, Ahmadabad, Gujarat



V. R. Shah Memorial High School Vasna, Ahmadabad, Gujarat



Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation (GMDC) Ground

Skit

CERC organised a skit on two different issues: (i) consumer awareness and rights and (ii) organic foods in schools, colleges and mall. The skit was performed by Ahmedabad-based theatre group - 'The EarthingGroup.' Through the skit the actors depicted the importance of producing and consuming organic food. The script of the play was very lucid involving every aspect of organic production, consumption, how to differentiate between organic and non-organic food with the help of organic labels and how organic foods are good for health and the environment.

The audience was made aware of their consumer rights and how they can approach consumer organisations for redressal of their grievances. The skit also explained what shoppers have to keep in mind while making online purchases. The artistes gave a vivid representation to the powerful script



Skit was organized at various places of Ahmadabad



These awareness campaign programmes have been covered in schools, college and super mall of different localities.

TV Talk

A TV Talk on **Harmful effects of chemicals and pesticides in food** in local news channel VTV News.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROkh-kVp5vk&feature=youtu.be>



Key Observations

Awareness

Though a small part of consumers are aware about organic food, a huge section remains largely unaware about the concept of organic food and farming.

Recommendations

An ongoing awareness programme on the health and environmental benefits of organic products that would promote a shift towards organic production and consumption.