

Nominated NGO

Name: Community Awareness Research Education (CARE Trust)

Headquarters: Coimbatore

Founded in: 2001

Website: Not available (see www.adoptanactivist.org)

Number of employees: 21 (5 in Coimbatore HQ, 10 in Namakkal district, 6 in Kanyakumari district)

Number of members: 779

Field of action:

- Working for better labour standards and environment standards
- Research for social change
- Child rights protection by research, campaign and education
- Capacity building trainings on labour rights for Workers and Trade Unions
- Human rights education to marginalized people, children and youth
- Imparting training to other institutions on socio-economic and ecological topics
- Developing watershed management and alternate ecological models
- Carrying out outreach activities.
- Sustainable development and Economic equity

Since December 2004, we are involved in Tsunami Disaster Relief & Rehabilitation in Kanyakumari district, Tamilnadu.

General aims of the NGO:

To develop an environmentally sustainable development in all spheres in earth by implementing Agenda 21 of Rio Summit 92

To defend the civil rights through United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Constitution of India and International legal ins

To promote child rights and labour rights through core ILO conventions

To build a society with a respect for social justice, human dignity and economic equity

To build North-South relations towards a genuine, impartial, non-discriminatory, equal and true globalization of mankind

Reasons for the nomination:

OUR CAMPAIGN: STOP FDI IN RETAIL SECTOR AND STOP WAL-MART IN INDIA

The aim of the campaign is to stop transnational corporations entering into retail sector for exploiting local economy by campaign, coalition building and advocacy.

Wal-Mart is one of the major importer of garments from Tirupur region after China it purchases textile garments from Tirupur region. Wal-Mart is also the biggest seller of garments in USA.

Wal-Mart is primarily crushing suppliers price and triggering cheap labour and in its attempt to provide low cost garment products it doesn't care the cost of environmental pollution. A company which recorded excess of 10 Billion Dollars as profit if it decides to spend 5% of its profit then it can clean Noyyal River Basin which is polluted by knitting companies and a major portion is supplied to Wal-Mart and brands sold under Wal-Mart roof. Since it is the number one corporate among top 500 companies, we target Wal-Mart as a symbol of oppressive corporate company without any social and ecological responsibility. This is the connection between Wal-Mart and textile industrial pollution in Tirupur Noyyal River Basin.

Foreign Direct Investment in retail sector hasn't been allowed so far in India. Wal-Mart would like to make significant investments in India and is trying to influence the Indian Government to open up the retail sector.

We oppose Wal-Mart's entry into India for the following reasons:

1. Foreign Direct Investment in retail sector will affect 40 million Indian small traders and their employees. There are additional 10 million single person traders and Wal-Mart's entry will affect their livelihood and therefore it will trigger unemployment while it provides employment for very few people.
2. Global retail giants like Wal mart wants to capture this market and this what Wal-Mart CEO John Menzer wants and he said " India represents a \$250 billion retail market, growing 7.2 percent a year, but modern retailing is just starting to emerge This shows us that India is a huge organic growth opportunity for Wal-Mart." "The average urban household income in India is about \$3,000 a year, roughly in line with China, and the consuming class has grown from 35 million families in 1996 to an expected 80 million this year. That's roughly in line with the U.S.," "This is a very big opportunity for us." and "take advantage of this market while it's still developing." during his July 2005 visit to India.
3. For example In towns in Mexico where Wal-Mart has stores, small businesses have lost sales and closed. In the United Kingdom, an ethnic foods market that was in operation for 100 years was going to be destroyed to make room for a Wal-Mart store. In the United States, retailers say that Wal-Mart is their greatest market challenge.
4. Letting Wal-Mart enter Indian retail trade could harm the government's efforts to promote economic integration.

5. Wal-Mart has indeed come to epitomize the concept of social dumping and cruel price pressure on suppliers and business partners, while providing enormous incomes for its major shareholders and senior management.
6. Wal-Mart is against workers rights and it oppose trade union in USA and Canada and recently, it closed a store in Canada for opening a trade union.
7. Wal-Mart squeezes its suppliers, constantly demanding that they produce the same products at lower costs. In turn, the factories cut labor costs by forcing workers to work unpaid overtime, increasing workloads and paying wages below the minimum standard. It happens already among Tirupur garment exporters.
8. Upon studying Wal-Mart's impact in other nations we have found that Wal-Mart has no respect to local laws and local communities and it destroys them and India has thousands of local laws and marginalized local communities.
9. Wal-Mart's largest source country is China and therefore if it opens shops in India it will flood Indian domestic market with Chinese goods and it will affect thousands of producers and million of factory workers in India. India, for example, in 2005 is estimated to source \$1.2 billion worth of goods to Wal-Mart but this is about 6% of China's total Wal-Mart exports.
10. In the case of Wal-Mart starting to operate in the country, we demand it should ensure full respect for workers fundamental rights and economic and social interests, and the unconditional compliance with the ILO Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, but we are sure Wal-Mart even if it accepts this and it will not apply in practice such is the track record of Wal-Mart .
11. Wal-Mart destroys environment and for example:- In addition to the negative impact Wal-Mart's retail and sourcing operations have on workers, the company has also has a detrimental effect on the environment. In 2001, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took action against Wal-Mart for violating the Clean Water Act in 17 locations. This was the first time the EPA took action against a company for multi-state violations of the Clean Water Act's storm water provisions.
12. Wal-Mart is against women rights for example: - In the United States, the company is involved in a major class action lawsuit, where women workers have established that there is a pattern of systematic gender discrimination. Its refusal to provide affordable health insurance to a majority of its workers breaks with established practice on the U.S. labour market and has lead to legislative action in a number of U.S. States.

Description of the activities in the campaign:

So far we have conducted consultation meetings with major trade unions in Tamilnadu, anti-globalization activists, academics and Federation of traders association. After Wal-Mart chiefs 'meeting with Prime Minister in June 2005 at New Delhi, we have organized " Stop Wal-Mart outreach workshop" on 13th July 2005 at Chennai. During the workshop we have built a coalition called STOP FDI IN RETAIL SECTOR AND STOP WAL-MART IN INDIA. Members of this coalition are Trade unions like the Indian National Trade Union Center (INTUC), the All Indian Trade Union Center (AITUC), the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITUC), the Labour Progressive Fronts (LPF), the Marumaralchi Labour Front (MLF), the Hind Mazdoor Sangh (HMS), the Tamilnadu

Federation of Traders Association and SARDI (South Asian Research Development Initiative). Now we are in touch with political party leaders of major trade union leaders who took part in Chennai workshop.

And press meet for economic and financial media at Chennai. Similarly we have organized Wal-Mart outreach meeting for youths on 15th August 2005 at Bangalore. We are constantly arranging small group discussions with consumer organizations, small agricultural producers and traders associations in Coimbatore to bring awareness on how FDI in retail sector will affect our small agricultural producers, small traders, labour rights and environment in India.

What was the result of the campaign (success of the campaign)?

Now we have roped in major trade unions affiliated to ruling and opposition political parties in our coalition and Tamilnadu's largest traders association with over 0.2 million small traders as membership in our coalition. Pro-corporate financial media persons boycotted our press meet, which we consider as a success.

Six trade unions went on Strike on 29th September 2005 for one day demanding stop FDI in retail sector along with small business peoples association (this is called traders association). It was a success. Rightist media condemned this as an effort of leftists to stop India's development and moderate media reported this as a success and indeed it is a success and put the Wal-Mart efforts to enter India into a national debate.

Furthermore our research study-Dirty Shirts-A study on health and environmental impacts of Tirupur Garment industry is used to inform High Court Judiciary in our legal case to protect farmers from effluents discharged by dyeing and bleaching units in Tirupur Region, which is stored in Orathupalayam Dam. Judges favoured joint cases filed by Farmers association and our organization and issued orders to close down Dyeing and Bleaching units without Reverse Osmosis Plant(RO) and requested industry and government to provide loans and grants for building RO plants such plants.*

This achievement needs additional lobbying and Davos meeting will help us to bring wider international attention to "Dirty Shirts", Corporate Social Responsibility and North Consumers.

**Reverse Osmosis is a wastewater treatment used for treating industrial and domestic sewages. If it is introduced in dyeing and bleaching units then it will clean the effluents and restore water quality in rivers and canals.*

Which are the reasons for the success?

We have worked hard and convinced all major players in this regard by conducting several planning and informal meetings and we have a meaningful coalition. We involved Anti-Wal-Mart American organizers like Acorn and AFL-CIO when they expressed the dangers of Wal-Mart like no trade union, no fair price for suppliers, no respect for local

culture, no respect for laws on their contribution, no respect for ecology and environment. All this made a big impact on the local leaders mind and we could able to form a coalition and plans for National strike on against FDI and closure of shops for one day by trade unions

Follow-Ups?

After National Strike and State Convention of Traders Association we will intensify lobbying with Member of Parliaments, petition campaign and demonstrations in order to Stop Wal-Mart and Stop FDI in retail sector.

Information for the organizer:

Nomination submitted by: Managing Trustee

Name of organization: Community Awareness Research Education (CARE Trust)

Name of contact person: (Prithvi) S.M.Prithviraj, Executive Director.

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