



**CUTS Centre for
Consumer Action,
Research & Training (CART)**

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Enhancing Consumer Voice in Power Sector

To kick start the activities of the second phase of CUTS-FES project on 'Involvement of Consumers in Power Sector Reforms,' CUTS-CART organised a state-level orientation workshop at HCM-RIPA (Harish Chandra Mathur-Rajasthan Institute of Public Administration) in Jaipur, on May 26-27, 2005. The workshop was aimed at imparting required skills to representatives of consumer organisations, with the view to facilitate their effective participation in electricity regulation through building capacities on evolving issues in the power sector and to enhance the consumer voice. This phase of the project will continue up to May, 2006. The project includes 12 workshops at the selected nodal circles and a state-level evaluation workshop.

CUTS and FES (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung) jointly conceptualised and initiated this programme in Rajasthan in August, 2001. In the first phase of the project, CUTS worked in six districts of Rajasthan on pilot basis with the support of FES. The major objective of the programme, among others, is to facilitate active involvement of consumers in the power sector reforms. Through the first phase, the effectiveness of the approach was tested on the ground. The second phase is a result of the successful implementation and evaluation of the first phase with the involvement of all the stakeholders in the state. In the second phase, a series of activities will be conducted all over the state.

Based upon the feedback and learnings from the programme, a

replicable and sustainable model was developed, known as 'CUTS-FES Model in Power Sector'. The World Bank in 2004, under its 'Voice and Client Power Programme (VCP),' had identified this model, as one of the



From L to R : HD Charan, PN Bhandari, Pradeep S Mehta at the inaugural session of the orientation workshop.

successful interventions, and researched and documented the model for wider dissemination.

The participants were the representatives of consumer groups from all over Rajasthan, and officials of other stakeholder groups, such as Energy Department, Electricity Distribution Companies (*Vidhyut Vitaran Nigam*), RERC (Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission) and the media.

Pradeep S Mehta, PN Bhandari (Ex. Chairman, RSEB) and H D Charan (Ex. Chief Managing Director, Jaipur Vidhyut Vitaran Nigam Limited) participated in the inaugural session and spoke on the issues in the power sector reform process in the state and about the aims of the workshop. R C Sharma (Deputy, Secretary, RERC), Tara Singh (Ex. Technical Member), Devendra Mohan Mathur, C B Mathur, Prabhat

About CART

Established in 1996, CUTS-CART is pursuing the cause of common consumers. The programmes of the Centre are primarily aimed at generating awareness, creating a more responsible society and encouraging changes at the policy level by advocating with the government machinery and sensitising it to its issues of concern to the common man. The Centre has spearheaded several campaigns and pioneered consumer empowerment. It has created and trained over 1200 consumer activists and facilitated in establishing over 300 independent consumer groups in Rajasthan and elsewhere. The Mission of the Centre is to 'enable people, particularly the poor and the marginalised to achieve their rights to basic needs and sustainable development, through a strong consumer movement.'

CUTS-CART has a 12-member advisory committee consisting of eminent personalities from various fields. Professor V S Vyas, well-known economist and Professor Emeritus of IDSJ (Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur) is the Chairman of the advisory committee.

Dayal and H D Charan along with CUTS staff served as resource persons. M S Dharendra (Member, RERC) was the Chief Guest in the valedictory session and he spoke on the 'role of the consumer groups in effective regulation.' George Cheriyan of CUTS-CART made the concluding remarks and spoke on the 'irrational power tariff hike.' Deepak Saxena and Vinayak Pande of CUTS were responsible for coordinating the workshop along with other CART staff. The event was well covered by the Media.

The first nodal circle-level training programme under the second phase of the CUTS-FES programme, was organised at Sawai Madhopur on June 20, 2005, at Hotel Ganesh. About 50 participants attended the workshop from various blocks of Sawai Madhopur district.

The resource persons were R K Jain, Superintendent Engineer, B R Goyal, Executive Engineer from Jaipur Discom; District Supply Officer, Brij Mohan Srivastava and noted local consumer lawyer Radha Mohan Sharma. Apart from the above, Deepak Saxena and local coordinator Hari Prasad Yogi were the other speakers. The event was well organised, well attended and the media had given good coverage. Deepak Saxena was responsible for coordinating the workshop with the assistance of Dharmendra Chaturvedi.

HIGHLIGHTS

- GRANITE Curtain Raiser in Rajasthan**
- Awareness on Rational Use of Drugs**
- Hum Bhi Bachche Hain**
- Representation**
- Future Activities**
- Publications**
- CART in Media**

GRANITE Curtain Raiser in Rajasthan

CUTS has launched a two-year project called GRANITE (Grassroots Reachout & Networking in India on Trade & Economics) from January 1, 2005. NORAD (The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) and Novib (OXFAM, The Netherlands) are supporting the project. It is being implemented in eight States, viz. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal in partnership with civil society organisations (CSOs) working at the grassroots. The project focuses on two sectors, viz. agriculture and textile & clothing, as they are key to livelihood of a large section of our population. Being one of the partners in the project, CUTS-CART is responsible for implementing the project in Rajasthan.

The Rajasthan State Launch Meeting of GRANITE was successfully held at the Pink City Press Club, in Jaipur on, April 14, 2005. Principal Secretary Industries, Government of Rajasthan

(GoR), T Srinivasan was the chief guest. He delivered the inaugural address and formally launched the project. CUTS Secretary General Pradeep S Mehta chaired the inaugural session and delivered the presidential address. The Chief Guest also released CUTS-GRANITE publication *Khuli Khidkiyan Khule Darwaze* on the occasion. George Cheriyan welcomed the guests and participants, and R K Sharma introduced the aims and objectives of the project.

107 people attended the launch meeting. Representatives from all stakeholder groups, such as government, media, academic institutions, CSOs and grassroots groups actively participated in the meeting. There were two panel discussions on 'Opportunities and Challenges' in agriculture and textile & clothing sectors in Rajasthan, which was followed by open discussions. Dr C S Barla (Consulting Economist) moderated the panel discussion on agriculture. The panelists were A K Pachori (Agriculture

Research Officer, Government of Rajasthan), Sunny Sebastian (Special Correspondent, The Hindu) and Krishna Kumar (CECOEDECON, Jaipur).

Prof. Kanta Ahuja, (Honorary Senior Fellow, IDS, Jaipur) moderated the session on textiles and clothing. The panelists were L C Jain, (Incharge, World Trade Organisation Cell, Secretariat, GoR) and Vimal Jain (Rajasthan Patrika). These discussions threw light on the situation of these two sectors in Rajasthan and the steps needed for improvement. People from grassroots took active interest in the issues and got the opportunity to present their stand, views and concerns. The media gave wider coverage for the launch meeting and the project.

A State Reference Group for Rajasthan has been formed with 15 eminent personalities from the field of 'trade & economics' as members representing the Government, the media and the CSOs with a purpose to act as a sounding board and check quality of outputs of the project.

Hum Bhi Bachche Hain

CUTS-CART in consultation with the Save the Children (UK) conceptualised a project entitled 'Sensitisation, capacity building and advocacy on the issue of Child Domestic Workers in Schools of Jaipur City' in April, 2005. The project is for a period of one year from July 2005 to June 2006. The following are the objectives of the project.

- To get an understanding about the Child Domestic Workers employed in the city of Jaipur through surveys in the households and among different stakeholders, involving students and to know the types of exploitation they are subjected to;
- Generating awareness about the issue and sensitising the common people against exploitation of children and advocacy for preventing the child domestic work; and
- Capacity building of the schools for compulsory check of child domestic work and sustainable advocacy involving the Education Department, GoR.

The project will be implemented through 35 schools in Jaipur City. The State Launch Meeting of the project is scheduled to be held on July 27, 2005 in Jaipur. Presently, Dharmendra Chaturvedi with the assistance of K C Sharma is responsible for coordinating the project.

Gram Gadar Awards

CUTS had initiated the *Gram Gadar* awards in the year 2003, coinciding with the 20 anniversary of the *Gram Gadar*, for outstanding rural journalists. This year also a number of entries were received and after careful scrutiny by a panel, the winners were chosen. The awards were announced on April 13, 2005, which is *Gram Gadar* Day, through a press release. The awards (cash prizes along with certificates) were distributed on May 27, 2005. The following persons got the awards for the year 2004-05.

State of the Consumer in Rajasthan – Avinash Basu, Medical Times, Jaipur.

Status of the *Panchayati Raj* system in Rajasthan – Amar Pal Singh, Rajasthan Patrika, Sriganaganagar.

Advocacy for Women & Child Rights – Geeta Yadav, VIVIDHA Features, Jaipur.



Awareness on Standardisation

CUTS-CART jointly with Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Jaipur Regional office organised a one day Programme on 'Awareness on standardisation of Products to Rural Consumers' at Madhorajpura (Tehsil Phagi). *Aman Vikas Sansthan* in Phagi was the local organiser of the programme.

Addressing the conference Deputy Director of Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Amitabh Mukherjee said that BIS provides standards on products after ensuring the quality and variety of the products. Expressing his views Joint Director of BIS Shiv Raj Singh Meena said that while providing ISI Mark on the products the Bureau mainly focuses on the quality of the product.

More than 100 rural consumers participated in the programme. This programme marked the beginning of a long-term partnership with BIS. The next programme with BIS is scheduled to be held in Alwar, in August. Dharmendra Chaturvedi and K C Sharma were responsible for co-ordinating the programme with the assistance of Deepak Saxena.

Rational Use of Drugs

CUTS has undertaken a project on 'Consumer Awareness on Rational Use of Drugs' with the support of WHO (World Health Organisation) and the office of the Drug Controller General of India to build awareness among consumers (patients) on these matters. The project is being implemented in nine States in India and is co-ordinated at the national by the Calcutta Resource Centre (CRC) of CUTS. CUTS-CART is responsible for implementing this project in Rajasthan.

Under the project, Training of Trainers (ToT) was organised at the auditorium of Jaipur Medical Association (JMA) on June 25, 2005. Dr Rameshwar Sharma (a noted figure in Jaipur in the Health sector and at present Executive Director of Bhagwan Mahaveer Cancer Hospital) was the key speaker. The other resource persons were Dr N K Gurbani (President of Indian Pharmaceutical Association and a technical coordinator of India-WHO Essential Drugs Programme) and Dr. Rameshwar Sharma (Executive Director, Bhagwan Mahaveer Cancer Hospital, Jaipur). Shantnu Bannerjee represented, Calcutta Resource Centre (CUTS-CRC), Kolkata. Deepak Saxena coordinated the programme, while Dharmendra Chaturvedi and K C Sharma assisted.

WTO Outreach Workshop

R K Sharma, Swati Chadha and Sonal Jain attended a two-day outreach workshop on WTO at Hotel Rajputana Palace Sheraton, Jaipur on April 1-2, 2005. It was hosted by National Cadet Corps (NCC), Rajasthan and sponsored by Association for Environment and Development Research (AEDR), Delhi.

Global Week for Action

GWA (Global Week for Action) was observed in Rajasthan with various activities from April 10-16, 2005 with the initiative of CECOEDCON. Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended the press conference on April 10 and the NGO Forum meeting on April 15 under GWA.

Consultation on Good Governance

K C Sharma participated in the inaugural session of the two-day National Convention on Good Governance held at HCM-RIPA on the April 28, 2005 organised by the Centre for Good Governance. Former Ambassador to the United States of America, Naresh Chandra delivered the keynote address on 'The need for good Governance in the rapidly changing environment.' Chief Secretary Anil Vaish also attended the inaugural session.

Meeting of Consumer Organisations

The Accountant General (AG) office organised an interactive meeting with the consumer organisations on the April 29, 2005 at its office. This meeting was mainly to discuss the problems faced by consumer organisations in the implementation of COPRA. Deepak Saxena and K C Sharma attended the meeting.

Action Group Meeting : Transport

The office of the State-level Coordinator of Petroleum Industry, Rajasthan under Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India in association with Department of Transport, Government of Rajasthan and Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) organised the 'Action Group Meeting in the Transport Sector' in the Conference Hall of Parivahan

Bhawan in Jaipur on May 2, 2005. The meeting took stock of the developments in transport sector and considered techno-economic aspects in vehicles and fuel technology leading to fuel conservation. Deepak Saxena attended the meeting.

Meeting of CAB

Considering the involvement of CUTS for the cause of the children, CUTS-CART was nominated to the Advisory Board of the ChildLine, Jaipur, which is known as CAB (City Advisory Board). Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended the meeting of the Board held in IDS-J on May 9, 2005.

Workshop on Social Accountability

A workshop for the Application of Social Accountability Mechanisms in Community Driven Development and Decentralisation Programmes in South Asia was held at Hyderabad organised jointly by the World Bank and the Centre for Good Governance (CGG), Hyderabad on May 16-19, 2005. George Cheriyan and K C Sharma attended the workshop and made a presentation on the 'Participatory Expenditure Tracking: People's Campaign for Transparency and Accountability – The Rajasthan Experience' in the workshop.

Workshop on Urban Governance

A workshop under the State Urban Agenda for Rajasthan (SUARAJ) titled 'Urban Agenda for Rajasthan – Towards better urban Governance' was organised by Jaipur Development Authority (JDA), Rajasthan, Jaipur on June 13-15, 2005 at Conference Hall (Manthan) of JDA. The main objective of the workshop was to formulate policies for better urban governance. About 50 persons participated in the workshop. K C Sharma attended the workshop on the first day.

Workshop on Deficiency of Iodine

A State level workshop on 'National Programme for control on deficiency of Iodine deteriorates health' was organised by Directorate of Medical and Health Department, Rajasthan and UNICEF, Jaipur June 17, 2005 at Hotel Khasa Kothi, Jaipur. The main objectives of the

workshop were to ensure availability of iodised salt in Rajasthan, to review quality and prices of salt and to create awareness among people for its use. More than 70 people participated in the programme. K C Sharma and Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended the workshop.

Workshop on Children

Regional Workshop on 'Children and Food Security' (22 June) and a Training workshop on 'Rights to Seeds' (23 June) was organised by the Consumers International, Asia-Pacific Regional Office in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. George Cheriyan attended the workshops.

The objective of the first workshop to raise awareness of participants on the important links between nutrition, health, education and food security. The objective of the second workshop to understand the implications of intellectual property rights (IPRs) on seeds, consumers, farmers and biodiversity. About 50 delegates attended both the workshops from about 15-20 countries.

EC-State Partnership Programme

A meeting of the Task Force formulation phase, EC-State Partnership Programme was held at the secretariat Conference Hall on June 23, 2005. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the progress as well as next steps with regard to preparation of the draft financial proposal for the partnership programme. R K Sharma attended the meeting.

Drought Preparedness in Rajasthan

A State level Consultation on "Drought Preparedness in Rajasthan" was held at Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur (IDSJ) organised jointly by IDSJ & Save the Children, North Central India office in Jaipur on June 30, 2005. The objective of the consultation was to review the drought preparedness of the State of Rajasthan and to identify the gaps and to evolve policy directions. About 50 participants representing various academics, Government Departments and CSOs participated in the consultation. Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended the workshop.

VISITS/MEETINGS**Meeting with Dr Dirk R Frans**

Dr Dirk R Frans (team leader EC Rajasthan Formulation Mission, EC-Rajasthan State Partnership Programme) visited CART office along with a team member Dr Kurian Baby on June 16, 2005.

Meeting with Dr Lakshmi Rani

George Cheriyan met with Dr Lakshmi Rani, National Project Manager, Child Domestic Workers Project at Save the Children Country office in Delhi.

Mini Retreat

As a precursor to CUTS' main retreat, CART's one day mini retreat was held on Sunday June 26, 2005 at CART office. The objective of the mini retreat was to retrospect the last year of its functioning in terms of its mission and strategies, functional areas, achievements, identifying areas of strengths and improvements and the future strategies. The report and the business plan on the basis of the outcomes of the discussions were prepared.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

- Project on ‘Sensitisation, Capacity Building and Advocacy on the issue of Child Domestic Workers through forums/clubs in Schools in Jaipur City’ in partnership with SC (UK).
- Project on State level Seminar on ‘Education for Sustainable Future’ & Regional Workshop on “Land & Water Management for Sustainable Development’ to be held on September 7-9, 2005 in Jaipur, in partnership with CEE (Centre for Environment Education) Ahmedabad.
- Project on ‘Impact of globalisation on the capacity of the Indian State to deliver social goods: Case of water, with special reference to the State of Rajasthan’ in partnership with National Foundation for India (NFI), New Delhi.
- Concept note on ‘Alternative Livelihood Programmes for Youth in Afghanistan’ was submitted to the French Embassy in New Delhi on May 12, 2005 along with the request for a scoping mission. The same has been forwarded to the AFD (French Development Agency) in Paris.
- Project on ‘Developing a culture of investment in the rural areas’ was re-submitted to the IEPF, Ministry of Company Affairs on the June 6, 2005. Response awaited.
- Concept note on Participatory Public Expenditure Tracking (PPET) was submitted on June 18, 2005 to the World Bank on the water related expenditure for the district of Jaipur for a period of one year.
- The basic concept on the Social Audit (using score card) on Mid-day Meal Scheme in Rajasthan was shared with the World Bank and received comments. The concept note is under preparation.

PUBLICATIONS



CART IN MEDIA

