

About CART

Established in 1983 as a small voluntary group of concerned citizens, Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) expanded its activities and CUTS CART was set up in 1996 as a programme centre to pursue the cause of common consumers, initially being undertaken by CUTS as the mandate.

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 the issues of concern of the common man. The Centre has spearheaded several campaigns and pioneered consumer empowerment.

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Partnership for Development Knowledge Conference in Yemen

Two years ago, Yemen was on the brink of an all-out civil war, paralysed by political and security crisis, in a region swelling with protest against authoritarian regimes. Today, it is taking peaceful steps forward through dialogue, as the only Middle Eastern country with a negotiated transition and a clear roadmap for change.

The crisis erupted in Yemen in early 2011, as popular uprisings stirred elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. As the Yemenis themselves started to look for a way out, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and United Nations helped Yemen to establish a way forward to prevent a descent into civil war.

Laying out the steps for a return to peace and stability, the transition agreement paved the way for transitional elections, and Government of National Unity in early 2012 along with steps to begin a critical restructuring of the armed forces.

Carrying forward the next steps in the transition, Yemenis were engaged in broad-based national dialogue supported by the United Nations, which concluded in January 2014.

Instilling the concepts of transparency and accountability, empowering civil society organisations (CSOs) and opening new opportunities for



cooperation are important steps towards achieving democratic change. A cornerstone of the change process towards sustainable government-CSO partnerships is learning from international and regional experiences in countries that have undergone similar transitions.

Supporting government-CSO partnerships and constructive engagement is one of the key pillars of the World Bank's support in the MENA, and in Yemen specifically, which consists of strengthening the governance framework, both on the supply and demand side. As part of the World Bank's support, a Partnership for Development Knowledge Conference, supporting constructive engagement between Government of Yemen and CSOs, was organised in Sana'a, Yemen on March 04-06, 2014 with the objective to allow high-level decision makers and CSOs in Yemen learn from each other and international experiences.

On invitation from the Government of Yemen, as an international speaker George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International participated in the conference, jointly organised by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation of Yemen and the World Bank Group. Cheriyan made a presentation on 'Government-CSO Partnerships and Collaborations: Lessons from India' and facilitated a working group on 'Citizens Engagement in Service Delivery'.

He visited the Indian Embassy and met with the Ambassador, Amrit Lugun. The Indian Ambassador also hosted a dinner for him along with Mohammed Alhaweri, Deputy Minister for Planning and International Cooperation, Government of Yemen, Mariana T Felicio and Najat Yamouri, The World Bank, Washington DC. As an outcome of the conference, it was decided to take India as model for Yemen to study and incorporate best practices.



Insights into Indian States

CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART) with the support of the United Nations Development Programme undertook a project entitled, 'Insights into Indian States'. The objective was to highlight the successful as well as not so successful practices followed in the selected States, in the selected areas and help policymakers implement relevant policies in the best manner possible.

Mapping Best Practices in Rural Non-Farm Sector

After formal launch of the project in all four states, team identified schemes under Rural Non-Farm Sector (RNFS) and started working on action research. The basic information of all these selected schemes was collected by state partners and project management team. Team visited different places of all four targeted states and gathered cases from the selected schemes.

Madhu Sudan Sharma visited Assam during March 04-11, 2014 to conduct the action research and validate five cases and practices related to RNFS. He visited five institutions along with Manjit Barua, State Project Officer, Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development. He also visited Assam Rural Livelihood Mission office, Rural Department and North Eastern Development Finance Corporation.



Amar Deep Singh visited Karnataka during March 11-15, 2014. Sreedharan and Arvind L Sha of PAC accompanied him. Two specific cases of organisations named ATREE and OUTREACH were covered during the visit. MM Hills area of ATREE and Hosur Block of OUTREACH were visited to see the livelihood activities in the field. Focussed group discussions with beneficiaries in the field, interviews with officials of concerned organisations, brief discussion with government officials were conducted.

Arti Pandey Tiwari visited Odisha during March 04-08, 2014 to collect information about different government-supported interventions in the non-farm

livelihood sector, along with Seema Gupta, Centre for Youth and Social Development. The team visited Orissa Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS) under Odisha Livelihoods Mission and met with the Executive Director, B N Das.

Madhu Sudan Sharma and Arti Pandey Tiwari visited Urmul Trust, Bikaner on February 17-18, 2014 for documenting their weaving programme implemented by one of the sister organisation called 'Urmul Marusthali' Bunkar Vikas Samiti' based at Phalodi. They also visited Jaipur Rugs office on March 03, 2014 and Village Narhet of Alwar district on March 28, 2014 to view the field area and activities. They learned about the socio-economic business model of the organisation and visited five places where looms were installed and weavers working.



Improving Service Delivery in Jaipur

CUTS CART with the support of The Asia Foundation implemented a project entitled, 'Improving Service Delivery by Urban Local Government in the City of Jaipur through Enhanced Civic Engagement' (MyCity). The objective is to improve the service delivery of urban local government in the Jaipur city through enhanced civic engagement.

A councillors' consultation meeting was organised at Jaipur, on February 17, 2014 with the objective of building rapport with Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) councillors as well as to take their feedback on MyCity intervention. Nine councillors of JMC participated



and shared their views. Manish Pareek, Deputy Mayor of JMC addressed the participants. All councillors assured to extend necessary support for project activities.

World Consumer Rights Day 2014

Globally World Consumer Rights Day is celebrated on 15 March, and this year theme was 'Fix Our Phone Rights'. To mark the occasion, CUTS organised an interface meeting to discuss consumer concerns with leading telecom service providers at Jaipur. The meeting was attended by 30 representatives of



various consumer organisations, CSOs and representatives of service providers and few media persons. George Cheriyan chaired the meeting and Deepak Saxena made a presentation on the theme, which was followed by presentations by representatives of service providers.

Promote Organic Consumption in the State of Rajasthan

The Centre with the support of Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), Sweden is implementing this project to promote organic consumption in the State of Rajasthan (ProOrganic).

ProOrganic team visited various organic farms of Nawalgarh block of Jhunjhunu district in a trip organised by M R Morarka-GDC Rural Research Foundation, Jaipur on February 20, 2014. The team met two officials of Nawalgarh office – Sanjay Vasishtha, Programme Manager and Anil Saini, Programme Coordinator, who facilitated the visit by CUTS team. Officials provided basic information/inputs about organic farming, such as nadep compost, NSDL



compost, vermi compost, herbal spray, neem spray, dhatura spray, aak spray and vermi wash etc. through live demos.

They also showed basics of de-hydration system, down to earth, home farming and drip irrigation system. After completing the ground information in the Morarka office, the team left for visits to three farms, namely Beri, Kolra and Katrathal villages and experienced live organic farming demo of certified farmers. The team came to know about developing horticulture crop programmes, vegetation in green house and tray cultivation etc.

Consumer Rights in Non Store Retail



Amarjeet Singh attended a 'National Conference on Consumer Rights in Non Store Retail' organised by the Indian Direct Selling Association at New Delhi, on March 12, 2014. The conference was an initiative to deepen understanding of consumer rights in non-store retail sector. He was one of the panellists in Open Forum on *Creating Transparency for Consumer Rights in Non-Store Retail*.

Felicitation

P J Kurian, Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha felicitated George Cheriyan in a function at Tiruvalla, Kerala on January 07, 2014 for outstanding contribution to the welfare of the society, including the receipt of the Rhoda Karpatkin International Consumer Fellow Award from the American Council of Consumer Interests in 2013.



Meeting of the Central Consumer Protection Council

The 28th Meeting of the Central Consumer Protection Council (CCPC) was held at Kochi, Kerala on February 03, 2014. K V Thomas, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge), G Gurucharan, Additional Secretary, DoCA, Manoj Kumar Parida, Joint Secretary, DoCA, Charles Dias, Member of Parliament, M Okendro, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Government of Manipur, V Ratheesan, IAS, Managing Director, Consumerfed, few officials from DoCA and non-official members of CCPC attended the meeting.



The meeting commenced with prayer, lighting of the traditional lamp and welcoming guests with flower bouquet. Two minute silence was observed in memory of late Pankaj Agrawala, who passed away on January 24, 2014. The floor was opened up for discussions. Cheriyan actively participated in the discussions.

Identifying Misleading Advertisements

Taking cognisance of the problem of misleading advertisements and unfair trade practices (UTPs) and in order to safeguard the interests of consumers, the Government of India constituted an Inter-Ministerial Monitoring Committee (IMMC) on the issue of Misleading Advertisements in March 2014.

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International is appointed member of the IMMC as a representative from the CCPC. During two years, the Committee will meet periodically and look into complaints received, monitor misleading advertisements and UTPs, identify and recommend appropriate legislative measures to safeguard the interest of consumers. The Additional Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs will chair the Committee.

Global Green Action Week Workshop

Amar Deep Singh participated in the workshop on Global Green Action Week (GGAW) for partners on March 04-06, 2014 and Strategic Review of GGAW on March 07, 2014 organised by SSNC, Sweden jointly with PELUM Kenya at the Training Centre of Sustainable Agriculture Community Development Programme located in Thika, Kenya.

The objective of the workshop was to exchange experiences and strengthen capacity regarding campaigning methods for sustainable consumption focussed on agricultural food products. It also aimed at drawing lessons from the GGAW 2013 and to discuss how to make GGAW 2014 successful. The workshop was attended by 25 participants from eight different countries.



REPRESENTATION IN MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS ETC.

New Initiatives-Investor Protection and Education

Pradeep S Mehta, Amol Kulkarni, Deepak Saxena, Dharmendra Chaturvedi and Badri Narayan Sharma participated in a National Conference on 'New Initiatives-Investor Protection and Education' sponsored by PHD Chamber in association with Securities & Exchange Board of India and The Institute of Company Secretaries of India at Jaipur, on January 06, 2014.

Sustainable Textiles for Sustainable Development

Arti Pandey Tiwari attended a final dissemination workshop of Sustainable Textiles for Sustainable Development Project funded by European Commission under the SWITCH ASIA Programme and implemented by Tradecraft Exchange-UK, All India Artisans and Craft workers Association at Jaipur, on January 08, 2014.

Empowering Persons with Disabilities

George Cheriyan and Madhu Sudan Sharma participated in a book release entitled, 'Effectiveness of DPO in Empowering PWDs – A Case Study from Bikaner', organised by Sightsavers and screening of a video film on similar intervention at Jaipur, on January 20, 2014.

Citizen Participation in Local Democratic Governance

Om Prakash Arya participated in one-day consultation on 'Citizen Participation in Local Democratic Governance' organised by Participatory Research in Asia at Jaipur, on January 29, 2014. He made a presentation on *Challenges and Opportunities for CSOs in Rajasthan*.

Towards an Equitable and Just Internet

Arjun Kant Jha participated in a three-day global consultation on 'Towards an Equitable and Just Internet', organised by IT for Change, Bangalore at New Delhi, on February 14-16, 2014.

Open House by BSNL

Dharmendra Chaturvedi and Abhimanyu Singh attended a district-level Telecom public hearing in BSNL meeting hall Jaipur, on February 19, 2014.

Tobacco Control

Amar Deep Singh and Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended a meeting of District Monitoring and Steering Committee under tobacco control organised by Police Commissioner of Jaipur at Commissionerate office on February 19, 2014.

Pre-budget Workshop with MLAs

Om Prakash Arya participated in a pre-budget workshop with MLAs organised by Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre at Jaipur, on February 19, 2014.

Strengthening Road Safety Legislation in India

Rajeev D Mathur and Arjun Kant Jha attended a consultation on 'Strengthening Road Safety Legislation in India' supported by SaveLife Foundation at New Delhi, on March 01, 2014.

Railway Users' Consultative Committee

Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended a meeting of the Divisional Railway Users' Consultative Committee at Jaipur, on March 05, 2014.

Bureau of Indian Standards

Amarjeet Singh attended the BIS Resource Management Sectional Committee-MSD 12 meeting at BIS office, New Delhi on March 27, 2014.

Inequality in India: Major Dimensions and Policy Challenges

George Cheriyan attended a National Consultation on 'Inequality in India: Major Dimensions and Policy Challenges' organised by the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, in collaboration with Oxfam India at New Delhi, on March 25, 2014.

Protection of Consumer Rights in Digital Era

Amarjeet Singh attended a National Seminar on 'Protection of Consumer Rights in Digital Era' at Jamnalal Bajaj School of Legal Studies, Banasthali University, Rajasthan on March 30, 2014.

Upcoming Project

Campaign/Advocacy on the issue of sales incentives and mis-selling of financial products, affecting consumers' right to make an informed choice in partnership with Consumers International



CART IN MEDIA

