

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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GPSA Global Partners Forum

The Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA) hosted the first Global Partners Forum, in Washington DC, on May 14-15, 2014. GPSA is a programme hosted by the World Bank that supports civil society organisation (CSO)-led Social Accountability (SAC) initiatives through funding and knowledge products. The Forum was part of the GPSA's Knowledge and Learning Strategy, which lay emphasis on continued dialogue between partners and on sharing lessons learned, which will be disseminated and put into practice.

The Forum was an unique opportunity to bring together more than 200 participants representing 165 organisations from 50 countries, which includes diverse array of development agencies, international CSOs and local organisations and private sector groups from around the globe –

alongside government representatives and the World Bank staff. The Forum was an occasion to recognise, connect and share knowledge with many relevant actors in the field of SAC. The guiding question of the Forum was 'What works in SAC?' The GPSA



proposes a pragmatic *problem-solving approach* to SAC interventions, grounded in realistic theories of change and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Other than George Cheriyan, representatives from Participatory Research in Asia and Accountability Initiative from India attended the Forum.

The Forum commenced with opening remarks by Sanjay Pradhan, Vice President, World Bank. It was followed by a keynote presentation by Jonathan Fox, Professor, American University, Washington DC. The breakout session was on 'What works in SAC?'. Breakout sessions and panel discussions on various relevant topics were facilitated by different experts.

A highlight of the Forum was the dialogue of participants with the World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim. Stella Dawson, Chief Correspondent on Governance and Anti-Corruption at Thomson Reuters interviewed Kim. In a prelude session on 'Framing the Dialogue' forum insights, lessons and questions were consolidated and the same were shared to Kim by rapporteurs. He stated that SAC can improve development effectiveness and hence governance and accountability is one of the important portfolios of the Bank. He further said that GPSA is the fundamental change the way Bank look at the civil society.



The dialogue and interaction with the World Bank President helped in understanding the Bank's position on governance and accountability issues. The Forum was very good opportunity for networking with donors, government and CSOs working on governance issues.

Consumers in the Digital Age 2014

Deepak Saxena participated in the regional meeting of Consumers International (CI) for Asia, Pacific and the Middle East (CIAPME) members organised at Thailand. He also attended the international seminar on 'Consumers in the Digital Age'. The regional meeting of CI CIAPME is held every year.

The aim of the meeting was to discuss CI's global strategic plans especially in relation to Food Security, Consumers in the Digital Age, Consumer Justice & Protection, Financial Services and other global campaigns with members of Asia, Pacific and the Middle East. 12 representatives from India attended the meeting. The seminar was organised by CI along with Foundation for Consumers, Thailand and National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission. More than 200 participants, including the CIAPME members attended the seminar.



Validating Practices in the Non-farm Sector

During April-June 2014, a total number of 15 practices have been validated in the sector of rural non-farm livelihood in Rajasthan under the project entitled, 'Insight into Indian (I3S) States' supported by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Out of these 15 practices, 12 are into the handicraft and three into the vocational training sector respectively.

On further categorising 12 practices of handicrafts, eight are in the domain of handloom, weaving and embroidery sector, viz. carpet weaving of Lawan, Namda sheets of Tonk, famous practice of *Kota Doria*, hand-block printing of Bagru, *Kashidakari* of Barmer, *Aari-tari* of Nayla, two are covered in pottery – the Terracotta pottery of Pokhran and the famous Blue-pottery of Jaipur and one each is specifically into the handmade leather products and brassware carving respectively.

Out of three practices which are into the vocational training, one is specifically devoted to provide masonry training to the tribal community of Kathodi, residing in the southern Rajasthan. Thus, a total of seven districts of Rajasthan have been covered to validate the livelihood practices in the non-farm. Arti Pandey Tiwari along with Varidhi Singh made these visits.



Madhu Sudan Sharma visited Karnataka during May 19-23, 2014. He visited several places in Mysore and covered practices, such as terracotta jewelry and fancy items of *dorra* and stone, *zari* and other works of *belavatha*, *beedi*, stone and Self Help Groups at T Narsipura.

Visit of Assam state was done by Amar Deep Singh during June 02-07, 2014. Manjit Mahanta, Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change & Development (OKDISCD) accompanied him for field visits. Specific cases of four different agencies and organisations were covered during the visit. Focus group discussions (FGDs) with beneficiaries in the field, interviews with concerned officials of implementing organisations and others were conducted during the visits.

Community Monitoring of Roads under PMGSY

Partners meeting under Community Monitoring of *Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana* (PMGSY) road project organised by Public Affairs Centre (PAC) jointly with National Rural Road Development Agency (NRRDA) was held on June 15-16, 2014 to share experiences from phase-1 and plan phase-2 of the project. Officials of the National Rural Roads Development Agency (NRRDA), Karnataka Rural Roads Development Agency (KRRDA), World Bank and representatives of State Rural Roads Development Agency (RRDA) were present in the meeting.

Madhu Sudan Sharma and Amardeep Singh shared experiences with participants from Rajasthan and provided suggestions to improve the condition of PMGSY roads in the state. State-level consultations will be organised in each partner state. Consultation of Rajasthan will be organised in July 2014.

MyCity: Improving the Quality of Delivery of Urban Services in Jaipur

A consultation meeting was organised with the officials of Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) at Jaipur on April 09, 2014. Total 11 officials including commissioners, health officers, revenue officers, executive engineers etc. participated. The meeting was aimed to share objectives of the project and to build the rapport with officials for effective implementation. This consultation was also helpful in understanding the problems, shortcoming in the delivery of services by JMC officials.

To review the progress of phase II of the project, Mandakini Devasher Surie, Senior Programme Officer, The Asia Foundation visited Jaipur on April 24, 2014. She visited Mayor's residence along with George Cheriyan and Amar Deep Singh and met with Jyoti Khandelwal, Mayor of Jaipur City and discussed the project. Mayor appreciated efforts made under MyCity to engage citizens in urban areas. She also raised various issues related to the civic sense.



Surie participated in a community meeting conducted by the *Maulik Foundation* at ward 64. There were around 30 local residents including community action group (CAG) members. From the service providers' side, there were representatives of stray animals, street lights, water supply, sanitation, representative of the Deputy Mayor etc. Participants raised local issues and discussed possible solutions with service providers.

During June 2014, total six interface meetings were organised in different wards of the city by partner organisations. The team attended the meeting and facilitated the discussion. These meetings were attended by local residents, ward councillors and service providers, including officials from JMC zonal offices. Discussions took place in the meeting regarding local ward specific issues which were addressed by the councillors and other service providers from zonal offices.

Sensitising Farmers on Organic Farming in Rajasthan

Six District Level Orientation and Exposure Visits for farmer groups were conducted during April-June 2014 for motivating them to reduce chemical uses in farming and showcase organic farming under the ProOrganic project supported by Swedish Society for Nature Conversation (SSNC). A total of 262 males and 120 female farmers participated in the event.

During district level orientation workshops, Scientist from *Krishi Vigyan Kendra* at all districts became the local resource person, whereas National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Agricultural Banks, Agriculture Department, Horticulture Department and Rajasthan State Seeds Corporation at some districts provided information of their respective institutions. Participation of various agricultural institutions resolved queries of farmers regarding various available schemes. The activity will bring farmers and institutions closer, which will reap good results.



During exposure visits, local organic farming sites were visited, which were managed by local agriculture farmers. Farmers provided their experiences in adopting organic farming and results in terms of monetary benefits, assets, quality and quantity of production and health aspects.

Conference on Consumer Rights



Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ-India) organised two conferences under Consumer Policy and Protection (CPP) Programme of GIZ at New Delhi. The first conference on 'Enforcement of Fair Commercial Practices: Appropriate Legislative Measures' was held on April 14, 2014. The objective was to present findings of studies undertaken by national and international experts under the programme and finalise the future course of action.

George Cheriyan and Amarjeet Singh attended the conference and made a presentation on GIZ-supported CUTS' study to 'Analyse and Document the Knowledge Gaps for Issues/Challenges Arising from Unfair and Misleading Advertising in India'. Cheriyan was also one of the panellists on the topic 'Possible Institutional Measures of Stakeholders to Enforce Fair Commercial Practices'.

The conference on 'Safe Consumer Products' was held on April 15, 2014.

REPRESENTATION IN MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS ETC.

Expanding Enabling Environment

Arjun Kant Jha attended a FGD on issue of Enabling Environment for Voluntary Organisation, organised by VANI in Jaipur on April 09, 2014. The objective of the FGD is to collect the information and identify different legal and operational (opportunities and problems) aspects of CSO at the national level.

Launch of Centre for Road Safety

Arjun Kant Jha and Dharmendra Chaturvedi participated in the function to launch the Centre for Road Safety at Rajasthan Police Academy, Jaipur on April 10, 2014. The purpose of the function was to inform line departments and NGOs about the facilities available for conducting monitoring, evaluation, research, analysis etc. on road safety issues.

Water Sustainability with Rain Water Harvesting

Varidhi Singh participated in the Conference on Water Sustainability with Rain Water Harvesting, organised by PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry at SMS Convention Centre, Jaipur on May 01, 2014. The conference was organised to sensitise different stakeholders on the need of conserving water through various mechanisms.

Rethinking Financial Inclusion

Amarjeet Singh participated in the Regional Event on 'Financial Capability - A People-centred Approach to Rethink Financial Inclusion' organised by Centre for Micro Finance in partnership with GIZ at Jaipur on May 09, 2014. The main objective was to share the findings of a study conducted by GIZ on issues and share the tools used.

Ecological Workshop for Youth from Rajasthan

Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended an Ecological Workshop for Youth from Rajasthan as resource person organised by Grameen Vikas Sodh Avam Takniki Kendra, Tonk at Jaipur, on June 11, 2014.

Alliance for Immunisation

Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended Rajasthan Core Team Meeting organised by Alliance for Immunisation in India (All) on June 19, 2014. All is managed by Catholic Health Association of India and NGOs from different parts of Rajasthan are its members. The main objective of All was to improve immunisation coverage with quality, to the underserved population in Rajasthan. The meeting was chaired by All Chairman Bhupendra Tripathi. Total 20 NGOs attended this meeting.

Upcoming Project

Global Green Action Week Campaign on 'Safer and Sustainable Food for All' in partnership with Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC)



CART IN MEDIA

