

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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Improving Quality of Urban Services through Enhanced Civic Engagement

49 percent of people throws garbage in the open land; 75 percent admit that they face problems due to stray animals; 50 percent do not get any effective solution of complaints made by them. These were some of the key findings presented in the 'Dissemination cum Advocacy Meeting' organised by CUTS in Jaipur on August 28, 2014 under the project entitled 'MyCity' supported by The Asia Foundation, New Delhi. The objective of the project is to improve service delivery of Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) through enhanced civic engagement.

Jyoti Khandelwal, Mayor, JMC while delivering the keynote address said that as development is a continuous process, problems keep emerging; hence efforts should be made continuously. She said that ward committees should be formed and even there is a provision in the Municipal Corporation Act for the same. She said that as we keep our houses clean, we should also consider the city as our own and keep the same clean.

Ratna Jain, Mayor, Kota Municipal Corporation through a presentation briefed on interventions made by her through use of technology, especially the mobile application



where any citizen can not only go through the required information but also file complaint. She said that there is confusion among citizens due to multiple agencies and lack of awareness with regard to the scope of work. She also emphasised on the lack of financial resources to carry out the desired interventions.

Sagar Parsai, Country Representative, The Asia Foundation briefed that there can be a debate on the findings presented, however perception on lapses need to be addressed. Hence, it is important to get feedback of citizens for improving quality in the delivery of services.

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International in the opening remarks said that Jaipur is a fast growing city having population of 33.5 lakh in 2014. He pointed out that 73rd Amendment of the Constitution is functioning well in rural areas, however there is no progress on the implementation of 74th Amendment, such as formation of ward *sabhas* in urban bodies.

Rao Rajendra Singh, MLA, Rajasthan said that as citizens we should fulfill our fundamental duties and make efforts towards conservation of human capital. He emphasised on the need of developing civic sense for a better future. He also said that there should be a dialogue among leaders across political parties for better outputs.

Manish Pareek, Deputy Mayor, JMC raised that the required devolution of powers to elected representatives in urban local bodies has not happened due to various reasons which is resulting in poor service delivery.

More than 100 participants participated in the meeting including representatives of Jaipur-based civil society organisations (CSOs), resident welfare societies, councillors of various wards, officials from JMC and other line departments as well as media.

Stop Financial Mis-selling to Maintain Trust in Banking

“Banking is nothing but trust” and complaints of mis-selling of financial products is resulting in erosion of the trust in banking system”, said V G Sekar, General Manager, Department of Banking Supervision, Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Regional Office, Rajasthan.

He was delivering the opening address in a consultation on RBI’s Draft Charter of Customer Rights, organised by CUTS under the project on ‘Right to Choice of Consumers of Financial Services, with special focus on the issue of Mis-selling and Financial Incentives in Indian Banks’, in partnership with Consumers International and Which? (UK) at Jaipur on September 18, 2014. The purpose of the consultation was to discuss and gather feedback of various stakeholders on the Charter and consolidate recommendations for submission to RBI.



A B Das, Secretary and DGM, Office of Banking Ombudsman office (Jaipur), RBI said they received number of complaints on mis-selling of products and asked commercial banks repose trust in the banks as they survive and thrive only due to trust of customers.

George Cheriyan said the draft Charter issued by RBI on customer rights is a welcome step and shift in the approach from ‘buyers beware’ to ‘sellers beware’. However, a clear roadmap for the implementation of the Charter is missing, leaving it to the interpretation of each bank. The consultation was attended by around 35 delegates, including senior officers of banks, organisations working on financial issues, consumer activists and media, who provided valuable suggestions on the issue.

Validating Practices through Field Research

A total of more than 45 practices in the rural non-farm livelihood sector were researched, validated and documented under the Insight Into Indian States (IIS) project supported by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), India during July-September 2014.

Varidhi Singh and Jaishree Rathore made a visit to Udaipuriya village of Jaipur district to study its Leather Cluster. The visit was facilitated by Harinarayan Sonkariya, Master Artisan of Udaipuriya Leather Cluster. As a cluster, it constitutes around 500 households with gender equality. The cluster has been involved in the business of crafting leather products. Its major product is famous ‘*Rajasthani Jooti*’.



Jaishree Rathore visited Bangalore and Mysore during August 25-28, 2014. The purpose of visit was to review the progress of the documentation of cases by S N Fathima, Development Consultant, Mysore. She visited seven villages along with Fathima and Public Affairs Centre (PAC), Bangalore and met with Harish and Suranjan Dutt in order to review the progress of the documentation by PAC.

Madhu Sudan Sharma visited Berhampur and Bhuvneshwar, Odisha during September 08-11, 2014 in connection with monitoring-cum-facilitation of the action research and other project activities undertaken by the Odisha consulting organisation – Youth for Social Development (YSD) and State partner – Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD). He met with three weavers’ cooperative societies and one women SHG federation in Berhampur which is running a shop on wheels and an outlet for its products in Berhampur district.



Amrat Singh visited Udaipur and Rajsamand districts in order to visit field locations for documenting case studies under the project. Two organisations ‘*Sadhna*’ promoted by *Sevamandir* and ‘*Shree Nath Grameen Dastkar Samiti*’ promoted by ‘*Vishvas Sansthan*’ including their field locations were visited.

Organic Food and Farming for All

The campaign was supported by Swedish Society for Nature Conservation under the Green Action Week and aimed at facilitating awareness generation among consumers of Jaipur city of Rajasthan about organic food.

During September 2014, a total number of nine cottage meetings were organised in nine different localities of Jaipur targeting urban consumers. In each of these meetings, consumers were



informed about the simple technique of growing organic kitchen garden through the medium of tray cultivation. Experts on the theme of ‘Organic Food and Farming for All’ facilitated the cottage meetings.

A total number of 10 street plays were organised at various market places to reach out to a wider audience in an attempt to modify consumer behaviour in favour of organic products. For conducting plays, *Ras Rang Manch*, a Jaipur-based street play group was given the responsibility. A signature campaign was also organised.



Urban Governance Issues and Challenges in India

A team from The Asia Foundation visited CUTS on September 17, 2014 to learn about urban governance issues and challenges in India and to know more about the MyCity intervention in Jaipur. Barbara Smith, Senior Director for Governance and Law and John Taylor, Urban Governance Consultant of The Asia Foundation, US along with Sagar Prasai, Country Representative and Mandakini Surie, Senior Programme Officer, The Asia Foundation India were part of the team.



The meeting was held at conference hall where they met with governance team members. The team also visited State Commission on Urbanisation for meeting with K K Bhatnagar, Chairman of the Commission to had discussions on the 'Urban Governance Issues and Challenges in India, with Special Reference to Rajasthan'. Bhatnagar appreciated efforts made under MyCity to engage citizens in urban areas.

Community Monitoring of Roads

The dissemination meeting of the Phase-1 findings was organised by Rajasthan Rural Roads Development Agency (RRRDA) at SMS Convention Centre, Jaipur on July 14, 2014. In the meeting, National Rural Roads Development Agency (NRRDA) official Manju Rajpal, Deputy Secretary (RC) & Project Leader, *Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana* (RRP II), Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India and the World Bank representative Satyanad Mishra took part along with more than 50 participants from RRRDA. George Cheriyan provided a brief introduction and Madhu Sudan Sharma made a detailed presentation on the monitoring done in Rajasthan.

Pre-proposal Workshops under NEAC

Five Divisional Level Pre-Proposal Open Workshops were organised at Chittorgarh (Udaipur Division), Kota, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Jaipur on August 04, 05, 06, 07 & 12 respectively. By the deadline of August 20, 2014 a total 360 applications were received.



Promote Organic Consumption in Rajasthan

Awareness campaigns are scheduled under the project entitled, 'Promote Organic Consumption in the State of Rajasthan' (Pro-Organic) supported by Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) in selected 102 *gram panchayats* of all six districts during August 2014-January 2015 with the aim to make consumers aware of available organic products and influence their buying habits by use of street plays, posters, handouts etc.



The campaigns commenced during August 2014. Arjun Kant Jha attended the awareness campaign at Chittorgarh and Kota on September 10 & 11, 2014 respectively and Deepak Saxena at Dausa on September 29-30, 2014.

Building Capacity of Consumer Advocacy Groups

Deepak Saxena participated in a regional workshop on 'Capacity Building of Consumer Advocacy Groups' (CAGs) organised by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) at Surat (Gujarat), on September 26, 2014. The objective of the



workshop was to build capacities and appraise CAGs about functions, activities and initiatives of TRAI in the recent past. About 10 representatives of registered CAGs from the region attended the meeting. Saxena made a presentation about CUTS work in the area of telecom.

CART Mini Retreat



CART Mini Retreat was held at Hotel Royal Orchid Central on September 06, 2014. Rajendra Bhanawat (IAS ret'd), Chairman, *Doosara Dashak* was the guest speaker and delivered the opening address. George Cheriyan chaired the entire discussion. Madhu Sudan Sharma made a presentation on CUTS' Strategic Business Plan (2013-17).

REPRESENTATION IN MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS ETC.

India Policy Forum

Varidhi Singh attended 11th India Policy Forum organised by National Council of Applied Economic Research at New Delhi on July 15-16, 2014.

Dealing with Misleading Adverts

George Cheriyan attended the first meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Monitoring Committee held at Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA), New Delhi on July 18, 2014.

Smuggled and Counterfeit Food Products

George Cheriyan attended a Roundtable on Smuggled and Counterfeit Food Products organised jointly by DoCA and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry-Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying Economy at Federation House, FICCI, New Delhi on July 24, 2014.

Preventing Telemarketing Fraud

George Cheriyan attended a one-day roundtable on 'Preventing Telemarketing Fraud: A Multi-Stakeholder Response: Coordinating Enforcement, Education, and Technological Solutions' organised by Bureau of Consumer Protection of US Federal Trade Commission at New Delhi on July 30, 2014.

Food Safety and Standards

George Cheriyan attended the 12th meeting of Central Advisory Committee of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on August 01, 2014. CUTS is member of FSSAI.

Consultation on Public Distribution System

Madhu Sudan Sharma participated in a Stakeholder Consultation organised by Independent Evaluation Office, Government of India, on the issue of Public Distribution System at New Delhi on July 28, 2014.

Economic Burden of Tobacco Related Diseases in Rajasthan

Amrat Singh participated in the event organised by Rajasthan Voluntary Health Association to release highlights of the report on 'Economic Burden of Tobacco Related Diseases in Rajasthan' on August 13, 2014.

Amendments to COPRA and BIS Act

Amarjeet Singh attended Stakeholder Consultation meetings organised by DoCA to finalise proposals for amendments to Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and Consumer Protection Act (COPRA) at New Delhi on September 02 & 03, 2014 respectively.

Panel Discussion on Medical Ethics

Deepak Saxena attended a panel discussion on medical ethics at Jaipur on September 03, 2014. The event was organised to mark the birth centenary of Dr L M Sanghvi, a famous cardiologist from Rajasthan.

Sanitation Situation of Government Schools in Jaipur

Jaishree Rathore participated in planning meeting on 'Sanitation Situation of Government Schools in Jaipur' organised by Centre for Advocacy and Research at Jaipur, on September 11, 2014.

Enhancing Outreach of Producer Organisations' Development Fund

Amrat Singh participated in the workshop on 'Enhancing Outreach of Producer Organisations' Development Fund' organised by National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development on September 16, 2014.

Collaborative Action for Inclusive Cities

Amardeep Singh and Vipin Chawla attended a state level consultation on 'Collaborative Action for Inclusive Cities' organised by Participatory Research in South Asia at Jaipur, on September 19, 2014.



CART IN MEDIA

