

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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More than 90% Farmers are Aware of Negative Effects of Chemicals and Pesticides

About 91.3 percent of farmers are aware of negative effects of chemicals and pesticides. However, 90.7 percent of them use chemical-based fertilisers and pesticides as it gives high yield. These are some of the findings of a study conducted by CUTS International in six major agriculture potential districts of Rajasthan: Jaipur, Dausa, Chittorgarh, Pratapgarh, Udaipur and Kota covering 1536 consumers and 1529 farmers.

Findings of the study were released in 'Annual State Level Stakeholder Consultation and Feedback Meeting' organised as part of the 'Pilot Project to Promote Organic Consumption in the State of Rajasthan'. The project is being implemented by CUTS with the support of Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC).

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS in his opening remarks stated that promoting organic farming is a key component under National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture. 'National



Project on Organic Farming' commenced in 2004 but even after 10 years there is only 0.3 percent of cultivated land under organic farming, i.e. 5.2 million hectare. Organic farming in India has to go a long way.

As special guest of the programme Shital Prasad Sharma, Director, Agriculture Department, Government of Rajasthan appreciated CUTS and SSNC for the integrated efforts to put together the production and consumption sides.

Amarjeet Singh, Project Coordinator, CUTS through a presentation shared that only 25.2 percent consumers have purchased organic products at any point of time although 78 percent are aware of ill-effects of pesticides. The awareness is low among women which was found at 28 percent. The encouraging fact is that 98 percent consumers expressed willingness to purchase if organic products are available. He further shared that 2.8 percent farmers use only organic input, 39.2 percent use only chemical while 57.9 percent use a mix of both organic and chemical. Certification awareness is found to be an issue as only 13.6 percent farmers are found aware of organic certification.

Sharing the experiences from Sweden, Sara Nilsson said that 2.5 percent population of Sweden is member of SSNC – a 105-year old organisation having partners worldwide. She stated that organic consumption has considerably increased in Sweden in the last two years and they want it to be increased worldwide. Promoting organic consumption is one of the key areas of work for SSNC. She also opined that 40 organisations and 25 countries participated in the Green Action Week organised worldwide during October 2014. During the event, Ulrika Hjertstrand, in-charge of Green Action Week in SSNC at the international-level was also present.

S S Rathore, Programme Coordinator, *Krishi Vigyan Kendra* (KVK); Surendra Babu, Assistant General Manager, National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD); B D Yadav, Professor of Vegetable Cultivation in Agriculture Research Institute, Durgapura also addressed the participants including officials from state government, consumer activists, scientists from research institutes, NGO representatives and farmers.

Green Action Week: State Level Stakeholder Consultation

To mark the conclusion of the Green Action Week Campaign, a State Level Stakeholder Consultation on the theme 'Organic food and farming for all' was organised at Jaipur on October 16, 2014. The aim of the consultation was to advocate for a shift in policy towards organic consumption and production.



George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS in his opening remarks cited certain studies which stated that there are 140 percent of pesticides than the allowed limit in fruits, such as Apple and Orange. He said locations which use water with highly toxic materials, such as from *Amanishah Nallah*, are supplying vegetables with toxic components which constitute about 20 percent of consumption in the city.

R A Mishra, General Manager, NABARD, shared his experience of working on issue of organic farming through farmer clubs and briefed about the initiatives

of NABARD, such as credit schemes for organic cultivation. Sheetal Prasad Sharma, Additional Director, National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm, Department of Agriculture, Government of Rajasthan briefed about the National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture and Sub-Mission on Organic Agriculture. K Ram Krishna, Director of Research, SKN Agriculture University, Jobner through a presentation, said that there are serious health concerns due to polluted environment, unsafe drinking water and food. Sanjay Jhala, Deputy Director, Department of Food & Consumer Affairs, linked the need of organic farming and consumption with the traditional values and emphasised on adopting good moral values.

As part of the event, a panel discussion was also held in which experts from different agencies participated including S S Rathore, in-charge, KVK, Chomu; A C Shivran, Professor of Agronomy, SKN University of Agriculture; and Satyaveer Beniwal, Deputy General Manager, Morarka Foundation. More than 70 representatives from civil society/consumer organisations, farmers' groups, media and government departments participated.

Promoting Organic Consumption in Rajasthan

Being part of the ongoing awareness campaign under the project entitled, 'Promoting Organic Consumption in the State of Rajasthan' (ProOrganic), an awareness camp was organised for SSNC representatives on November 15, 2014 so that they can participate and see the actual implementation of the campaign.



After visiting the organic farm in Khatwa (Lalsot), Sara Nilsson and Ulrika Hjertstrand from SSNC participated in the camp. The camp was organised in the village *Chaupal*. More than 150 participants, including large number of women, who were very excited to meet and interact with the SSNC team participated. Sara Nilsson spoke in the *Chaupal* meeting. R N Sharma, Programme Coordinator of KVK, Dausa and R A Sharma, Horticultural Scientist from KVK were key technical speakers in the camp.

National Consumer Convention

George Cheriyan, as a resource person, attended the National Consumer Convention on 'Challenges facing Indian Consumers: Suggestions on a National Consumer Policy' organised by Consumer Coordination Council (CCC) with support of Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India on at New Delhi on October 10, 2014.

Ram Vilas Paswan, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution inaugurated the national convention. Cheriyan chaired a session on 'Views of Prominent Consumer Organisations on Challenges facing Indian Consumers' and also made a presentation on the topic. He



attended the 22nd Annual General Body Meeting of CCC at New Delhi on October 11, 2014 and spoke on 'Role of Consumer Organisations in the Redressal of Grievances of Consumers'.

Urban Citizenship in India

George Cheriyan and Amar Deep Singh attended a workshop on 'Urban Citizenship in India' and release of the report of Citizenship Index organised by the Janaagraha at Bangalore on December 16, 2014. Janaagraha and Brown University, US jointly conducted a study concerning the quality of citizenship in urban India. During the event, they met with some of the representatives from Brown University, Azim Premji Foundation, Bangalore University, Janaagraha and others and shared urban governance work of CUTS. They also met with Patrick Heller, Brown University, US and discussed the possibilities of collaboration.

Improving Service Delivery through Civic Engagement

A Civil Society Organisation (CSO) consultation was organised at Jaipur on November 27, 2014 in which around 35 CSO representatives participated. AK Ojha, Centre for Development & Communications; P N Mandola, Lok Sampati Sanrakshan Samiti; and Anshu Singh, Participatory Research in Asia were main speakers in the session on 'Current Context of the Local Governance and Role of Civil Society Organisations to Improve the Quality of Services'.

Councillors' consultation meeting was organised at Jaipur on December 30, 2014 in which around 40 participants including councillors of different wards, representatives of partner CSOs participated. Amar Deep Singh presented an overview of MyCity project and Amrat Singh facilitated the discussion.



Councillors who were recently elected shared their thoughts about the project and responded to queries raised by CSOs.

Around 25 participants

including senior officials and representatives from Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) and partner CSOs attended the consultation. Jagdish Sharma, Senior Town Planner, JMC appreciated MyCity project for creating a space for citizens' participation. Other officials also discussed various issues which need more focus and attention at the ward-level.

Meeting with Ram Vilas Paswan



Ram Vilas Paswan invited few consumer organisations for one-to-one meeting on November 21, 2014. Pradeep S Mehta and George Cheriyan met with the Minister. He mainly inquired about the problems faced by common consumers and the possible solutions. Mehta responded to his queries and touched upon various issues, such as low level of awareness at the grassroots; functioning of the consumer fora; issue of banning of lawyers from the District Forums', need to strengthen the BIS etc. A set of CUTS publications was also presented to him.

Amendment to Consumer Protection Act

George Cheriyan and Amarjeet Singh attended a stakeholder workshop on 'Fourth Amendment to Consumer Protection Act, 1986', at New Delhi on November 24, 2014. The purpose of the workshop was to seek comments on the proposed amendments to the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. It was attended by representatives of voluntary consumer organisations, industry bodies, legal education institutes and officials from Department of Consumer Affairs. Ram Vilas Paswan chaired the meeting. Raosaheb Dadarao Danve, Minister of State; Keshav Desiraju, Secretary, DoCA; G. Gurucharan, Additional Secretary were present.



Documentary on Power Theft: *Katiyabaaz*

Katiyabaaz (Powerless) is an award winning documentary feature that narrates the story of conflict between citizens of Kanpur and its bankrupt electricity supply company, and is told through the eyes of two protagonists – a woman bureaucrat and an electricity thief whose actions contribute heavily to the electricity utility's losses.



CUTS CART organised the screening of *Katiyabaaz* and Panel Discussion on 'Curbing Power Theft' at Jaipur, Rajasthan on December 16, 2014. In the opening session, RG Gupta, Advisor, Department of Energy; R C Sharma, Director (Engineering), Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Authority (RERC); and K L Vyas, Ex-Member, RERC spoke on the issue of power theft in Rajasthan. During the panel discussion, Chhavi Rajawat, *Sarpanch*, Sodha village; Rajendra Bora, Senior Media Person; R C Sharma,; and Sunny Sebastian, Vice-Chancellor, Harideo Joshi University of Journalism and Mass Communication expressed their insights on issues presented in the documentary. There were around 105 participants representing CSOs, NGOs working on related issues, media and academics.

REPRESENTATION IN MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS ETC.

Excellence in Public Service/Administration

George Cheriyan participated in 'International Symposium on Excellence in Public Service/Public Administration' organised by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Government of India, with support from the United Nations Development Programme at New Delhi, on October 07-08, 2014.

USI State level Stakeholders Meeting

Amarjeet Singh attended 3rd USI State level Stakeholders meeting organised by Micronutrient initiative in Jaipur on October 10, 2014.

World Standards Day

Deepak Saxena and Dharmendra Chaturvedi participated in an event to mark the World Standards Day jointly organised by BIS, Jaipur office and Vishwakarma Industries Association, Jaipur on October 14, 2014.

Meeting of Consumer Organisations

George Cheriyan, Deepak Saxena and Amarjeet Singh met with Subodh Agrawal, Principal Secretary, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Government of Rajasthan on October 16, 2014. The meeting was called to get acquainted with the work consumer organisations are doing in the area of consumer protection and explore possibility of involving them in department's local campaigns.

Resource Management Sectional Committee

Amarjeet Singh attended the fourth meeting of the Resource Management Sectional Committee, MSD 12 of Bureau of Indian Standards at New Delhi on November 25, 2014.

Dilution of Development Policy

Amrat Singh participated in a seminar on 'Dilution of Development Policy and Need to Strengthen them' jointly organised by the Academy of Socio-legal Studies and the Alternative Development and Research Centre, at Jaipur on November 08, 2014.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Jai Shree Rathore participated in a National Seminar on Corporate Social Responsibility organised by Centre for Social Development, at Jaipur on November 21-22, 2014.

State Advisory Committee of RERC

Deepak Saxena and Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended the 17th meeting of State Advisory Committee of RERC, held at Jaipur on November 19, 2014.

Review of Public Procurement Policy

Amrat Singh and Madhu Sudan Sharma participated in the World Bank Seminar to review its operational procurement policy on December 11, 2014.

Better Working Conditions in the Natural Stone Sector

Amrat Singh participated in a multi-stakeholder event on 'Policy and Practice for Better Working Conditions in the Natural Stone Sector in Rajasthan' organised by ARAVALI and Ethical Trading Initiative at Jaipur on December 23, 2014.

Pre-Budget Consultation

Madhu Sudan Sharma participated in a consultation organised by Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre, at Jaipur on December 24, 2014.

National Consumer Day

Dharmendra Chaturvedi and Amarjeet Singh attended State level Government function on the occasion of National Consumer Day at Jaipur on December 24, 2014. The theme was 'Misleading Advertisements'.



CART IN MEDIA

