

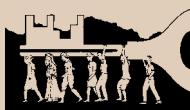
About CART

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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Organic Farming is the Future of India

“Organic farming is the need of the hour not only for consumers and producers but also to save the Mother Earth as the use of chemicals in the soil has reduced the nutritional value tremendously”, said Prabhu Lal Saini, Agricultural Minister of Rajasthan while delivering the address at the formal launch of the ProOrganic-Phase II Project, to promote organic farming in the state of Rajasthan.

Saini highlighted initiatives undertaken by the Government of Rajasthan in the form of *Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana* (PKVY) in which ₹30,000 is proposed to be given to a farmer in three years to practice organic farming. He also mentioned initiatives taken by Chief Minister Vasundhra Raje in which an incentive of ₹6/kg is being given to produce and export fruits, vegetables, flowers and spices and also to include markets and shops in *mandis* for organic products. The Minister cited the example of Dungarpur district which will soon be declared as the first fully organic production district of Rajasthan.

Rao Rajendra Singh, Deputy Speaker, Rajasthan Legislative Assembly applauded the efforts of Rajasthan government in introducing a culture of organic farming. He laid stress on preparing a roadmap to increase the income of farmers and incentivise them along with changing their mindset to turn them in favour of organic farming.

In his opening address, George Cherian, Director, CUTS International said there is a need to work with a multi-dimensional approach taking into consideration the demands of consumers, sensitising farmers and also advocating with the government. Highlighting the importance of Sustainable Consumption, he said it is all about doing more and better with less natural resources, pollutants and waste and helping the future generation to meet their own needs. Cherian also pointed at lack of ways to regulate the use of chemicals in field leading to unscientific and excessive use of pesticides and fertilisers.

Based on the learnings from the first phase of the ProOrganic intervention, he stressed on issues and problems for farmers to switch to organic way of production as they are scared to lose the yield and revenue, and therefore advocated for the need to provide subsidy to farmers along with provision of inputs who are willing to shift towards organic farming. At present, the National Programme for Organic Production has an export-oriented perspective which needs immediate attention to focus on domestic consumption instead. He urged to take initiatives to address the gap between demand and supply of organic products.

Rajdeep Pareek, Project Officer, CUTS gave a detailed presentation on objectives and activities to be covered in the project. Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS delivered the welcome address and explained the project in brief.

Many other eminent personalities, such as Vikas Sitaram Bhale, Commissioner, Agriculture, Government of Rajasthan; Sheetal Sharma, Director, Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers; Hema Yadav, Director, National Institute of Agricultural Marketing; Kanika Varma, Associate Professor, Department of Home Science, Rajasthan University; and P L Patel, Theme Leader, Vaagdhara Sansthan, Banswara delivered speeches and presentations.



Digital Financial Services and Financial Inclusion

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) organised a workshop on 'Digital Financial Services and Financial Inclusion', in partnership with the World Bank and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation at Washington DC on April 19, 2017. The main objective of this workshop was to



disseminate final outputs of the ITU Focus Group Digital Financial Services and provide an overview of future events.

More than 70 participants attended the workshop. Cherian was the speaker on the issue of data protection and also provided responses on transparency and questions from the audience.

Journey of Public Procurement in Rajasthan

A dissemination-cum-advocacy workshop on 'Journey of Public Procurement in Rajasthan: Current Status, Recent Initiatives and Challenges' was organised at Jaipur on April 11, 2017. 54 procuring officers participated. Eminent personalities such as Sandeep Verma, Principal Secretary, Public Health and Engineering Department; Ashutosh Vajpai, Joint Secretary (EAD-FCC), Finance Department; Savita, Joint Secretary, Rural Development, Finance Advisers, Chief Accounts Officers and others were present.



During the quarter, CUTS organised one Regional Advocacy Meeting in Ahmedabad and two Divisional Advocacy Meetings in Rajasthan respectively.

Regional Advocacy Meeting

CUTS in partnership with Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC) organised a Regional Advocacy Meeting on Road Safety: Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2016 at Ahmedabad on May 26, 2017.

The meeting was attended by 75 participants including representatives of NGOs from Goa, Pune, Mumbai etc. The inaugural session commenced with a welcome speech by Uday



Mawani, Chief Executive Officer, CERC. Cherian delivered the opening address and Madhu Sudan Sharma presented the highlights of Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill,

Urban Agencies under 'One Umbrella'

"There are more than nine development agencies working for several infrastructure works in Jaipur but there is no cooperation between those agencies", said Jaipur Mayor, Ashok Lahoti. All these agencies should come under one



umbrella for better cooperation and implementation. He was delivering inaugural speech in Mayors' Conference organised by CUTS at Jaipur with active collaboration of Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC).

Justice (Retd.) VS Dave, former Chairman of Supreme Court's Empowered Committee on World Class City mentioned that ward committees should be formed as per constitutional provisions. Without ward committees, people's participation cannot be ensured, which is very crucial for success of any urban project.

Ghanshyam Ojha, Jodhpur Mayor spoke about public participation and focussed on putting things online so that common public could access it easily and which will decrease corruption, and make the process speedy.

Cherian while delivering opening address highlighted recent ranking of cities done by *Janaagaraha*. Out of 21 cities, Jaipur was on 6th position in designing and planning but 21st position in transparency and people's participation.

Shiv Singh Bhont, Bharatpur Mayor also shared non-cooperative behaviour of the administration and government and insufficient funds to implement their programmes. Narayan Chopra, Mayor Bikaner also shared his experiences.

Road Safety

Divisional Advocacy Meetings

Two Divisional Advocacy Meetings on Road Safety were organised at Chittorgarh on May 09, 2017; and in Dholpur in partnership with *Samajik Vikas Samiti* on June 27, 2017 respectively. More than 78 participants attended the meeting in Chittorgarh and 67 were present in Dholpur respectively. Collector Indrajeet Singh was the key resource person in the meeting held at Chittorgarh.



Development of Sustainable Consumption

Think Tank Group (TTG) is set up by Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) under the new Sustainable Consumption programmatic area of SSNC with a specific objective and budget for four years until 2021. The objective of TTG is to contribute to the development of sustainable consumption patterns, through physical as well as web-based meetings, exchange of ideas and generating knowledge from in-depth studies on sustainable consumption lifestyles.

Representatives from CUTS, IBON (Philippines), IDEC (Brazil), Consumers International and SSNC are members of the TTG. The following are the expected outcomes of the TTG:

- Identified relevant policy processes/areas, as well as possible solutions/methods associated with SDG 12 in order to influence decision makers.
- Identified areas for idea development and in-depth studies, such as deepening of context analyses, trend tensions and/or concrete case studies of sustainable lifestyles.
- Develop, adapt and improved working methods to contribute to sustainable consumption cultures.



- The think tank's work is used for method development and policy priorities for the Green Action Week campaign, thereby strengthening campaign impact.

The first meeting of the TTG was held in Brighton (UK) on June 26, 2017 and continued in London on June 30, 2017 at the office of Consumers International. The group discussion was centered around three tracks: the in-depth, the policy and the GAW track.

Institutional and Legislative Assessment of Road Safety

World Health Organisation (WHO) Country Office for India, through support from Bloomberg Initiative for Global Road Safety (BIGRS 2015-2019) is working towards improvement of road safety laws and regulations in India.

CUTS was selected for conducting an assignment for the Institutional and Legislative Assessment of Road Safety in four states and two union territories. The objectives are to facilitate a common understanding of roles and responsibilities of government



institutions and organisations involved in road safety laws and to identify the scope and limitations of states' and union territories' authority with regards to the adoption and implementation of road safety laws and regulations.

As part of initiating this assignment, Cherian and Madhu Sudan Sharma along with Saroja Iyer from Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG) visited Puducherry on April 05, 2017 and met with Chief Minister, Chief Secretary and Secretary Transport and the Transport Commissioner.

Depositor Education and Awareness

The first workshop under Depositor Education and Awareness was held at Jobner, Jaipur on April 25, 2017. Leena J Sharma, Assistant General Manager of Financial Inclusion and Development Department of Reserve Bank of India, Jaipur region was the chief speaker. Branch Managers — Subhash Saini from ICICI; Suraj Raj from SBI; and K L Pankaj from PNB were other speakers.



The second workshop was organised at Dausa on May 05, 2017. There were around 65 participants from various sections of the society including banking consumers from rural areas. Resource persons and local bank representatives and media were also present.

Sustainable Lifestyles, Livelihoods and the Circular Economy

The third International Conference of the Global Research Forum on Sustainable Production and Consumption, hosted by the Institute of Development Studies and Science Policy Research Unit, was held at University of Sussex during June 27-29, 2017.

George Cherian attended the conference. It discussed in depth paths to sustainable production and consumption through synergies and tensions among the circular economy, sustainable lifestyles and livelihoods, and their implications for the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

More than 150 stakeholders from multiple domains attended the conference and explored some of the key



questions and debated on the circular economy and their implications for lifestyles and livelihoods in both industrialised and developing countries.

