

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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Building Consensus on Food Labelling Regulations

The front-of-package labels are required for people to be aware of healthy and unhealthy food," said Pawan Agarwal, CEO, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) while addressing the National Consultation on Food Labelling Regulation for Safe and Healthy Food organised by CUTS in partnership with FSSAI.

Agarwal announced the formation of Expert Panel to look into draft Food Safety and Standards (Labelling & Display) Regulations, 2018 which were announced in April 2018 by FSSAI. The regulations are at the stage of consideration by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). India is still at a comfortable stage where it can control the menace of unhealthy eating by working on public policy.

Adding to the deliberations of consultation, Rajeev Kumar, Director, Director-Non Communicable Diseases, MoHFW stressed on how chronic diseases, such as cancer, diabetes and hypertension are leading the burden of diseases in India. Kumar said that cancer kills 7



lakh people per year, there is around 7.1 crore diabetic population and one out of five Indians suffer from hypertension. He pointed out that scheme, such as *Ayushman Bharat* and initiatives by the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs are working to target risk factors and aiming to look into these chronic diseases.

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS mentioned, how front-of-package labelling (FoPL) designs, which are clear and impactful, play an important role in increasing awareness and shifting food eating norms. Mandatory FoPL are considered by governments around the globe as an effective and evidence-based way to improve diets. At least 16 FoPL systems are operating in 23 countries, with another 14 schemes proposed. Cheriyan also stressed how India can learn from best practices from Nordic countries with Keyhole Labels, Iran with Green Apple Tree Labels and some more countries, such as Denmark, Chile, Norway, Singapore, South Africa and Ecuador which are leading the fight against trans-fats, high fat, sugar and salt and unhealthy food consumption.

As the initiative to turn people to adopt safe and healthy food options, FSSAI has already initiated campaigns, such as *AajSeThodaKam* and *Eat Right Movement*. The expert panel comprised of Sesikeran, Former Director & Scientist, National Institute of Nutrition (NIN); Dr. Nikhil Tandon, AIIMS; and Hemalatha, Director, NIN.

The panellists and participants put forth various recommendations on how final regulations shall look like taking into account the interest of consumers. Other panellists were: Anil Kumar, Adviser (Standards) and N Bhaskar, Adviser (QA) from FSSAI; Satish Kulkarni, Former Head, National Dairy Institute, Bangalore; Nikhil Tandon; GM Subha Rao, Scientist-E, Deputy Director, NIN (ICMR), MoHFW; Vandana Shah, Director, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids; Kanchan Zutshi, Secretary, Federation of Biscuit Manufacturers of India; Amit Khurana, CSE; and Raj Kapoor, MD, Assocom Institute of Bakery Technology & Management.

States 25 Years after the 74th Amendment

“74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) was historic and landmark, however still not properly implemented in India even after 25 years of its enactment. Municipal governments feel dependent on state, even for funds and decisions making.” The issue was raised during the *National Conference on 25 Years of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act* organised by CUTS in association with *NITI Aayog* at Jaipur on July 10, 2018.



Sanjay Kumar Singh, Director *NITI Aayog* highlighted the sad state of 74th CAA in India where only total 11 states have devolved the functions to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and Rajasthan is not amongst them. Singh raised concerns on availability of funds to ULBs and asked if the concept of untied funds shall be put forward to devolve funds to ULBs to be used as per needs of the city. The Central schemes, such as Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation, Smart City and Housing for All etc. are incentives-based and open huge opportunities for ULBs who have to come forward and grab them.

Debolina Kundu from National Institute of Urban Affairs, New Delhi highlighted that there should be financial autonomy to ULBs, and methods of revenue generation to make ULBs self-sufficient. The concept of

ward committees is just followed in Kerala and West Bengal, while other states have not made such efforts.

As per the recommendation of the Fifth Finance Commission, Rajasthan shall receive seven percent of total devolution to states from which 25 percent of the share of funds for Rajasthan goes to ULBs while the rest 75 percent goes to *Panchayati Raj Institutions* (PRIs) as 25 percent of population in Rajasthan lives in urban areas.

As per 74th CAA, there are 18 functions given to ULBs under 12th Schedule of Constitution. The 74th CAA came as *Nagarpalika Act*, 1992 and came into effect on June 01, 1993 marking 25 years in 2018.

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS reminded the important provisions of the 74th CAA, which made it an historic amendment and said that today even after 25 years of its enactment, it have not implemented in letter and spirit and on analysing the state of urban self-governance, it has not proved as fortunate as rural self-governance in India.

Out of 18 delegated functions recommended under 12th schedule of the Constitution, one study says, Mumbai and Pune are two cities which have devolved 14.5 functions (14 fully and one partially). Jaipur have devolved only seven functions. Not even a single city in India can be matched with cities, such as London, New York or not even Johannesburg in terms of City Governance.

According to a study conducted by CUTS on urban local governance and role of multiple parastatals, the existence of more than 14 agencies related to urban development and lack of coordination between them poses the challenge towards efficient governance in the city. There is urgent need for the State government to take action to strengthen the role of Mayor and Municipality and move from present State Inspection to Municipal Inspection in the city.

Other speakers in the technical session were Purushottam Biyani, IAS (retd.), former Director, Department of Local Self Governance, Government of Rajasthan (GoR); Miling Mhaske, Director, Praja Foundation, Mumbai; Vivek Nair, Head-ASICS, Jaanagraha, Bengaluru; and Himani Tiwari, City Managers' Association Rajasthan, DLB, GoR. More than 60 participants attended the event which included elected and CSO representatives and government officials.

Organic Clubs & Garden in Schools Programme

State Level Launch of 'Organic Clubs & Garden in Schools Programme' was organised at St. Pauls School, Mundiya Ramsar, Jaipur on July 12, 2018. As part of the project entitled, 'Promoting Organic Consumption in Rajasthan' Phase II, organic gardens will be developed in schools of 10 target districts of Rajasthan.

The purpose of the organic clubs is to inculcate a culture of sustainable consumption and contribute towards safe and sustainable food systems. Rev Samson Samuel, Director of St. Paul's Mar Thoma School, Jaipur was the Chief Guest. Deepak Saxena spoke about the project and George Cheriyan delivered the opening remarks. Rajdeep Pareek facilitated a technical session on developing the organic garden.



Green Action Week 2018

Green Action Week (GAW) is a global campaign held every year in October. The theme for this year is 'Sharing Community.' Focussing on the theme, activities were planned in the community for kitchen gardening, composting and sharing the yield with the neighbourhood community. To avoid food wastage, sharing of left-over food among the needy was also planned in the community. For this, two neighbour communities (Ramnagar and Meenavala) of Jaipur are identified.

Global Road Safety Partnership

CUTS hosted the fourth GRSP partner's-cum-strategic planning meeting at Jaipur during September 10-13, 2018. All GRSP India partners participated including Taifur Rehman, Nalin Sinha and Mena from Global Health Advocacy Incubator. A welcome dinner was hosted on September 10, 2018 in which GRSP team members and partners, CUTS staff and some officials from Transport Department of Rajasthan, such as Nidhi Singh participated and shared their experiences. The event was full of learning and interactions.



Improving Financial Education and Literacy

Federal Service on Customer's Rights Protection and Human Well-being Surveillance (Rospotrebnadzor) of Russia organised a Round table devoted to strengthening the cooperation between government bodies, financial regulators and non-government organisations in the field of financial consumer protection.



The Round table was part of the project jointly undertaken by the Russian Federation and the World Bank 'Financial Education and Literacy Project for the Russian Federation.' George Cheriyan as an international expert delivered three presentations on consumer protection and financial services in India covering all sectors.

Responsible Governance and Management

Two capacity building workshops on the 'Responsible Governance and Management' were organised by CUTS with the support of US Embassy, India. The objective was to strengthen skills and capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) to develop their leadership, problem-solving skills and overcome challenges at different level.

First workshop was organised at Jaipur on September 17-18, 2018 which was attended by 25 CSO representatives. Rajendra Bhanwat, Retd. IAS delivered keynote speech.

Second workshop was organised at New Delhi on September 20-21, 2018 which was attended by 28 CSO representatives. Parul Soni, Thinkthrough Consultancy delivered keynote speech. Mathew Cherian, CEO Helpage India shared his experience in the session on 'Current Government and CSOs relationship'. Muthusami Kumaran, Associate Professor, University of Florida was lead expert.



Promoting Organic Consumption in Rajasthan

During July-September, 2018, a total of 70 *gram panchayat* level workshops; 16 inception meetings and five farmer's trainings and exposure visits were held. The purpose was to make consumers and farmers aware of organic products.



Various modes to create awareness were organised, for example, street plays, showcasing movie on organic farming and

local cultural programmes; displaying posters and distributing hand-outs. Besides, other local and traditional activities, such as *chaupal baithaks* (village meetings) and puppet shows, etc. were also organised.

Depositor Education and Awareness

CUTS with the support of Reserve Bank of India conducted Depositor Education and Awareness workshops in rural, semi-urban and urban areas of various districts of Rajasthan during August-October 2018.

During August-September 2018, seven programmes were conducted, which covered Chittorgarh, Bhilwara, Jaipur and Jhunjhunu districts. All workshops had an average participation of 60-65 people each, in a mixed and balanced participation of farmers, house wives, *anganwadi* workers, daily wagers and self-help groups.



Global Road Safety Leadership Course

Jeetali Agnani participated in the Global Road Safety Leadership Course at Baltimore, Maryland, USA during July 21, 2018-August 03, 2018. This course is sponsored by Global Road Safety Partnership and jointly organised by GRSP, Bloomberg Philanthropies and Johns Hopkins International Injury Research Unit.



REPRESENTATION IN MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS ETC.

Food Safety Initiative

Madhu Sudan Sharma attended a meeting organised by India Medical Association (IMA) on 'Framing the IMA Food Safety Policy for India' at New Delhi on July 29, 2018.

NGOs and Development in India

A group of 22 students from University of Florida along with a faculty member visited CUTS on July 13, 2018. George Cheriyan made a presentation on 'NGOs and Development in India.'

Consumer Outreach Programme

Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended Consumer Outreach Programme organised by TRAI Regional Office, Jaipur at Jalore on July 26, 2018; and Deepak Saxena attended Consumer Outreach Programme at Kapasan, Chittorgarh on September 30, 2018 respectively.

Consumer Protection and Welfare

Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended a workshop on 'Consumer Protection and Welfare' organised by Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi at Jaipur on August 30-31, 2018.

Meeting of Central Advisory Committee

George Cheriyan participated in the 23rd Meeting of the Central Advisory Committee of FSSAI at New Delhi on September 07, 2018.

Codex Committee Meeting

CUTS was invited by FSSAI to discuss a paper at New Delhi on September 28, 2018. Aakansha Choudhary participated in it.

Tobacco Harm Reduction Seminar

Amar Deep Singh participated in a seminar on Tobacco Harm Reduction organised by US-India Strategic Partnership Forum at New Delhi on September 27, 2018.



CART IN MEDIA

