



CUTS Centre for
Consumer Action,
Research & Training (CART)

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A Golden Beginning

In 1984, CUTS raised the first burning case in favour of consumers about virulent coin shortage. Reserve Bank of India was written a letter followed by a joint petition signed by 44 MLAs of Rajasthan, including the present Vice-President of India, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat. A highly acclaimed editorial page article by Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, in *Janasatta*, provoked the Government to take immediate action and end the shortage.

CUTS' Initiative on Tobacco Control

"Tobacco: deadly in any form and disguise", a school and community based tobacco control intervention project of CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART), in partnership with the World Health Organisation (WHO), India and the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India (GoI) and in active collaboration with the Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Rajasthan (GoR) formally launched on December 20, 2006 at a meeting held at Hotel Maharani Plaza, Jaipur.

Dr ML Jain, Director & in-charge of Tobacco Control Cell, Department of Health and Family Welfare, GoR launched the project by lighting the traditional lamp. While delivering the inaugural address, Dr Jain highlighted that the implementation of the laws against the consumption and selling of tobacco products has been ambiguous and inadequate. He also emphasised that one-fifth of the total death cases and 40 percent of cancer death cases are due to consumption of tobacco alone.

Dr Malati Tiwari, Senior Consultant, Soni Hospital, Jaipur, spoke about the need to understand ways and means by which the use of tobacco is spreading, and also shed light on some tobacco cessation measures. She informed that death related to tobacco occurs 15-20 years after initiation of tobacco use, making it difficult to establish the relationship. Dr RC Sharma, Chief Medical & Health Officer (CM&HO first), Jaipur stressed specifically on creating several role models in order to eradicate this menace from our society.

Dr DK Ameta, Additional Director and Nodal Officer, Tobacco Control Cell, GoR, chaired the technical session. He pointed out the social causes and as well as effects of consumption of tobacco. Other speakers were Dr P C Dindoriya (Joint Director, Department of Health and Family Welfare), Dr G C Jain (CMHO-second), Dr Malati Tiwari, Dr Rakesh Gupta (Rajasthan Cancer Foundation), Dharahveer Katewa (President, Asthama Society), Mr Sataya Narayan Pareek (Gayatri *Parivar*) and Vidhaya Dhar Doodi (SHO, Jalupura Police Station).



They threw lights on various aspects of Tobacco Control Initiatives.

About 65 participants, including representatives from the 50 selected schools, officials of concerned government departments (especially the Department of Health), other stakeholders such as NGOs working on the issue, hospitals, tobacco cessation centres, media and others working on the issue, attended the meeting.

George Cheriyan, Associate Director of CUTS introduced the project and explained the focus of the campaign, including the implementation activities, which would be carried out. Ritu Agarwal, the project coordinator, welcomed the guests and the participants, while Dharmendra Chaturvedi proposed the vote of thanks.

The project will focus on the section 6 of the tobacco control law, which lays down that no person shall sell, offer to sale, or permit sale of, cigarette or any other tobacco product:-

- a) to any person who is under 18 years of age; and
- b) in an area within a radius of one hundred yards of any educational institution.

The project will run for a period of nine months, i.e. from December 2006 to August 2007, and will involve 50 selected schools in Jaipur city (both government & private).

INSIDE

- **Projects and Programmes**
- **Representation**
- **Meetings/Visits**
- **Future Activities**
- **Publications**
- **CART in Media**



CM Visits CUTS' Stall

In connection with the completion of three years of the present Government of Rajasthan, the Department of Transport organised an exhibition at the *Jawahar Kala Kendra* (JKK), in Jaipur from December 13-15,

2006. As per the invitation, CUTS put up a stall, where CUTS' initiatives on road safety were exhibited through photographs. The Chief, Minister, Vasundhara Raje, who inaugurated the exhibition, visited CUTS' stall. On this occasion, George Cheriyan, Deepak Saxena and BN Sharma from CUTS CART briefed CUTS' activities to the Chief Minister, who lauded CUTS' efforts on road safety issues.

Investor Education

CUS CART, with support from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Mumbai, organised the fifth workshop under the fourth round of Securities and Market Awareness Campaign (SMAC), at Jyotiba Phule Educational



School, Karauli, Rajasthan on November 14, 2006. The Branch Manager of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) and local subject expert, Sharad Misra was the key speaker.

The sixth workshop was held in Sawai Madhopur, on November 25, 2006. The Chief Representative of Unit Trust of India (UTI) Laxmi Narayan Gupta was the resource person. The seventh workshop was held at Bikaner, Rajasthan, on December 09, 2006. Nirmal Bhura, Manager, JB Multi Commodity Agency was the resource person. Dharmendra Chaturvedi and B N Sharma were responsible for organising these workshops.

Environmental Awareness

CUS CART, being the Regional Resource Agency (RRA) for Rajasthan, organised five open workshops at Churu, Bhilwara, Chittorgarh, Jodhpur and Jaipur under the National Environment Awareness Campaign (NEAC) of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEFs), GoI from October 03-07, 2006.

By October 10, 2006, which was the deadline for submission of proposals set by the Ministry, CART received a total of 469 proposals from Rajasthan. Out of that 406 proposals with a total budget of Rs 23,80,000 were recommended by the Ministry.

The regional meeting for western region, covering the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan & Chhattisgarh was held at Bharatiya Agro-Industries Foundation (BAIF) Bhavan, Pune from October 31 to November 02, 2006. The committee selected 209 proposals with a total budget of Rs 11,52,000 for funding from the Ministry.

Vidhayak Samvad

CUS CART is in the process of initiating a non-partisan forum called 'Vidayak Samvad' to discuss 'centre-state issues' and 'infrastructure issues'.

After getting the consent for such an initiative and receiving signatures of Dr C P Joshi (Congress), Nathu Singh Gurjar (*Bharatiya Janta Party*), Shubash Sharma (Independent), Amararam, Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM) and Jeethmal Janata Dal (United), the introductory letters were sent to all the members of the state assembly, inviting them to be a part of the *Vidhayak Samvaad*.

Few legislators responded, giving their consent to be part of the forum. B N Sharma along with Deepak Saxena are the coordinators of the initiative.

Advisory Committee



The third meeting of the Advisory Committee of CUS CART was held at the CART office on November 11, 2006. Dr Sharada Jain, the new Chairperson of the Committee, chaired the meeting, which was attended by seven members. The seven members were: Justice VS Dave, Dr Anita Mathur, IC Shrivastava, PN Bhandari, Dr Maya Tandon, Dr CS Barla and Dr Kumkum Srivastava.

National Consumer Day

CUS CART, jointly with the Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA), GoR organised a drawing and painting competition for school children at Jawahar Kala Kendra on December 22, 2006, in connection with the observation of the National Consumer Day.

A number of children from various schools in Jaipur participated in the competition. Deepak Saxena was responsible for coordinating the event along with Rashmi Sharma, Deputy Commissioner of DoCA.

Road Safety Activities in Jaipur

The road safety awareness activities with the support of Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, GoI was formally started on December 15, 2006, in a small function held at the premises of the Regional Transport Office, Jaipur.

Five campaigns focusing on vehicle divers were organised on December 15, 19, 21, 23 & 26, 2006, respectively at various places. The activities will continue till January 29, 2007. Deepak Saxena with the assistance of BNS is responsible for the coordination of the activities.



REPRESENTATIONS

One Year of RTI

The three-day national convention on 'One year of RTI' was organised by the Central Information Commission (CIC) at the Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, on October 13-15, 2006, to mark the one-year completion of the implementation of Right to Information (RTI) Act.

The President Dr A P J Abdul Kalam inaugurated the convention, while Dr P C Alexander delivered the keynote address. On the second day, the Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, delivered the valedictory address. George Cheriyan attended the three-day convention.

World Standards Day

World Standards Day was commemorated in Jaipur, on October 14, 2006. The main organiser of the event was the regional office of Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), in collaboration with Vishwakarma Industrial Association, Jaipur. Usha Sharma, Commissioner Industries inaugurated the event. 'Standards: Big Benefits for Small Business' was this year's theme for the day.

Prior to this event, there was a small ceremony to open the new office building of BIS, at Prithviraj Road, Jaipur. A K Nagpal inaugurated it. Deepak Saxena attended both the events.

Anniversary of MN Tandon Trust

In connection with the 10th Anniversary of Dr M N Tandon Memorial Charitable Trust and on getting the 4th National Road safety Award from the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, GoI, the Trust organised a function at Jaipur Club, on October 31, 2006. George Cheriyan and Deepak Saxena attended the dinner meeting.

Credit Card Cloning

The Sahara Samyai organised a TV programme on the issue of Credit Card Cloning on November 03, 2006.

Representing CUTS, Deepak Saxena attended the live TV discussions along with Ponnu Swamy (SP, Special Task Group).

Anniversary of PRIA

A one-day seminar on 'Participatory & Democratic Governance' was organised in connection with the 25th anniversary of Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) at HCM-RIPA, Jaipur, on November 10, 2006.

Sumitra Singh, Speaker of Legislative Assembly inaugurated the seminar. George Cheriyan attended the inaugural session of the seminar and anniversary celebrations.

Day for Road Accident Victims

The third Sunday of November every year earmarked as the World Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims. Deepak Saxena participated in a programme organised by M N Tandon Charitable Trust on November 19, 2006, to extend appropriate acknowledgement to the victims of road traffic crashes and their families.

Water Summit 2006

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) along with GoR, and with the support of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and World Economic Forum (WEF) organised a two-day Water Summit at SMS Convention Centre, Rambagh Palace, Jaipur on November 29-30, 2006.

Pratibha Patil, Governor of Rajasthan inaugurated the event. George Cheriyan attended the inaugural session of the event.

Workshop on DPIIP

George Cheriyan and RK Sharma attended the inaugural session of a two-day workshop on 'District Poverty Initiatives Programme (DPIP)-What worked, What did not and What Next?' at Indira Gandhi *Panchayati Raj Sansthan*, Jaipur, on November 30, 2006.

MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENT/DONOR AGENCIES

Meeting with Premila Satyanand

Premila Satyanand, Task Manager at the Water and Sanitation Programme-South Asia (WSP-SA), the World Bank, in-charge of the Voice & Client Power Programme (VCP) visited CUTS Delhi Resource Centre (CUTS DRC) and met George Cheriyan on October 12, 2006.

Meeting with Vineet Gill Munish

George Cheriyan visited the office of the World Health Organisation (WHO) at *Nirman Bhavan* on October 16, 2006 and met Vineet Gill Munish, National Professional Officer, Tobacco Free Initiative (TFI), WHO India.

Meeting with Dr Vinayak Prasad

George Cheriyan met Dr Vinayak Prasad, Director, Public Health, TFI, the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, GoI on October 16, 2006.

Meeting with Rebecca & Madhumita

George Cheriyan met Rebecca Black and Madhumita Gupta of USAID, American Embassy, New Delhi, on October 26, 2006.

Meeting with GN Sreekumaran

George Cheriyan met GN Sreekumaran, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Affairs (MoCA), GoI in his office on October 26, 2006.

Meeting with Saluddin Ahmed

George Cheriyan and Deepak Saxena met Salauddin Ahmed, Principal Secretary, Food and Consumer Affairs, GoR; Sarita Singh, Assistant Food Commissioner; and Rashmi Sharma, Deputy Secretary on November 17, 2006.

Meeting on Traffic Conditions

A special meeting under the Jaipur Agenda Action Group (JAAG) was called to discuss various traffic conditions in Jaipur, on November 22, 2006. The meeting was presided by Sunil Arora, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister and was attended by various eminent persons. Pradeep S Mehta, and Deepak Saxena represented CUTS in the meeting as special invitees.

Pre Budget Consultation with the CM

Deepak Saxena from CUTS CART along with Manish Agarwal and Udai S

Mehta from CUTS C-CIER participated in the pre-budget consultation with the Chief Minister and submitted a note on several issues on November 24, 2006.

Meeting on SCoRA

A meeting on State Competition and Regulatory Agency (SCoRA) was held at Secretariat on November 27, 2006. Pradeep S Mehta and Deepak Saxena on behalf of CUTS took part in the meeting.

Traffic Control Board

Pradeep S Mehta and Deepak Saxena attended a meeting on Traffic Control Board organised in the conference hall of Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) on November 29, 2006.

Meeting with Divisional Commissioner

Pradeep S Mehta and Deepak Saxena met Madhukar Gupta, Divisional Commissioner, on December 04, 2006, for a discussion on improving the road safety scenario of Jaipur.

