



CUTS Centre for
Consumer Action,
Research & Training



Catalyst

Quarterly E-Newsletter

Volume 3, No.1

January-March, 2007

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.

CFLI Project Launch cum Brainstorming Workshop

CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART) organised a state level launch-cum-brainstorming workshop of the project entitled, 'Promoting Greater Role of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Rajasthan to Foster Rural Livelihood Opportunities: Meeting the Challenges of Globalisation and Economic Liberalisation' at Hotel Maharani Plaza, Jaipur, on February 28, 2007.

The Canadian High Commission, New Delhi under the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) is supporting this project. The objective of the fund is to enhance the economic, cultural and social life of the people of India; and to promote and strengthen good governance, democratic development and respect for human rights. The fund is supporting projects implemented by domestic civil society organisations (CSOs). The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and grassroots organisations in Rajasthan, so that they could help in sustaining the livelihood, keeping in view the challenges posed by globalisation and economic liberalisation to the rural sector.

Participants

The dignitaries attended the workshop were: Rohit Brandon, Chairman & Managing Director, Rural Non-farm Development Agency (RUDA); Ram Gopal Guard, *Zila Pramukh, Zila Parishad* Jaipur; Rajan Mathur, Executive Director, RUDA; and Prof C S Barla, Consultant Economist and Chairman of Project Consultative Group. The workshop witnessed an active participation of 65 relevant stakeholders representing CSOs, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), trade research institutions, consultants,



Ram Gopal Guard speaking in the Inaugural Session

private entrepreneurs (domestic and exporters), self-help groups (SHGs), leaders, representatives of different producer/community groups from the rural areas, media and national/international trade promotional agencies etc.

Inaugural Session

The workshop commenced with welcome and introductory remarks by R K Sharma, Deputy Head, CUTS CART, while Manish Dubey, Project Coordinator made a brief presentation on the project. Rohit Brandon, Chairman & Managing Director, RUDA, while delivering his keynote address, emphasised upon the strategies to eradicate poverty in rural communities and said that the non-farm sector (handloom and handicraft) should be promoted through community participation and assuring access to adequate market of the products. Brandon also opined that there is a need for developing a Community Public Private Partnership (CPPP) model in the non-farm sector.

Ram Gopal Gaurd, *Zila Pramukh, Zila Parishad*, Jaipur, while delivering the special address was of the view that there is a requirement for effective implementation of programmes and policies in rural areas, including the

involvement of PRIs in real sense. He stated that handloom and handicraft activities could be one of the impressive modes to revive the rural economy and eradicate unemployment and poverty from rural areas.

Technical Session

Technical Session started with brief introduction by George Cheriyan, Associate Director, CUTS, who mentioned that the project is unique, as it endeavours to link local self-governance to address

the issues relating to livelihood/employment opportunities. He emphasised that there is a need to sensitise and build the capacity of Panchayati Raj



Technical Session

Members to initiate the process of rural development. He also pointed out that there is a need to know the requirements of global market and design the domestic policies and products accordingly. Professor C S Barla and Rajan Mathur, Executive Director, RUDA, facilitated the technical session. The workshop concluded with vote of thanks by Manish.

INSIDE

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

Road Safety Activities in Jaipur

Under the road safety awareness activities supported by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India (GoI), 8 eye testing camps, in which 407 persons were checked and 10 awareness camps in 10 different schools were conducted in Jaipur city.

A one-day seminar on Section 134 of the Motor Vehicle Act 1988 was organised at the Convention Centre of Pink City Press Club, Jaipur, on January 27, 2007. The purpose of the seminar was to create awareness about the Section. Dr Maya Tandon, Retired Superintendent, Jaykaylon Hospital and CEO of M N Tandon Charitable Trust; Dr S K Pathak, Retired Professor and Head of Department of Forensic Medicines, SMS Hospital and Director of NIMS Medical College; Dr N K Lodha, Head of the Emergency Unit of SMS; Dr Suresh Sehgal, Medical Jurist of SMS; Shankar Surolia, Advisor to Traffic Control Board of JDA; Jagmal Singh, Deputy SP, Traffic; and Adviser D M Mathur were the resource persons.

CUTS on WBISD

In recognition to the World Bank (WB) and considering the experience and involvement of CUTS in the area of good governance and social accountability, George Cheriyan, Associate Director, CUTS is included in the International Resource Team on Social Accountability of the World Bank Institute on Sustainable Development (WBISD) based in Washington DC, USA, from January 2007.

The World Bank Institute is the knowledge and learning arm of the World Bank. In partnership with local training and research institutions, it develops customised, multi-year capacity development programmes.

As part of the assignment, George went to Sri Lanka for 10 days to over see the training programmes organised by WBI, in February 2007 and will be going to Dhaka for 10 days in May 2007, for conducting a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme.

One Year of RTI in Rajasthan

CUTS CART, Jaipur in partnership with Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), New Delhi organised a seminar on 'One Year of RTI in Rajasthan: Problems & Possibilities' in Jaipur, on February 01, 2007. The overall objective of the seminar is to unearth the various ground realities of one-year implementation of the RTI Act. It discusses the loopholes as well as the possible amendments in the Act. There were about 82 participants representing government officials, advocates, representatives of school, various CSOs and agencies, media and other individuals working on the issues related to RTI.

Seminar started with a welcome speech by RK Sharma of CUTS CART. Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS while delivering introductory speech expressed a view that the ultimate success of any act or law depends on its enforcement. M D Kaurani, Chief Information Commissioner of Rajasthan while delivering the inaugural address said, "there is extra need in order



to make effective implementation of the Right to Information Act". He stressed that commission should be proactive adding that the CIC basically has the role of a judge. He said that the common man is still unaware of the Act and still lot of efforts has to be done to make it popular.

Nikhil Dey of *Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan* (MKSS) in his keynote address opined that persistent efforts in conducting training for the information seekers and providers for effective use of the RTI Act should be there for successful implementation of law. While delivering his speech, Venkatesh Nayak,

Coordinator, Access to Information Programme, CHRI, pointed out that there is a need to search the basic reason of the improper implementation of the RTI Act.

George Cheriyan, Associate Director, CUTS, highlighted that India is perceived to be marginally corrupt than in 2005-climbing to 70 by improving its position from 88 among 183 countries according to Corruption Perception Index (CPI), which reveals the potential of RTI. Venkatesh Nayak and Reshmi Mitra of CHRI, facilitated the technical sessions entitled, "The RTI Act and its Potential being a tool to ensure transparency and accountability in the government" and "Loopholes in the Act and the Problems faced in the implementation of the Act at the state level".

R K Sharma proposed the vote of thanks. A set of recommendations emerged out the seminar and the same was presented to Central and CICs and all others concerned.

Events under TCI

The first phase of awareness and sensitisation events in the schools of Jaipur city started from January 03, 2007. A total of 38 schools were covered in the month of January 2007. The events in remaining 12 schools were held during February 2007. Through the events, students and teachers were sensitised and made aware about the ill effects of tobacco consumption. Students and teachers were informed about the objectives of the project and Section 6 of the Tobacco control law in India, which says – *no person shall sell, offer for sale, or permit sale of, cigarette or any other tobacco product to any person who is under 18 years of age and in an area within a radius of one hundred yards of any educational institution.*

To generate awareness and sensitise the common people, who comparatively consume more tobacco, a 20-minute documentary film 'choose life not tobacco' was screened among the women at *Anganwadi* centre of slum area of Jhotwara, Jaipur, on February 06, 2007. After the successful completion of events in schools, road shows were organised with interactive *Nukad Nataks* (street plays) at various public places in the city regarding the Tobacco Control Act and the hazards of consuming tobacco/smoking. During the month of March 2007, three such road shows were held in various places of the city.



RERC Appointment

As the representative of CUTS, George Cheriyan, Associate Director, CUTS was appointed as a member of State Advisory Committee of Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission (RERC), on March 13, 2007. CUTS is a member of this Committee since the beginning.

The RERC was established on January 02, 2000. The Commission is playing an effective role in the development of energy sector in the state. The State Advisory Committee is advising the Commission on major questions of policy, matters relating to quality, continuity and extend of service provided etc.

REPRESENTATIONS

Workshop on CNPPP

R K Sharma participated in a workshop on Community NGO Public Private Partnership (CNPPP), convened by the Rajasthan Mission on Livelihoods (R莫L) and Association for Rural Advancement through Voluntary Action & Local Involvement (ARAVALI), in Jaipur, on February 15, 2007.

Trafficking of Women and Girls

Ritu Agarwal attended a programme on "Trafficking of Women and the Girl Child" sponsored by the National Commission for Women (NCW), New Delhi and organised by the Centre for Social Development (CSD), in Jaipur, on February 15, 2007.

Rural Business Hub

R K Sharma participated in a Conference on 'Rural Business Hub – Partnering for Growth' convened by the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), in Jaipur, on February 20, 2007.

HIV/AIDS Awareness

Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended a one-day dissemination workshop on HIV/AIDS Awareness organised by the Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR), in collaboration with the Plan International, New Delhi, at the IIHMR campus, on February 24, 2007.

Session on 'Sustainable Development'

George Cheriyan facilitated a session on 'Sustainable Development & Role of NGO's' in a five-day training programme on 'Public Private & People's Partnership in Development' for the senior and middle level officers of Government of Rajasthan (GoR), organised by the Centre for Management Studies, HCM-RIPA, and sponsored by Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), GoI, on March 07, 2007.

National Environmental Awareness Campaign (NEAC)

A one-day state level post proposal workshop was held at *Panchayati Dharamshala*, Jaipur, on February 19, 2007. Representatives of 163 NGOs attended the workshop and DD's and Cheque's were distributed to them. Detailed briefing regarding the effective implementation, reporting and submission of statement of accounts were also provided.

A two-day interactive workshop for Regional Resource Agencies (RRAs) was organised by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), Government of India at the Scope Convention Centre, New Delhi, on February 26-27, 2007.

George attended the workshop and made a presentation on the problems faced by new RRAs as requested by the MoEF and provided suggestions to improve the implementation of the NEAC.

Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Ritu Agarwal, Badri Narayan Sharma along with Madan Giri Goswami from CUTS Centre for Human Development (CUTS CHD) visited 47 organisations and monitored their awareness and action activities supported under NEAC.

Investor Education

Deepak Saxena attended a meeting of Investor Associations held in Mumbai, on March 11-12, 2007, organised by Indian Institute of Capital Market (IICM) and Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

World Consumer Rights Day

Deepak Saxena attended a workshop organised by Consumer Action Network Society (CANS), jointly with the Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA), GoR, in connection with the World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) at the Rajasthan Chamber of Commerce and Industries, in Jaipur, on March 15, 2007.

Deepak also was a resource person on 'consumer rights and responsibilities' in an event organised by the Agmark section, Agriculture Department GoR. The DoCA, GoR published five lakh leaflets, in association with CUTS, on the occasion of WCRD.

South Asia Workshop

George Cheriyan and R K Sharma attended the South Asia Social Accountability workshop held in Hyderabad, on March 13-14, 2007.

Addressing the Gender Dimension

R K Sharma participated in a one-day thematic seminar on 'Addressing the Gender Dimension in Development Projects: The European Commission Experience in India' convened by the European Union (EU) Delegation of the European Commission (EC) to India, Bhutan and Nepal, at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, on March 19, 2007.

Francisco Da Camara Gomes, Ambassador & Head of Delegation of the European Commission; Indira Jaising, Women's Rights Initiative; Daniela Rofi, European Commission Gender Network Representative; Dr SY Quraishi, Election Commissioner of India delivered speeches on gender issue in the opening session.

NGO-Business Engagement in India

George Cheriyan attended a two-day workshop on 'NGO-Business Engagement in India' organised by the 'Partners in Change' in partnership with Oxfam Novib, the Netherlands, in Bangalore, on March 22-23, 2007.

He made a presentation on CUTS' experience on NGO-Business partnership. He also met Liesbeth Unger, Adviser, Trade & Private Sector, Oxfam Novib, The Hague; and Viraf Mehta, Chief Executive, Partners in Change, New Delhi; and discussed about possible future collaboration.

Management of Community Resources

Manish Dubey attended an orientation course on 'Mobilisation on Management of Community Resources for the State of Rajasthan' organised by the Health, Environment, and Development Consortium (HEDCON), Jaipur; and the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), Indore, in Jaipur, from March 23-25, 2007.

Advocacy and Citizen Engagement

George Cheriyan attended a one-day workshop on 'Advocacy and Citizen Engagement' organised by the Canadian High Commission (CIDA) for the benefit of its partners engaged in the promotion of good governance, democratic development and human rights, in New Delhi, on March 27, 2007.

The purpose of this workshop was to provide an opportunity to CIDA partners to explore the basic concepts of advocacy and citizen's engagement for development.

Olga Gladkikh, Manager, Education Programmes, Coady International Institute (St. Francis Xavier University); and Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada facilitated the session.

**MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENT/
DONOR AGENCIES**

Meeting with Kalu Lal Gurjar

George Cheriyan and R K Sharma met Panchayati Raj Minister Kalu Lal Gurjar to discuss about scaling up the Participatory Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) on Mid-day Meal Scheme (MDMS) and pending matter of District Poverty Initiatives Programme (DPIP), on January 11 & February 22, 2007, respectively.

Meeting with O P Galhotra

Pradeep S Mehta and Deepak Saxena met O P Galhotra, Inspector General Police (Range I) and S P Traffic, Smita Srivastava to discuss the behavioural aspects of drivers and other traffic problems in Jaipur, on January 17, 2007.

Meeting with Ranjan Patnaik,

George Cheriyan and R K Sharma met Ranjan Patnaik, Zonal Manager, Save the Children, UK, North Zone to discuss the status of various projects submitted to it and about the continuing partnership with Save the Children, on March 30, 2007.

VISITS

Visit of Nishino Takahiro & Session of 'ORIGAMI'

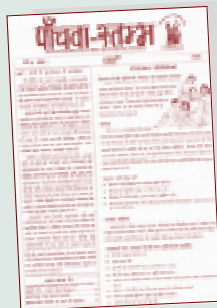
Nishino Takahiro, a volunteer with the World Studies Center (WSC) – a small Japanese NGO – based in Nagasaki, Japan and a student at the Nagasaki Prefectural University visited CART on March 06-08, 2007 and met with staff. He was in India to study about the NGOs and to share the experience from Japan.

An event was organised at the Girls Senior Secondary School, Adarsh Nagar, Jaipur to teach the Japanese art form 'Origami' on March 06, 2007. The event started with a brief introduction about Nishino and origami by George Cheriyan. 'Origami' is the Japanese word for paper folding. It is an art form that has been handed down from parent to child through many generations. Origami involves the creation of paper forms usually entirely by folding. Animals, birds, fish, geometric shapes, puppets, toys and masks are among the models. Nishino with the help of Ritu and Dharmendra taught the children the most well known origami model that is the crane.

In Japan, every child eventually learns to make the crane which has become the international symbol of peace. About 150 students and 15 teachers attended the session and appreciated organising such an event.

PUBLICATIONS

- **Panchva Stambh**
(quarterly newsletter)
- **Gram Gadar**
(monthly wall newspaper)



FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Project titled 'Combating Corruption in Rajasthan State, India, by Applying RTI Act as a Tool' in partnership with 'Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF) based in Washington DC, USA

CART IN MEDIA