



CUTS Centre for  
Consumer Action,  
Research & Training



# Catalyst

Quarterly e-Newsletter

Volume 3, No.3

July-September, 2007

## About CART

Established in 1996, CUTS CART is pursuing 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 more responsible society and encouraging changes at the policy level by advocating with the government machinery and sensitising it to its issues of concern to the common man. The Centre has spearheaded several campaigns and pioneered consumer empowerment.

## Good Governance through People's Participation

CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART) organised a one-day meeting to formally launch the project entitled, "Assessment of the Qualitative and Quantitative Output of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) Project" at Sirohi Zilla Parishad Hall, Sirohi on August 09, 2007. CUTS CART,

in partnership with the World Bank, has conceptualised the project for promoting social accountability and achieving good governance through civic engagements.

The project will assess the output of NREGS in Sirohi district of Rajasthan by using various social accountability tools such as Citizen Report Cards (CRC), Community Score Cards (CSC) and Participatory Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS). The overall objective of the project is to generate awareness and enhance the transparency and accountability in the implementation of NREGS by engaging the common citizens,



A view of the Launch Meeting

community-based organisations (CBOs), media and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) functionaries.

Welcoming the participants, RK Sharma of CUTS CART outlined the purpose of the project, including various aspects of its implementation. George Cheriyan of CUTS CART introduced the concept of social accountability and explained its credibility in making the power holders accountable towards common citizens.

Om Prakash Arya of CUTS CART made a PowerPoint presentation to highlight the project covering the background, objectives,

methodologies, tools, major activities, and expected outcomes, etc.

In his inaugural speech, Siddhart Mahajan, District Collector of Sirohi suggested that the study under this project should reveal the facts and figures at the grassroots level so that corrective measures could be taken for better further implementation.

Anna Ram Borana, Zilla Pramukh reiterated the importance of the scheme for downtrodden and deprived sections of the society. Ashfaque Hussain, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Zilla Parishad, Sirohi, cited the reason for low wages, saying that the average wage in Sirohi is more than that of the national average wage under the scheme.

Other participants voiced their concern regarding implementation of the NREGS and its scope. Woman Sarpanch Meera Yadav told that there is a need of logical and behavioural measurement of the works done by the labourers.

## Gail Cockburn Visits Jodhpur

Gail Cockburn, Counsellor (Development) Head of Development Cooperation, India/Bhutan/Accredited to Nepal, Canadian High Commission, New Delhi visited one of the target villages, Jelu Gagadi about 65 kms away from Jodhpur, under the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) project on September 28, 2007.



Gail Cockburn interacting with women artisans

Gail met with the rural artisans making the cotton carpets/durries in Jelu Gagadi village before she visited the Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti (GRAVIS) training centre, where the training for rural artisans and PRI members was in session. She intimately interacted

with the participants of the training and GRAVIS field workers and also had a separate session with the female participants reluctant to speak in open. Gail was very much impressed with the progress made under the project. Gail appreciated CUTS CART for the wonderful efforts and expressed hope to continue the collaboration in future as well.

## INSIDE

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

## CUTS-FES Programme in the Power Sector



Under Phase III of CUTS-Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Project on 'Involvement of Consumers in Power Sector Reforms', the third workshop was held in Jhalawar, on July 20, 2007. The purpose of the workshop was to generate awareness among the representatives of grassroots consumer groups and volunteers on the Feeder Reforms Programme of the government. Among the resource persons were PR Goyal, Executive Engineer; and BS Choudhary, Junior Engineer of Jaipur Discom.

The fourth workshop, in the series, was held in Tonk, on August 14, 2007. The resource persons included SK Srivastava, Assistance Engineer; and RR Meena, Junior Engineer at Tonk under the Jaipur Discom as the technical speakers.

The fifth workshop, was held at Rani (Pali district), on September 26, 2007.

## Consumer Awareness Programme (CAP)

The skill training, consumer friend's training and awareness seminar under the Consumer Awareness Programme (CAP) supported by the Department of Consumer Affairs were organised at Gangapur city in Sawai Madhopur district of Rajasthan on July 25-27, 2007. BN Nainawat, the Food Inspector and Ghanshyam Rawat, the local social worker were the guests.

The activities under CAP were organised at Keshavrai Patan in Bundi district of Rajasthan, from August 08-10, 2007. The participants were the representatives of consumer clubs, which included the nodal persons and the local citizens and networkers. Around 46 participants attended the event. In the inaugural session, *Sarpanch* Murarilal Sharma was the chief guest.

The events at Bonli and Bundi were held on September 12-14 & 19-21, 2007 respectively. About 54 participants attended the programme. Rajesh Goyal, Member, *Zila Parishad* was the chief guest.

At Bonli and Bundi, the participants were the representatives of local voluntary organisations, local citizens and networkers and the consumer clubs representatives. About 65 participants attended the programme. SS Bissa was the chief guest along with Hamid ul Haq, District Education Officer.



A view of the CAP

## Mini Retreat

CART Mini Retreat was held at Rajasthan Institute of Cooperative Education & Management (RICEM), on July 28, 2007. In addition to reviewing the ongoing projects, detailed discussions were held regarding the funding strategy, positive developments and the critical limitations.

## Advocacy for Tobacco Control

CUTS CART in partnership with the World Health Organisation (WHO) India and the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, and in active collaboration with the Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Rajasthan organised an advocacy seminar under the project entitled, 'Tobacco: deadly in any form and disguise' in Jaipur, on August 21, 2007. This event marked the culmination of the one-year project.



Dr GC Jain, CMHO (Jaipur) distributing mementos to participating schools

Asthama Care Society, Sataya Narayan Pareek of *Gayatri Parivar Trust*; Dr GC Jain, Chief Medical and Health Officer (Second), Jaipur.

In order to show 'pictorial warnings on tobacco products' through the advocacy seminar, a letter on behalf of Advocacy Forum for Tobacco Control (AFTC) was forwarded to all members of *Lok Sabha* and *Rajya Sabha* on August 23, 2007, which was placed before the *Lok Sabha*.

## Securities and Market Awareness Campaign

The first workshop under the VI<sup>th</sup> round of Securities and Market Awareness Campaign (SMAC) supported by Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Mumbai was conducted in Jhalarapatan City of Jhalawar district on July 19, 2007.

Hari Ram, a Commerce Lecturer with sound knowledge of stock and capital market and TP Jain, the Share Broker of a Share Trading Co., Jhalarapatan city were the resource persons. A total of 52 participants attended the workshop. The second workshop, in the series, was held at Rani (Pali District) with the assistance of a local NGO 'Social Service Society', on August 31, 2007.

## PROJECTS & PROGRAMMES

### Workshops under RTI Project

A two-day Divisional Level Workshop under the project entitled, 'Combating Corruption in the Rajasthan State, India by applying Right to Information (RTI) Act as a tool' in partnership with the Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF) was organised at Rajasthan Institute of Co-operative Education and Management (RICEM), in Jaipur, during July 27-28, 2007.

Justice NK Jain Chairperson, Rajasthan State Human Rights Commission was the Chief Guest and MK Khanna Secretary, Rajasthan Information Commission (RIC) was Guest of Honour and delivered the inaugural address respectively. Dr Rakesh Ranjan, Convener, *Sochna Adhikar Abhiyan*, and Coordinator, CHRI Madhya Pradesh, facilitated various sessions.

A Divisional Level Workshop for Consortium of Groups for Combating Corruption (CGCC) was held at State Institute of Agriculture and Management, in Tonk on August 06-07, 2007. Among the dignitaries were Dr Rakesh Ranjan, BL Kothari Chief Executive Officer, *Zilla Parishad*, Tonk and five Block Development Officers (BDOs) and the Press and Information Office (PIO) of the *Zilla Parishad*.

### National Environmental Awareness Campaign

Six Divisional Level pre-proposal open workshops were conducted in Bhilwara (Ajmer Division); Chittorgarh (Udaipur Division); Bundi (Kota Division); Pali (Jodhpur Division); Churu (Bikaner Division); and Jaipur (Jaipur Division) on September 18, 19, 21, 26, 27 and 28, 2007 respectively with the assistance of various local organisations on the theme of National Environmental Awareness Campaign (NEAC), biodiversity conservation.



## Vidhayak Samvad

The second meeting of the *Vidhayak Samvad* was held in the conference hall of the *Vidhana Sabha* on September 18, 2007. Around 20 *Vidhayaks* of the current Rajasthan State Assembly actively participated in the *Samvaad*. Sumitra Singh, Speaker of the State Assembly presided over the event. In continuation to suggestions that emerged out in the first *Samvaad*, on 'water' and 'electricity' the second meeting succeeded in forming a consensus amongst the *Vidhayaks*.

## Gram Gadar Awards 2006

The *Gram Gadar Awards* for 2006 were distributed by Sumitra Singh, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, in a small function arranged in her chamber on July 17, 2007 to the following persons:

1. Right to Information – Sikader Parik (*Rajasthan Patrika*, Sikar)
2. Management of Natural Resources – Gourav Kumar Jain (*Rajasthan Patrika*, Sikar)
3. Economic Development of Rajasthan – Vimal Jain (*Rajasthan Patrika*, Jaipur)



## REPRESENTATIONS

### Rajasthan Social Watch

Ajnish Biswas and Om Prakash Arya participated in the Rajasthan Social Watch First Report Planning meeting held at the Centre for Community Economics and Development Consultants Society (CECOEDECON), on July 11, 2007. Established in 1995, Social Watch provides a global platform for NGOs to monitor and promote the effective implementation of the commitments made by centre or state governments.

### Consumers International's Global Strategy

Deepak Saxena attended Consumer International (CI) Regional Members Meeting for Asia and the Pacific organised by CI's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on August 20-21, 2007. The objective of the meeting was to discuss CI's global strategic plan for the coming four years.

### Gender Approach to Health Care

Sabita Tripathy attended a three-day workshop on 'Gender Approach to Health Care in Rajasthan' organised by the Indian

Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR) and Rajasthan Health Systems Development Project (RHSDP) Government of Rajasthan, in Jaipur, during August 23-25, 2007.

### Right to Information

George Cheriyan attended a workshop organised by Harish Chandra Mathur-Rajasthan State Institute of Public Administration (HCM-RIPA) and the IC Centre for Governance, New Delhi for the Press and Information offices (PIOs) of various government departments on RTI on August 30, 2007. George made a brief presentation about CUTS involvement in the area of good governance.

### Motor Vehicle Injury Prevention

Deepak Saxena attended an Indo-US Workshop on 'Motor Vehicle Injury Prevention and Control' at Hyatt Regency, New Delhi, during August 28-30, 2007.

### Future Vistas for Food Safety

George Cheriyan attended a workshop on 'Future Vistas for Food Safety' organised by the Quality Council of India

(QCI), jointly with the Ministry of Food Processing Industry (MFPI), Government of India, as part of a series of workshops focused on food safety, at the Indian Habitat Centre, in New Delhi on September 05, 2007.

### Biodiversity Law

RK Sharma attended the inaugural session of the Western-Central India Regional Workshop on 'Biodiversity, Regulation: Legality and Reality' co-organised by the CECOEDECON, Rajasthan along with Food, Trade and Nutrition Coalition (FTN)-Asia, *Kalpavriksh*, New Delhi and in collaboration with GRAIN, New Delhi, in Jaipur, Rajasthan, on September 06-07, 2007.

### Child Rights

Sabita Tripathy attended a meeting with NGOs on 'Convention of Child Rights' organised by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in Jaipur, on September 22, 2007. She made a brief presentation about various interventions of CUTS in the area of child rights and protection.

**MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENT / DONOR AGENCIES**

**Meeting with Officials of CIDA**

George Cheriyan visited the Canadian High Commission, New Delhi on September 05, 2007 and met with T Sampath Kumar, Advisor (Development) & Canada Fund Coordinator and Gail Cockburn, Counsellor (Development) & Head of Development Cooperation, India/Bhutan/Nepal.

**Meeting with Sandra M Libunao**

Sandra Libunao, Consultant, Oxfam Novib, visited CUTS as part of conducting a detailed evaluation of its activities in India as a 'core country'. Along with Bipul Chatterjee, Deputy Executive Director, CUTS and other representatives from CUTS offices, George attended the evaluation session.

**Meeting with Bhavna Bhatia & Neeraj Gupta**

Along with Pradeep S Mehta, Bipul Chatterjee and Udai S Mehta, George met with Bhavna Bhatia and Neeraj Gupta from the World Bank, who visited CUTS to discuss consumer issues on September 11, 2007.

**Meeting with Navdeep Singh**

George Cheriyan and Deepak Saxena met with Navdeep Singh, Additional Director General (ADG-Traffic) in his office at Police Head Quarter and briefed him about CUTS' involvement in various road safety initiatives.

**VISITS**

**Visit to CHD**

George Cheriyan visited CUTS Centre for Human Development (CUTS CHD) along with Dharmendra Chaturvedi to attend the staff meeting and had discussions on various administrative as well as programme-related matters during September 18-19, 2007.

**Visit to Jaipur Dugs**

In continuation to the earlier visit of Nand Kishore Chaudhary to CART office, George Cheriyan and RK Sharma visited Jaipur Drugs Company, in Jaipur, on September 21, 2007.

**PUBLICATIONS**

- A book entitled 'Consumer Protection Act and the Supreme Court' (Volume II) was published during August 2007.
- The Bill Blow up 'Gram Nyayalayas Bill 2007' was published during August 2007.



**FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

Investor education and protection activities in 10 identified places in Rajasthan will be held with the support from Investor Education & Protection Fund (IEPF), Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.

**CART IN MEDIA**