



CUTS Centre for
Consumer Action,
Research & Training



Catalyst

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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.

Role of Consumers in Feeder Reforms

The first leg of third phase of the CUTS-FES programme entitled 'Involvement of Consumers in Power Sector Reforms in Rajasthan' concluded with a state-level evaluation workshop on December 15, 2007. The objective of the workshop was to evaluate the success and achievement of this leg in each of the 10 target districts.



Welcoming the participants, Deepak Saxena of CUTS CART recapitulated the objectives of the programme and successful implementation of first and second phase. George Cheriyan of CUTS CART explained the objective of the CUTS-FES programme and the progress achieved so far. Addressing consumer representatives from various districts of Rajasthan, KL Vyas, Officiating Chairman, Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission (RERC) pointed out the policy evolutions in electricity sector in India, especially in Rajasthan and introduced various

provisions in the Indian Electricity Act 1910; Electricity Supply Act 1948; Electricity Regulatory Commission Act 1998; and Electricity Act 2003.

In the technical session, Rajesh Kumar and Deepak Saxena jointly made a PowerPoint Presentation on 'Feeder

Renovation Programme: Role of Consumers'. Other speakers included RG Gupta, Chairman & Managing Director, *Jaipur Vidyut Vitaran Nigam Ltd* (Jaipur Discom); Shanti Prasad, ex-Chairman, RERC; SS Gupta, Deputy Secretary, RERC and CUTS staff. A set of recommendations emerged out of the evaluation meeting, which would be shared with various stakeholders to finalise the focus of future interventions. During October and November 2007, five workshops were organised under the programme in Sirohi, Pali, Banswara, Nagaur & Sikar districts respectively, prior to this state-level evaluation meeting.

World Bank Reviews Social Accountability Project

Sanjay Agrawal, a consultant with the World Bank, Washington DC visited Jaipur on November 08, 2007 to review the progress of the ongoing social accountability project. The discussion during the review was a meaningful exercise as several aspects of the project implementation were examined. Sanjay Agarwal also met with Rohit Kumar Singh, Secretary, Department of Rural Development, Government of Rajasthan. George Cheriyan and Om Prakash Arya briefed him on the social accountability project, including other



possible collaborations. Rohit Kumar showed keen interest in social accountability aspect of the rural development and invited CUTS to be part of training in social audit process.

Sanjay Agrawal visited various blocks

of Sirohi District of Rajasthan from December 10-12, 2007 to review the progress of the field activities during which he met with a range of stakeholders, including direct beneficiaries and officials in the district administration involved in the implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS). This was the first visit of any World Bank staff after the commencement of the project in June 2007. RK Sharma and Om Prakash Arya accompanied him during the visit.

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Visit of Gail Cockburn to Jaipur

On invitation from CUTS CART, Gail Cockburn, Head of Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in India, visited Jaipur on October 26, 2007 to review the progress of CART's 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' in partnership with Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI).

Gail visited Udaipuria village, one of the project target villages to meet the artisans and members of Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI). Gail

talked to artisans on the benefits received from the training and further requirements for improvement. Toofan Singh Meena, a member of Panchayat Samiti, Govindgarh, said that the artisans benefited with the training imparted to them but they need financial and marketing linkage for taking up product diversification.

Gail also visited CUTS office and met with staff. A presentation on CFLI funded project also was made. Then Gail had an informal meeting with the members of project coordination group (PCG), which included ML Mehta, Former Chief Secretary & Deputy Chairman, Rajasthan

Mission on Livelihoods; Rohit Brandon, Chairman & Managing Director, Rural Non-farm Development Agency (RUDA), Jaipur; Dr Sunil Ray, Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Jaipur; Sunny Sebastian, Special Correspondent, the Hindu; Vimal Jain, Senior Sub-editor, Rajasthan Patrika.

CFLI Planning & Evaluation Meeting

A Planning and Evaluation Meeting, under the CFLI project was organised in Jaipur, on November 23, 2007, to discuss the future plan of action and sustainability of the interventions made through the project and also to facilitate the evaluation process. Representatives of the stakeholders groups from various districts of Rajasthan attended the meeting. A presentation on the key findings of the field survey and highlights of the implementation of the project was made in the meeting. Detailed discussions were also held on the 'Way forward'. Evaluators discussed and raised several questions to relevant stakeholders, as part of the evaluation process about the different aspects of the project and training imparted to them.

Securities and Market Awareness Campaign

The Third workshop under the Fifth round of Securities and Market Awareness Campaign (SMAC) supported by Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Mumbai was conducted in Deedwana (Nagaur), on October 04, 2007 with the assistance of local networker 'Suksham Vigyan Samiti', Deedwana (Nagaur).

The Fourth workshop, in the series, was conducted in Sirohi on October 22, 2007 with the assistance of local networker Aravali Seva Samiti, Abu Road, Sirohi. The Fifth workshop was conducted in Banswara, on November 19, 2007 with the assistance of local networker Vagad Vikas Sansthan, Banswara. The Sixth workshop was held in Kishangarh (Ajmer), on December 21, 2007 with the assistance of local networker Shankar Singh Rawat, Secretary, Gramin Mahila Vikas Sansthan, Kishangarh (Ajmer). Avinash Bhardwaj, Branch Manager, ICICI Bank and Rashid Ali, Unit In-charge, ICICI Bank were the resource persons.

National Environmental Awareness Campaign (NEAC)

NEAC is a flagship campaign of the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India. CUTS was appointed as the RRA for Rajasthan for a period of three years in 2006. The campaign was successfully coordinated by CUTS during 2006-07. The theme for the year 2007-08 is bio-diversity conservation for which a total number of 494 proposals were received. A

meeting of the Regional Committee was held in Ahmedabad, on October 23-25, 2007 to scrutinise the proposals. The committee sanctioned a total of 349 proposals, covering all the 32 districts of Rajasthan, with a budget of Rs 19,56,000, which is a biggest achievement. Dharmendra Chaturvedi and Madan Giri Goswami of CUTS participated in the meeting.

Making the Consumers Aware

CUTS CART organised five events in Bhilwara Block (Bhilwara); Gulabpura (Bhilwara); Sojatcity (Pali); Pisangan (Ajmer); and Bhinay Block (Ajmer) under the Consumer Awareness Programme (CAP) with the support of Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Government of Rajasthan during October, November and December 2007.



At Bhilwara meeting, Gyan Prakash Pandey, President, District Forum, Bhilwara was the Chief Guest. In Gulabpura event, Surajmal Yadav, the Sarpanch, was the chief guest while Kamla Agrawal, Principal, Girls School of Gulabpura was the guest speaker. In the event held at Sojatcity, Dinesh Sharma, SDM, was the chief guest while at Pisangan, Mohd. Ramzan, PRO, Panchayat Samiti was the chief guest. In all these awareness meetings, local citizens, networkers, members of voluntary organisations and experts took part.

PROJECTS & PROGRAMMES

RTI Mid-Term Dissemination Meeting

A Mid-Term Dissemination meeting under the project 'Combating Corruption in Rajasthan State, India, by Applying RTI Act as a Tool' in partnership with Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF) was held at Rajasthan Institute of Cooperative Education and Management (RICEM), Jaipur, on October 10, 2007.

The meeting aimed at disseminating survey findings among surveyors, Consortium of Group for Combating Corruption (CGCC) members, and the government officials; to adopt new strategies for addressing corruption at different levels. Relevant stakeholders representing various NGOs, public representatives, and CGCC members participated in the meeting. The workshop commenced with welcome and introductory remarks by RK Sharma. Ajnish Biswas and AB Paul of CUTS CART made a brief PowerPoint presentation of various aspects of the project. Ajay Kumar Jain (Advocate, Rajasthan High Court) was the chief guest of the event.

Launch of Investor Education Programme

CUTS CART, along with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India conceptualised a project on Investor Awareness and Education. The project aims to develop a culture of investment in the rural masses in select 10 districts of Rajasthan by creating a team of dedicated investors and build their capacities to through training workshops. The project was formally launched at the Press Club, Jaipur in association with 'The Economic Club' being managed by a leading newspaper 'Nafa Nuksan' on December 22, 2007. The participants were the representatives of 10 selected voluntary organisations of 10 selected districts, viz. Jodhpur, Sawaimadhopur, Jalore, Churu, Ajmer, Bikaner, Jhunjhunu, Alwar, Bharatpur and Kota. Jai Singh Kothari.

CUTS Stall at Pushkar Mela

CUTS CART, in active partnership with CUTS Centre for Human Development (CUTS CHD) and with the support from PTF, US put up 'RTI Advisory & Facilitation Stall' during November 17-24, 2007, at Pushkar Mela, in Ajmer district. Through exhibition stall, CUTS CART promoted the rural development schemes/policies of the government, including the grassroots interventions.



Among the visitors were: Sarita Gena, Ajmer Zila Pramukh (Ajmer District Head), the PRIs members, tourists, officials and rural citizens. The visitors sought information about the RTI Act and were also keen to know about CUTS' work towards good governance.

A total of filing 139 RTI Act applications were facilitated on the spot and more than 300 application formats were distributed to the visitors. Also, the rural visitors were made aware of the RTI Act and the media expressed deep interest in CUTS' initiative towards curbing corruption.

REPRESENTATIONS

Learning Event in Paris

George Cheriyan attended a Learning Event on 'Generating Genuine Demand with Social Accountability Mechanisms' organised by the Communication for Governance & Accountability Programme (CommGAP) of the World Bank at World Bank Office, Paris, on November 01-02, 2007. He presented a paper on 'Analysing the Public Sphere/Political Context: Learning from India'.

Social Accountability Curriculum

George Cheriyan participated in a two-day brainstorming workshop on 'Social Accountability (SAc) Curriculum Development in South Asia' organised by The World Bank Institute in New Delhi, on November 19-20, 2007. The workshop aimed at assisting a select number of training institutions to establish training programmes on the SAc topic.

Meeting on Water and Sanitation

OP Arya participated in a working meeting organised by Water and Sanitation Programme (WSP), World Bank in New Delhi, on November 30, 2007. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed Urban Water & Sanitation Services (UWSS) community monitoring strategy and the specifics/logistics of how to translate the idea into constructive and sustained action.

Training on Juvenile Justice

Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended a sensitisation programme on Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 and its Amendment in 2006 at National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), Indore, during November 28-30, 2007.

Rajasthan NGO Alliance

RK Sharma attended the core group meeting of the 'Rajasthan NGO Alliance' at the Save the Children office, Jaipur, on December 20, 2007. The alliance is an initiative by leading NGOs (Donor and Implementing), primarily based in Jaipur.

Dialogue on Good Governance

A B Paul participated in a 'Public Dialogue on Good Governance & Access to Information with special focus on RTI Act (2005)' organised by the Center for Advocacy and Research in Jaipur, on December 08, 2007.

Country Programme Evaluation

George Cheriyan attended the Restitution workshop as part of the Core Country Programme Evaluation (India) of the Oxfam Novib, in Faridabad during December 17-19, 2007.

Empowering Mineworkers

RK Sharma attended the inaugural session of the national workshop on 'Empowering Mineworkers: Actions Taken and the Road Ahead' organised by the Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti (GRAVIS) in Jaipur, on December 29, 2007.

MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENT / DONOR AGENCIES

Meeting with Mohini Malhotra

George Cheriyan met with Mohini, Regional Coordinator for Capacity Development, South Asia Region of the World Bank Institute based in New Delhi On October 05, 2007 to plan for the forthcoming brainstorming workshop on *Social Accountability Curriculum Development in South Asia*, scheduled to be held in New Delhi.

Meeting with Anke Schuermann

George Cheriyan met with Anke Schuermann, Country Director in Delhi; Lata Raman, Senior Programme Coordinator; and Nivedita Varshneya, Programme Manager for Rajasthan to explore the possibility of collaboration with German Agro Action (Deutsche Welthungerhilfe) which is directed towards poverty alleviation rural development activities in India.

Meeting with Pierre Poert

George Cheriyan visited the office of Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris and met with Pierre Poert, Head, Investment Division, OECD, and Misuzu Otsuka, Economist/Policy Analyst in the IP division on October 31, 2007.

Meeting with Dominique Bocquet

George met Dominique Bocquet, Permanent Representative for France to the OECD and the Counsellor at the French Ministry of Finance based in Paris and also a member of the Development Assistance and Economic Assistance Committees of OECD at lunch on November 03, 2007 and had discussions with him on various issues.

Meeting with World Bank/DPIP Officials

Asmeen Khan, Task Manager of World Bank supported District Poverty Initiatives Programme (DPIP) project in Rajasthan; Samik Sundar Das, Senior Rural Development Specialist, World Bank; Vikas Sharma, Deputy Director, DPIP; and other World Bank consultants visited CUTS on December 04, 2007 and had a meeting with Rajeev D Mathur, George Cheriyan and RK Sharma.

Meeting with CWF Appraisal Committee

As per the invitation from the Department of Consumer Affairs, George Cheriyan and Deepak Saxena met with the Chairman and members of the appraisal committee and made a presentation on the revised GRANICA proposal at the department in New Delhi, on December 11, 2007.

VISITS

Visit of a delegation from Pakistan

A group of 15 delegates from the Church World Service (CWS), Pakistan visited CUTS on October 15, 2007. The visit was organised by Churches Auxillary for Social Action (CASA) Rajasthan unit. George and Deepak met with the group and had detail interactions about the work of CUTS, CWS & CASA.

Visit of Bruce Stokes

Bruce Stokes, a senior correspondent of the National Journal, Washington DC visited Jaipur on December 06-07, 2007, to have a close look on the real impact at the ground level in the context of economic liberalisation and globalization. Meetings for Bruce were arranged in nearby *Udaiuria* and *Mirapura* villages of the *Govindgarh* and *Chaksu* blocks, respectively. A separate meeting with senior journalists and Sumitra Singh, Speaker of Assembly; Nathu Singh Gurjar, MLA and other officials of the Rajasthan State Assembly was also arranged.

INTERNSHIP

The following interns were attached with CART for the durations mentioned below:

1. Pranjal Vyas, Intern from National Law University, Jodhpur November 12-December 11, 2007
2. Dharmendra Singh Bhati, Gujarat National Law University, November 14-December 21, 2007
3. Naved Khan, Rajeev Gandhi National University of Law, Patiala, Punjab December 21-January 07, 2008.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Project on 'Traffic Claming Strategies to Improve Pedestrian Safety in India' in partnership with Lund University, Sweden and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

Stand Up and Speak Out

Stand up and speak out was a worldwide call to take action against poverty and inequality and for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). During October 16 at 9 pm GMT and October 17 at 9 pm GMT, millions literally stood up and spoke out to show that they refuse to stay silent or seated in the face of poverty. In solidarity, CUTS CART staff took part in the campaign by standing up at 11 am on October 17, 2007.

CART IN MEDIA

