

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.

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Inculcate Culture of Governance Among all Stakeholders



Corruption is corruption, there is no small or big corruption and to uproot it, governance must be cultured among all stakeholders of society", said Professor VS Vyas, Member, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council and Deputy Chairman, Planning Board, Government of Rajasthan. Emphasising on all stakeholders, he specifically mentioned the role of opinion makers in developing culture and peer pressure that also works.

He was delivering a keynote address in an event 'Dialogue on Governance' organised by CUTS on the occasion of launch of a project '*Developing a culture of good governance and accountability in the state of Rajasthan, India through involving CSOs and building their capacity with a focus on improving the public expenditure outcomes*' in partnership with Affiliated Network for Social Accountability-South Asia Region and Global Partnership Fund (ANSA-SAR & Global).

Rao Rajendra Singh, Member, Rajasthan Legislative Assembly pointed out the flaws in the functioning of the Assembly and its pathetic condition. He said that a public representative is not able to perform his/her duty due to the lack of an effective functional system in place and blame goes to public representatives, ministers etc.

Gopakumar K. Thampi, Chief Operating Officer of ANSA SAR, Dhaka provided a brief overview of the initiatives of the World Bank institute in setting up ANSA-SAR. He said that ANSA-SAR & Global is supporting 19 organisations in eight countries to deepen/widen the work on social accountability. He also appreciated the measures undertaken by CUTS on the issue.

George Cherian, Director, CUTS international opined that the culture of corruption is fast extending to all aspects of life and corruption has become a way of life in India. 37 percent of total plan outlay during 2010-11 is earmarked for the social sector. But the resources are not reaching the intended beneficiaries. He hoped that the current project of CUTS in partnership with ANSA would help developing a culture of good governance negating the culture of corruption in the state. He said community based organisations (CBOs) will be trained under the project about the usage of Community Score Card, one of the high breed social accountability tools, and will test in National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS).

Om Prakash Arya, Project coordinator, CUTS International, proposed vote of thanks to chief guests. More than 70 participants from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Yemen, Egypt Argentina, Indonesia representing civil society organisations (CSOs), and also from Government of Rajasthan, media and CSOs from Rajasthan participated in the event.

Use RTI Creatively to Prevent Corruption

"Even after 65 years of Independence in India a large proportion of Indian population, act as 'passive citizens' and thus contributing zero towards the efforts of eradicating issues such as corruption in various sectors in India. Instead of just using RTI to expose misdeeds and corruption, use it as a 'preventive tool' to prevent corruption at its origin" said Jagadananda, State Information Commissioner of Orrisa, while delivering the keynote address in a final dissemination cum advocacy meeting organised by CUTS in collaboration with Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF) to share the findings of its interventions on 'Reforming the Processes in the Rural Development Department through Policy and Civic engagement, based on RTI Act (2005)', in Rajasthan.

Nishkam Diwakar, Chief Executive Officer, *Zila Parishad*, Jaipur; R P Chaudhary, Director *Indira Avas Yojna*; S P Baswala, Deputy Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms, Government of Rajasthan commented on the key findings of



the study. George Cherian, Director, CUTS, in his opening remarks said that along with 'Right to Information' there must be a 'Right to Accountability' to ensure time bound delivery of services at all levels of the government.

Madhu Sudan Sharma, CUTS while presenting the findings of the study said that the awareness level on RTI in Rajasthan is only 37 percent and 5.5 percent are using RTI as a social accountability tool to improve the service delivery. Though 78 percent Public Information Officers are aware of this Act, but majority of them are reluctant to provide the required information sought under the provisions of the RTI Act.

A set of recommendations was presented to the government during the meeting to make the processes in selected schemes more transparent and accountable. Dharmendra Chaturvedi proposed vote of thanks. More than 100 participants including representatives of CBOs, media, government departments, RTI activists actively participated in the meeting.

Absenteeism is Universal and has Major Financial Implications

"The problem of absenteeism is rampant all over the world and it has major financial implications", said Courtney Tolmie, Senior Programme Officer from Results for Development (R4D) Institute, Washington DC, while delivering the opening remarks in the district level dissemination meeting held in Tonk under the project 'Improving Service Delivery through Measuring Rate of Absenteeism in 30 Health Centres in Tonk District of Rajasthan, India'. The project is implemented by CUTS in partnership with R4D Institute under the Transparency and Accountability (TAP) Programme.

She further said that R4D works in the area of transparency and accountability mainly in health and education sector and is committed to identify the problems of service delivery in Asian and African countries and provide remedial solutions to it. She appreciated CUTS' work done in the area of research and advocacy. A communiqué based on the findings of the project was also released by Courtney Tolmie.

George Cherian, Director, CUTS briefly described the objective of the meeting and stated that findings of the project would help ensure maximum benefits of the health services to the primary health centres (PHCs) of Tonk by providing recommendations based on the evidences collected through various research activities and the use of social accountability tools to the district administration.



Om Prakash Arya, Project Coordinator, CUTS presented the key findings emerged out of various research activities and information gathered through the use of social accountability tools such as Citizen Report Card and Participatory Absenteeism Tracking Process.

Dr Ramawat Jaiswal, Deputy Director, Department of Health & Family Welfare and Dr R P Meena, Chief Medical Health Officer (CMHO) spoke during the meeting. More than 80 relevant stakeholders, including block programme managers, doctors from PHCs, PRI representatives, media and others participated.

ANSA Monitoring & Evaluation workshop

CUTS in partnership with ANSA-SAR, co-organised a monitoring and evaluation workshop for representatives of grantees of ANSA in Jaipur on June 01-03, 2010. A total of 39 participants from ANSA partnering organisations from seven countries: India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Yemen, Egypt and Argentina, including six CUTS staff participated.



Public Interface Meetings

The first phase of Public Interface Meetings (PIMs) in collaboration with the district partners was held under the project 'Grassroots Reachout & Networking in Rajasthan through Consumer Action' (GRANIRCA) in 12 districts

of Rajasthan: Dausa, Chittorgarh, Alwar, Banaswara, Sikar, Jodhpur, Churu, Jalore, Bundi, Kota, Dholpur and Tonk in May 2010. Representatives from civil society, media, educational institutions, legal system and others were targeted in these PIMs. The main objective of PIMs was to share the findings of the survey conducted by CUTS and its partner organisations in 12 districts of Rajasthan. The findings were shared with the participants of these PIMs and an open house discussion was carried out based on its findings.

Representatives from the surveyed departments as well as other important officers participated and answered to the queries raised by the participants.

VISITS

Visit of Indira Sandilya, Washington DC

Indira Sandilya, a Communication Expert and an Adviser, PTF, Washington DC visited CUTS to discuss the communication strategy of various governance projects of CUTS for advocacy on May 04, 2010. A presentation on the Advocacy Plan for the TAP-financed project was made and the discussion followed to re-cap the issues, suggestions and new ideas that emerged.

Visit of Courtney Tolmie, R4D, Washington DC

Courtney Tolmie visited CUTS to review the progress of implementation of TAP programme on June 28, 2010. Discussions on interventions of CUTS in the area of governance and accountability were also held. She visited Mehandawas, one of the model PHCs under the project in Tonk and interacted with the doctor, staff and community monitors etc. about the functioning of the PHC.



Visit of Stephanie de Chassy, Washington DC

Stephanie de Chassy, Adviser, PTF visited CUTS to evaluate the RTI PTF project phase-II from May 10-13, 2010. Stephanie met with S P Baswal, Deputy Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms, Government of Rajasthan and MD Kaurani to discuss the implementation of RTI Act in Rajasthan.



She visited both the Model RTI Gram Panchayats – Harsulia and Mundia on May 10-11, 2010 respectively. Stephanie also met with Kailash Narayan Meena, Sub Divisional Officer, Niwai and took stock of his involvement in project activities, especially about the exposure visit to Kerala and its outcomes. A de-briefing meeting was held at CUTS in which Stephanie provided feedback/suggestions for extension of phase II.

Visit of Students from University of Alberta, Canada

A group of 16 students, along with two faculty members from University of Alberta, Canada visited CUTS from June 06-09, 2010 as part of a study visit to India. George facilitated a session and made a power point presentation on 'Development Challenges in India (with special focus on governance) and the Role of CSOs'. The group visited Udaipuria village, Chomu to see the working live conditions of rural artisans engaged in tanning work.

