

## 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.

## INSIDE

- Projects and Programmes
- Representation
- Meetings/Visits
- CART in Media



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## Absenteeism – Major Obstacle in Service Delivery

**A**bsenteeism is one of the major obstacles, especially in the human resources oriented sectors such as *health* and *education* that hampers delivery of services. It is the unjustifiable or unexplained physical absence of an employee from work.

It is widespread among the physicians and healthcare personnel of public healthcare facilities in developing countries, including India and has wide financial implications. Surprisingly, these issues are not as widely discussed in the policy framework in the health systems of these countries, despite their potentially adverse effects on health service delivery.



India's primary healthcare system is based on primary health centres (PHCs) and its associated sub-centres, each of them covering 5-6 villages. National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) launched in 2005, aims at providing accessible health services to the poorest households in the remote regions of the country.

Recently, a study was conducted by CUTS CART, in

one of the districts (Tonk) of Rajasthan to measure the rate of absenteeism among health service providers and the status of service delivery. As part of Transparency and Accountability Programme (TAP), implemented in 18 countries, the study was undertaken in collaboration with Results for Development (R4D) Institute, Washington DC and the Human Development Network (HDN) of the World Bank.

As part of the study, 900 unannounced on the spot observations at 30 selected facilities were made for 35 consecutive days except on Sunday by 150 selected monitors from the catchments of PHCs.

On an average one third of the health service personnel was observed missing during duty hours. Absenteeism was as high as 36 percent among doctors, while in five categories of health service providers it was found to be 27 percent on an average.

The financial loss on account of absenteeism was calculated as 84 lakh per year for the target district, without taking in to consideration the opportunity cost. The study observed that an average of 12 percent posts of health personnel in PHCs remained vacant. 30 percent of PHCs had either poor or no proper drinking water facility. A 10 percent of PHCs lacked toilets and 13 percent electricity facilities respectively. 69 percent of respondents reported that they are either not getting any medicines or only a few. It was observed that absence of governance and accountability structure was the major impediment in the process of service delivery.

The findings of the study were shared in a state level dissemination meeting held in Jaipur, on July 29, 2010. While delivering the introductory remarks, George Cherian, Director, CUTS said that absence of governance and accountability is the major obstacle in the process of service delivery. Om Prakash Arya, Project Coordinator, presented the key findings.

Rao Rajendra Singh, MLA, Rajasthan; Shyama Nagarajan, Health Specialist, The World Bank and incharge of Rajasthan Health System Development Project; Shiv Chandra Mathur, Executive Director, Rajasthan Health System Resource Centre and more than 100 representatives from various CSOs in Rajasthan, media and PRIs and other stakeholder groups attended the meeting.

## Presentation on 'Absenteeism Study'

A seminar to present the findings of the 'Absenteeism Study' was organised by the World Bank, in New Delhi, on August 25, 2010. The seminar was attended by governance and health staff team coordinated by Roland Lomme, Adviser, Governance & Institutional Development, The World Bank; and Gerard M La Forgia, Lead Health Specialist, South Asia Human Development Department, The World Bank.

George Cherian and Om Prakash Arya made the presentations. The seminar commenced with the opening remarks by Roland introducing CUTS and governance work. Gerald introduced the study and the presentors. The presentation concluded with the screening of documentary of the study. The participants raised questions related to the definition of absenteeism,



methodology, process, findings, sustainability of the suggested community based monitoring model etc., which were suitably answered. Some points were suggestive in nature to make such studies more effective.

## Engaging Communities in Health Services



CUTS in partnership with TAP of the R4D Institute, Washington DC and HDN of the World Bank, Washington DC and in active collaboration with the Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Rajasthan, implemented a project entitled 'Ensuring Improved Service Delivery through Community Monitoring of PHCs in Tonk District of Rajasthan' during August 2009-October 2010. A 10 minute documentary film entitled 'Engaging Communities in Health Services' was produced, which depicts the interventions under the project that resulted in improved health service delivery through the involvement of communities. The documentary film was released on August 25, 2010 by Roland Lomme.

## Mainstreaming Disability in Rajasthan

CUTS in partnership with Sightsavers organised a state level consultation on 'Mainstreaming Disability in Development in Rajasthan' in Jaipur on September 01, 2010. The main objective of the consultation was to sensitise and build the capacity of the participants on the issue and select the governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to work with them on the issue.

The consultation marked the beginning of a new project 'Mainstreaming Disability in Development' which CUTS would be implementing in partnership with Sightsavers, along with selected governmental and NGOs in Rajasthan.

Prasanna Pincha, Special Rapporteur, National Human Rights Commission; and Ketan Kothari, Programme Officer, Sightsavers Mumbai were the key resource persons who spoke on the topics: 'UN Convention on the Rights of Persons



with Disabilities: Tool for Mainstreaming' and 'Mainstreaming: Challenges and the Way Forward' respectively.

George Cherian, Director, CUTS delivered the introductory remarks. Prabhat Sinha, Programme Manager, Sightsavers introduced the work of Sightsavers and linked the issue of disability with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Ajay Singh Deputy Director, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of Rajasthan shed light on the future plans/programmes of the government.

## Grassroot Consumers in Action

CUTS with the support of Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India organised a two-day residential Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop on Consumer Protection Act and other issues at CUTS Conference Hall on July 27-28, 2010 and District Level Training Workshops (DLTWs) in each of the 12 districts of Rajasthan during August-September 2010.

### Training of Trainers

The main objective of the training was to equip identified consumer activists with the required skills for undertaking training sessions along with GRANIRCA team in the DLTWs. More than 10 people from various districts of Rajasthan working on consumer issues participated in the training. It included various sessions such as history of consumer movement, COPRA 1986, advocacy, communication and writing skills and moot courts. The participants submitted their queries which further dealt by experts in the fields.



### District Level Training Workshops

The DLTWs were intended to fill the need of a strong consumer movement at the grassroots by furnishing proper information, methodology, procedures and an approachable redressal mechanism to the people. It was designed to help the consumer activists to get acquainted with grievance redressal system for speedy, inexpensive and effective justice in project districts, which will further support underprivileged classes in their respective blocks.

## Securities and Market Awareness Campaign

CUTS, with the support of Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) under the Securities and Market Awareness Campaign (SMAC) organised two workshops in Kekari (Ajmer) on August 07, 2010; in Tonk (Rajasthan) on August 30, 2010; and in Karauli (Rajasthan) on September 30, 2010 respectively.

Kailash Jain Branch Manager BOB, Kailash Soni, Development Officer LIC, Chanchal, CA were three resource persons who attended the Kekari workshop. More than 70 representatives were present in the workshop. Rajendra Gujar, Deputy Director WCD was the resource person in the Tonk workshop. More than 50 representatives attended the workshop. Om Prakash Goenka, Investor expert and Shyam Prakash Garg, Advocate were two resource persons during the Karauli workshop. More than 60 representatives attended the workshop.



## Decentralisation and Good Governance with Gender Perspective

Om Prakash Arya attended an International Training Programme on 'Decentralisation and Good Governance with Gender Perspective' organised by Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (ILCD) with the support of SIDA, held in two cities, Visby and Gothenburg of Sweden during August 30-September 26, 2010.

The training programme aimed at contributing to ongoing reform process in Asian countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia and Vietnam. More than 27 participants attended the programme. After the conclusion of the programme, participants will work on the change projects in guidance of their mentors through internet/mail and would meet again in Cambodia in May 2011 for the assessment of the progress of work.

## Distribution of Gram Gadar Awards

The Gram Gadar Award distribution function was organised at the residence of Babu Lal Nagar, Minister of State for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Government of Rajasthan on July 31, 2010. The Minister presented the award to Vishwanath Saini (*Rajasthan Patrika, Churu*) for writings on 'Water Conservation and Management in Villages'. CART staff and other media persons attended the function. Another award was given by George Cherian to Anand Choudhary (*Nai Duniya*) for his article on 'Good Governance and Accountability'.



## REPRESENTATIONS

### Meeting of the Investors Associations

Deepak Saxena attended the meeting of Investors Associations organised by SEBI, in Mumbai, on July 06, 2010.

### Mainstreaming Disability in Vocational Training

Madhu Sudan Sharma participated in a workshop on 'Mainstreaming Disability in Vocational Training' organised by 'Rajasthan Mission on Skill and Livelihood (RMoL)' in Jaipur, on September 07, 2010.

### CONFONET Regional Conference, New Delhi, Sept. 9, 2010

George Cherian attended the Regional Conference of the Northern States of the Computerisation and Computer Networking of Consumer Forums in the Country (CONFONET) scheme in collaboration with the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India in New Delhi, on September 09, 2010.

### Rural E-Governance

Arjun Kant Jha attended a two-day 'Roundtable Meeting on Rural E-governance' organised by Indian Institute of Public Administration in New Delhi, on September 16-17, 2010.

### Urban Health Initiatives

Nikita Srivastav attended a half-day Panel Discussion on 'Urban Health Initiative in Rajasthan – Prospects and Challenges' organised by Indian Institute of Health Management Research, Jaipur with support from Population

Foundation of India, and US Agency for International Development in Jaipur, on September 27, 2010.

### BBC Training on Media Handling Skills

Amar Deep Singh attended a Training Workshop on Media Handling Skills organised by The BBC World Service Trust in partnership with Tobacco Free Kids, in New Delhi, during September 20-24, 2010.

### Mainstreaming Social Accountability

George as a resource person facilitated a session in the Learning Workshop on 'Mainstreaming Social Accountability in Oxfam GB's Change Strategies for East Asia' organised jointly by ANSA-EAP & OGB EAR at Phnom Penh, Cambodia during July 06-08, 2010. In addition to providing inputs in various sessions, George facilitated a session on 'Participatory Public Performance Monitoring using Citizen Report Card as a Tool'.

### Upcoming Event

A Training of Master Trainers on the Community Score Card under the 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' supported by ANSA-SAR would be held in Jaipur, during October 27-31, 2010.



### CART IN MEDIA

**'Absentee rate doctors 36 pc'**

HT Correspondent  
htraj@hindustantimes.com

\* Respondents also comp

Special Correspondent

JAIPIR: On an average more than one third of health services personnel was observed missing during duty hours in Primary Health Centres (PHCs) in Tonk district of Rajasthan according to a study. Absenteeism was as high as 36 per cent among doctors while in five categories of health service providers

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