

About CART

Established in 1983 as a small voluntary group of concerned citizens, Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) expanded its activities and CUTS CART was set up in 1996 as a programme centre to pursue 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 a more responsible society and encouraging changes at the policy level by advocating with the government machinery and sensitising it to the issues of concern of the common man. The Centre has spearheaded several campaigns and pioneered consumer empowerment.

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CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CART)

D-217, Bhaskar Marg, Bani Park, Jaipur 302 016, India
Ph: 91.141.2282062, 2282821
Fx: 91.141.4015395, 2282485
Email: cart@cuts.org
Website:
www.cuts-international.org

Together for a Better World for All International Day for People with Disabilities

A State Level Consultation in partnership with Sightsavers under the project 'Mainstreaming Disability in Rajasthan' was organised to observe the 14th 'International Day for Persons with Disability' (PWDs) in Jaipur, on December 03, 2011. The consultation was organised with multiple objectives – firstly the observation of International Day for PWDs; and secondly marking the conclusion of 16-month long CUTS' intervention with Sightsavers in Rajasthan on mainstreaming disability in development process.



Vijaya Laxmi Bishnoi, Chairperson, State Social Welfare Board, Government of Rajasthan was the Chief Guest of the event. In the keynote address she said that it is really good to see that many organisations are working for making attitudinal change in the society towards PWDs. She acquainted participants with various schemes of the government and facilities extended to the PWDs. She said that her Board is always ready to extend their support to civil society organisations (CSOs) for implementing the policies and strategies in a better way.

In the opening remarks, George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS stated that the theme of the day is, 'Together for a better world for all: Including persons with disability in development'. There are five sub themes along with the main theme; and mainstreaming disability is on the top. He further said that PWDs make up an estimated 15 percent of the world's population and a quarter of the global population is directly affected by disability who are near and dear ones of PWDs facing the consequences of disability. He mentioned that experiences show that when PWDs are empowered to participate and lead the process of development, their entire community benefits, as their involvement create opportunities for everyone with or without a disability.

Madhu Sudan Sharma, Project Coordinator, made a detailed presentation on the successful implementation of all planned activities under the project. He mentioned that 24 sensitisation workshops and six access audits were conducted.

Prateek Agarwal, Social Activist, spoke on the UN Convention on Rights of PWDs. He said that PWDs are more concerned about social exclusion and impairments from family and the society, than their own physical disability. Prabhat Sinha, Programme Manager, Sightsavers stressed on the need to mainstream disability by linking it with Millennium Development Goals.

Abraham George, Area Director, Sightsavers in his concluding remarks said 16-month long intervention is not sufficient for achieving the main goal, but the project initiated the changes in attitude towards PWDs, which is only the beginning of the long journey.

More than 70 participants from different development organisations, government officials, students and media persons participated.

MoU of ConsumersUp Project Signed

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of ConsumersUp project was formally signed by George Cheriyan and Manoj Kumar Parida, Joint Secretary, Consumer Affairs, on November 04, 2011. S K Nag, Director, Consumer Welfare Fund; Prema Bhatt, Under Secretary, Consumer Welfare Fund etc. were present.

The main objective of the project is to bring out a report entitled, 'State of the Indian Consumer'. Cheriyan provided a brief about CUTS and the project, before signing the MoU. As part of the scoping visit under the project, Cheriyan visited Bangalore to meet with Y G Muralidharan, Secretary, Consumer Rights Education and Awareness Trust (CREAT). He also visited the National Law School University of India, Bangalore and met with Ashok Patil, Associate Professor, Chair, Consumer Law & Practice on November 08-09, 2011.

He visited Chandigarh on November 24-25, 2011 and met with Surinder Verma, Chairman, Citizens Awareness Group (CAG) and Shakuntla Jakhu (IAS), Principal Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA), Government of



Haryana. Cheriyan visited CUTS Calcutta Resource Centre (CUTS CRC) on December 05, 2011 and met with Keya Ghosh and other team members and briefed them about the project and possible role expected from CRC.

Cheriyan and R Prashant (from CUTS CRC) visited Agartala and Ranchi and met with Consumer Association in Agartala and *Janaki Foundation* in Ranchi on December 06-07, 2011 respectively.

Facilitating Community Score Card in Nepal



To improve the service delivery and public expenditure outcomes in health sector and with the aim of institutionalising community score card (CSC) in Nepal, Pro Public, a non-government organisation, organised a day long orientation on CSC for lower level service providers of the Ministry of Health, Nepal and four day long training for the representatives of CSOs. This training was supported by the World Bank under its Programme for Accountability in Nepal. George Cheriyan and Om Prakash Arya were resource persons for both the orientation and training programme which was held during November 13-19, 2011.

National Environment Awareness Campaign

Dharmraj Patil from Centre for Environment Education visited CUTS CART for scrutinising National Environment Awareness Campaign (NEAC) proposals during November 12-14, 2011. Dharmendra Chaturvedi and Arjun Kant Jha attended Regional Committee meeting of central zone organised by the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India in New Delhi during October 17-21, 2011. 229 proposals were sanctioned with a total disbursement grant ₹21,68,000.

GRANIRCA: State Level Feedback Round Table

Marking the conclusion of the activities of second year of the project, the consultation was organised to consolidate and share the key learnings gained from project activities and identify the advocacy issues. It was attended by more than 60 participants, comprising consumers, media and CSO representatives from 12 project districts. Senior Journalist Rajender Bora, Dr. Poonam Pande, Project Associate GIZ and Director CUTS, George Cheriyan were the key speakers.

Deepak Saxena made a presentation on project progress and findings of field research. Amarjeet Singh summed up the discussion and gave a vote of thanks.

Prior to the State Level Round Table, a District Level Training Workshop was organised at Banswara on November 02-03, 2011 which was attended by 47 participants.

Onkar Singh Kaviya, District Supply Officer, Banswara was the Chief Guest and accompanied by C L Basita, Enforcement Officer and Hazari Lal Aloria, Enforcement Inspector.



Engaging Citizens against Corruption in Asia

Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF) in partnership with CUTS, Transparency International, India and Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore organised a four-day Asia Regional Peer Learning and Knowledge Sharing workshop on the theme: *Engaging Citizens against Corruption in Asia: Approaches, Results and Lessons* in Jaipur, on November 29-December 02, 2011.



The workshop brought together CSOs from eight countries in Asia and anti-corruption activists from all over the world. The workshop discussed results from over 30 case studies under four country programmes. International experts from PTF and other organisations presented global good practices in helping citizens fight corruption. More than 67 participants, including four from CUTS (George Cheriyan, Madhu Sudan Sharma, Om Prakash Arya and Amar Deep Singh) attended the workshop.



7th National Consumers Convention

George Cheriyan attended the 7th National Consumers Convention organised by the Consumer Coordination Council (CCC) on November 25-26, 2011; and the Annual General Body Meeting of CCC on November 25, 2011. Ramesh Dhawala, Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Government of Haryana inaugurated the convention. George made a presentation on good governance in the session on 'Models of Good Governance'.

Bridging the Gap between Consumers & Telecom Service Providers

CUTS with the support of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) organised a 'District Level Telecom Consumer Education Workshop' in Tonk (Rajasthan) on November 11, 2011. The workshop was attended by 75 participants which included telecom consumers, representatives of media, telecom service providers, CSOs etc. Senior officials from Reliance Communication, Vodafone and Aircel, Idea Cellular and BSNL were key speakers along with CUTS team. The workshop was successful in raising awareness among consumers on various regulations issued by TRAI to protect the interest of telecom consumers and also bridging the communication gap between consumers and service providers.



Two telecom consumer awareness workshops were organised in Sikar on December 17, 2011; and in Chittorgarh on December 30, 2011 respectively. In Sikar, 75 telecom consumers participated and in Chittorgarh, 97 consumers participated. Both the events received wider media coverage.



Interface Meetings on CSC

The CSOs are being trained in facilitating under CAG project in partnership with ANSA-SAR with an aim to improve and reform the service delivery in the flagship scheme, 'Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Scheme' by using social accountability (SAc) tool under the governance network. The governance team members are participating in the activity of interface meeting under CSC. During October-December 2011, 32 organisations completed CSC in various districts. These interface meetings are being participated by one of the team members of CUTS to help facilitators and also gather learnings emerged out of the CSC exercise at the grassroots.

REPRESENTATION IN MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS ETC.

Grievance Redress & Whistle-Blower Protection

Om Prakash Arya participated in the National Convention on Grievance Redress and Whistle-blower Protection Bill organised by National Campaign for People's Right to Information and other organisations in New Delhi on October 10-11, 2011.

Improving Governance through Accountability

George Cheriyan facilitated a session on 'Improving Public Expenditure Outcomes of Major Social Sector Schemes' as part of training course on 'Improving Governance through Accountability' organised by the National Academy of Audits and Accounts, Shimla on October 11, 2011.

Effective Public Service Delivery

George Cheriyan attended a Regional Policy Seminar on 'Effective Public Service Delivery in Health and Education' organised by Global Development Network in partnership with the Results for Development Institute, and supported by the Department for International Development in New Delhi, on October 12, 2011.

Nurturing Elements of Accountability Ecosystem

George Cheriyan made a presentation in the Meeting of the Board of Directors of SAARC Development Fund in New Delhi on CUTS project under consideration by SDF Secretariat entitled 'Nurturing elements of accountability ecosystem in the delivery of basic education through research, advocacy and networking in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka'.

National Consumer Day

Deepak Saxena, Amarjeet Singh and Dharmendra Chaturvedi participated in the State Level Function organised by the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of Rajasthan in Jaipur on December 24, 2011.

Gender Issues in Panchayats

Om Prakash Arya attended a one-day State Level Advocacy-Showcasing Workshop organised by Participatory Research in Asia, in Jaipur on December 20, 2011 based on the work carried out under a three-year long intervention on gender issues in Panchayats of Rajasthan.

Regional Seminar on Investor Awareness

Abhimanyu Singh attended an awareness Seminar for investors organised by Securities and Exchange Board of India, Central Depository Services (India) Limited and Bombay Stock Exchange, in Jaipur, on December 30, 2011.

Decentralisation and Good Governance

Amarjeet Singh completed the first phase of the International Training Programme on "Decentralisation and Good Governance with a Gender Perspective", organised by the International Centre for Local Democracy in Sweden on September 19-October 14, 2011. He met with Indian Ambassador to Sweden Ashok Sajjanhar.



VISITS

Naimur Rahman who joined recently Affiliated Network for Social Accountability-South Asia Region (ANSA SAR) based at BRAC University, Dhaka as the Chief Operating Officer visited CUTS on October 28, 2011.

Chandy Andrews, Chief Controller of Accounts, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India visited CUTS on October 29, 2011.

Future Project

Community of Practice on SAc in partnership with ANSA-SAR with the purpose to enable and institutionalise the process, mechanisms and tools of SAc in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and India.



CART IN MEDIA