

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

Civic Engagement key to Improving Governance

Civic engagement is one of the key components towards improving governance. Social Accountability (SAc) tools and approaches are specially designed for engaging citizens. Community of Practice on Social Accountability (CoPSA) is a step ahead in utilising the full potential of SAc approaches by spreading the learning through sharing, innovating, building capacity and institutionalising them in development programmes for improved public expenditure outcomes, said Tahseen Sayed, Country Manager for Nepal, The World Bank in her valedictory address of the 'South Asia Regional Training on Social Accountability Tools' organised by CUTS in Kathmandu, Nepal from September 18-20, 2012 in partnership with Affiliated Network of Social Accountability South Asia Region (ANSA) with the support of the World Bank Institute (WBI).



She further said that the training is a commendable endeavour towards building a cadre of people trained in the tools which they can utilise in realising better quality of service delivery and in turn improved governance in the countries of south Asia. She concluded by congratulating CUTS for organising the training with participants from five countries in South Asia. Carolina Vaira (Social

Accountability Unit, The World Bank Institute, Washington DC), Nuzhat Jabin (Programme Manager, ANSA-SAR), and George Cherian (Director, CUTTS International) spoke in the valedictory session. The chief guest distributed mementos to all the participants.

In the inaugural session, making the introductory remarks George said that CoPSA is an attempt to bring all the practitioners of SAc in South Asia on one common platform anchored by CUTS. In the inaugural address, Carolina Vaira stated that the SAc intervention in South Asia region is very significant and the initiatives like CoPSA are need of the hour in the changing scenario of governance in the region. In this region, numerous pilots are going on and success of these will shape the roadmap for other regions as well.

Carolina Vaira, Richard Holloway (Programme Coordinator, Programme for Accountability in Nepal, The World Bank, Nepal), Kedar Khadka (Member, Management Committee, ProPublic, Nepal), George Cherian along with his colleagues Om Prakash Arya, Amar Deep Singh and Madhu Sudan Sharma facilitated various sessions in the training.

More than 27 participants, i.e. 14 from Nepal, six from Pakistan, two each from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh and three from India representing various civil society organisations and government attended the training. The training was well appreciated by all and the participants expressed that the learning from the training was beyond their expectations.



Regional Consultations on Consumer Issues

CUTS with the support of Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India has implemented a project entitled 'Indian Consumers in the New Age: A Forward Looking Agenda to Address the Concerns of the Common People' (ConsumersUp) lasting for a period of one-year. The objective of the project is to create an enabling environment for protection and promotion of consumer interest contributing towards the national interest.



Four Regional Consultations were organised with the collaboration of state partners at Bengaluru, Karnataka on August 03, 2012; at Agartala, Tripura on August 17, 2012; at Chandigarh, on August 24, 2012; and at Ranchi, Jharkhand on August 31, 2012.

Among the prominent speakers and participants in Bengaluru consultation were: C R Rajendra, (Bangalore Branch Head and Scientist -'F' & Head, BIS); C Rajashekhar (Dean, Faculty of Law and Professor, Department of Studies in Law, Karnataka University, Dharwad, Karnataka); Ashok R. Patil, (Associate Professor, Chair of Consumer Law and Practice, National Law School of India University, Bengaluru); S. Saroja

(Citizen consumer & civic Action Group, Chennai); J Vijayathilagam (Superintendent and Coordinator, State Consumer Help Line and Consumer Advice Centre, Department of Consumer Protection, Govt. of Tamil Nadu).

In Agartala Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food & Civil Supplies, Government of Tripura Manik Dey inaugurated the consultation. Among the prominent speakers were Justice A B Pal (President, State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Tripura & Mizoram), Justice Pradip Kumar Sarkar (Lokayukta, Tripura), Prof. Mihir Deb (Chairman, Tripura Pollution Control Board), K K Roy (Principal, Tripura Government Law College, Agartala) and Keya Ghosh (CUTS, Kolkata).

N K Mittal (Joint Director, Department of Consumer Affairs, Food & Civil Supplies Government of Haryana) inaugurated the consultation. Madhu P Singh (President Consumer Forum, Faridkot), Anant Sharma (Rajasthan), Charanjeet Singh (Chandigarh) & Vijay Acharya, Lucknow provided response to key research findings.

Mathura Prasad Mahto (Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of Jharkhand) inaugurated the regional consultation held in Ranchi. Among the prominent speakers were N P Singh (Joint Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of Jharkhand) and Sri Prakash Roy (President of District Consumer Forum, Ranchi) and representatives of consumer organisations from various Eastern states of India.

Dissemination meeting was held in Jaipur on September 13, 2012 to disseminate research findings of Rajasthan. M L Mehta (former Chief Secretary and President, CUTS) chaired the session. Media gave wider coverage to all dissemination meetings.

I Change My City

Urban local bodies/municipalities play an important role in the planning and development of urban areas. Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) provide basic infrastructure and services in cities and towns. However, in reality the performance of many of the municipalities in the discharge of their duties has continued to deteriorate over time. One of the reasons for poor performance by municipalities is ineffective participation of the citizens in the decision-making process. The 74th Constitution Amendment Act (1992) provides for a significant devolution of functions and powers to the local bodies through decentralisation and people's participation in local self-governance. The main thrust of decentralisation is to bring the governance nearer to people in order to enhance its quality. Civic engagement is one of the critical norms of good urban governance.

Keeping this aspect in mind CUTS conceptualised and initiated a new project entitled "Improving Service Delivery by Urban Local Government in the City of Jaipur through Enhanced Civic Engagement" (My City) in partnership with The Asia Foundation. The objective is to assess the status and quality of service delivery by urban local government in the city of Jaipur through Citizen Report Card (CRC) by engaging stakeholders and create a Public Services Index (PSI) of each of the selected wards based on delivery against key services.

As part of series of consultation with key stakeholders, a CSO consultation was organised on August 28, 2012 which was attended by more than 22 representatives of Jaipur-based CSOs. A Councilors' consultation meeting was organised on September 28, 2012 and 14 councilors, including Deputy Mayor of Jaipur Manish Pareek attended the meeting.



District Level Training Workshops under GRANIRCA

As a part of the project, 12 District Level Training Workshops (DLTWs) were organised with 12 district partners during the period July-September 2012. Six DLTWs were organised in the month of July starting from Dholpur on July 06-07, 2012; in Kota on July 12-13, 2012; in Dausa on July 12-13, 2012; in Alwar on July 19-20, 2012; in Tonk, on July 24-25, 2012; and in Chittorgarh, on July 26-27, 2012.

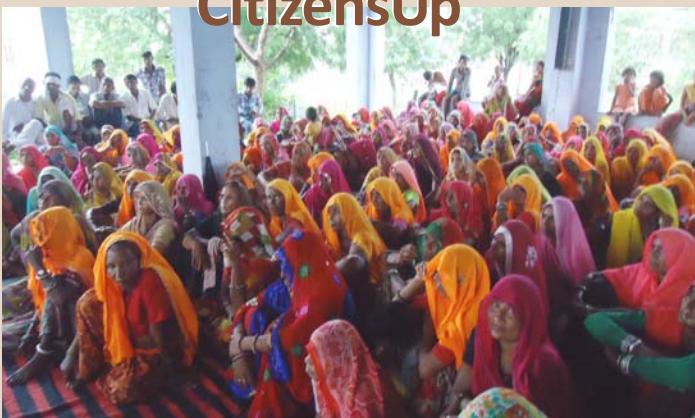
Five DLTWs were organised during the month of August, 2012: in Jodhpur, on August 06-07, 2012; in Churu, on August 08-09, 2012; in Jalore on August 17-18, 2012; in Sikar on August 23-24, 2012; and in Bundi on August 31-September 01, 2012. The last DLTW was held in Banswara on September 03-04, 2012.

All 12 DLTWs were organised with the coordination of district partners and were good in terms of participation of government officials, activists and media coverage. The



government officials includes District Supply Officer, officials from Weight & Measures Department, Members of District Consumer Forum etc. All the DLTWs received good media coverage also. A core group was formed in all the DLTWs to take the consumer movement forward.

CitizensUp



Under the project entitled "*Contributing towards Corruption Free and Transparent Service Delivery in 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)' through Civic Engagement in Jaipur and Tonk Districts of Rajasthan, India*" known as CitizensUp in partnership with the Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF) several activities were organised during the period. A day long Story Telling and Write shop was organised at CUTS CART Conference hall on August 06, 2012.

In the event 8 Consortium Groups for Combating Corruption (GCCs) from all the targeted blocks participated to share their survey experiences, narrate the grassroots case stories of MGNREGS showing the

service delivery lacuna and corruption in the system and write them on the spot. Second story telling and Writeshop was organised for the CGCCs on September 24, 2012 in CART office in Jaipur in which experiences, stories, cases etc. were shared with the peer members of CGCC and progress report of the previous month was submitted to the project team. Various activities such as interface meetings, facilitation camps etc. were held in Dudu, Phagi, Sambhar, Malpura and Niwai blocks.

Short Action Research on MGNREGS

The objective of this short term action research is to assess the impact of SAC (Community Score Card), used during the main phase of CUTS CAG project in partnership with ANSA SAR during 2010-12, in the service delivery of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in Rajasthan, India. The action research will be done by using the approach of experimental v/s control group. Experimental group is where CSC process has taken place under the ANSA supported intervention and control group where CSC process has not taken place. A comparative study will be done to see the difference in both places.

The orientation workshop was organised in Jaipur on July 04, 2012. Representatives of 11 organisations took part in the orientation. As planned, partner organisations carried out the Citizens Report Card (CRC) survey in each of the target gram panchayats and organised repeat score card and focused group discussions (FGDs) in selected gram panchayats. The team members attended the interface meetings and FGDs.



REPRESENTATION IN MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS ETC.

Right to Hearing

Madhu Sudan Sharma participated in a brief dissemination meeting of 'Rajasthan Right to Hearing Bill, 2012' called by District Collector, Jaipur at Collectorate conference hall on July 21, 2012.

Cluster Workshop at Bhuvneshwar

Madhu Sudan Sharma and Arti Pandey Tiwari took part in a two-day cluster workshop organised by the PTF/PAC Bangalore of the 'Citizens Against Corruption (CAC)' partners from Odisha, Karnataka, Kerala, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Delhi, Sri-Lanka and Nepal from August 16-17, 2012 at Bhuvneshwar.

Strengthening and Enabling the Voluntary Sector

VANI (New Delhi) & CUTS organised a one day workshop at Jaipur, on August 22, 2012 on strengthening the voluntary sector in Rajasthan. The meeting was designed to mutually share and learn from each other about the challenges faced by the sector. Representatives of various NGOs/ Donor agencies attended the meeting. Kaveri Dutt attended the meeting.

BSNL Open House

Dharmendra Chaturvedi participated in an Open House Session at BSNL District office Jaipur on September 15, 2012.

VISITS

- Steve Kosack from the Harvard Kennedy School, USA and Jean Arkedis from R4D, Washington DC, USA visited CART on July 09, 2012 to discuss the proposal R4D is developing in partnership with the Harvard Kennedy School, for a portfolio of impact evaluations to understand better whether and under what circumstances transparency and accountability interventions have an impact on the quality and use of service and spending as well as ultimate human development outcomes.
- Naimur Rehman (Chief Operation Officer) and Nuzhat Jabin (Coordinator-Operation and Resource Mobilisation) of ANSA SAR, Dhaka visited CART on July 25, 2012 for the mid-term review of CoPSA, which formally commenced on January 01, 2012.
- Sr. Mariola Sequeira, the newly appointed member of Rajasthan State Minorities Commission visited CART office on July 25, 2012 and met with George Cherian and discussed various plans of the Minorities Commission as well as the status of implementation of schemes meant for minorities in Rajasthan.
- Manish Pareek, Deputy Mayor of Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) visited CART office on September 25, 2012 along with CSO representative and met with George Cherian & Kaveri Dutt and had detailed discussions about the MyCity project. He also briefly met with the governance team and provided suggestions about selection of wards and inputs about the status of various services delivered by JMC.

Upcoming Study

Study on the 'Status of Law Enforcement for Misleading Advertisements in India and its Impact on Consumers' in partnership with GIZ under the DoCA-GIZ Project "Consumer Policy and Consumer Protection"



CART IN MEDIA