

## 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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## Rajasthan Needs Massive Campaign on Consumer Awareness

**T**here is an urgent need of massive campaign on consumer awareness in Rajasthan and this is the best way for protecting consumer rights, said Lalit Mehra, Principal Secretary, Government of Rajasthan, Department of Food, Civil Supply and Consumer Affairs. Speaking about the efforts made by the government, he said that the government has issued orders to District Supply Officers and Enforcement Offices in every district to help consumers in resolving their complaints. He was speaking in a seminar organised by Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) marking the “World Consumer Rights Day” which is celebrated on March 15 since 1983 all over the world after historical speech by US President John. F. Kennedy in American Congress on this day in 1962.

To mark the occasion, CUTS organised a series of street plays, an awareness event in school and a seminar on the theme “Consumer Justice Now” in Jaipur on March 15 & 18, 2013 respectively.



Other key speakers on the occasion were Ruth Anna, Programme Director, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), New Delhi; Poonam Pandey, Technical Expert, GIZ, New Delhi; Amrit Lal Saha, Chairman, Consumer Coordination Council; S Saroja, Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG), Chennai; and Keya Ghosh & George Cheriyan of CUTS International. The seminar was attended by more than 75 consumer activists from all districts of Rajasthan who raised their concerns and provided suggestions. On this occasion, Lalit Mehra also distributed awards to GRANIRCA district partners and some consumer activists in his speech.

Saha demanded to strengthen consumer organisations, such as CUTS, who have proved its strength and efficiency. Ruth Anna highlighted on the need of data in the digital age of communication and commerce.

Cheriyan spoke about the background of the World Consumer Rights Day and on the theme of ‘Consumer Justice Now!’ He raised issue of not having any Consumer Policy at National and constitution of State Consumer Protection Council in Rajasthan.

Rajendra Prasad Bora, Senior Journalist stated that collective action by the government and consumer organisations is the key step towards ensuring consumer justice. Deepak Saxena of CUTS facilitated the proceedings and Amarjeet Singh summed up the discussions while thanking all participants for taking up issues in interest of consumers.

## Revision of United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection

“Worldwide explosion of digital consumption, ever increasing financial frauds and similar other new consumer concerns calls for a certain amount of changes in the guidelines for consumer protections. Besides, stronger recognition of consumer organisations is the need of the hour.” This was observed by Helen Mc Callum, Director General, Consumers International (CI) while welcoming the gathering of the two-day Global Meeting on Review of United Nations Guidelines on Consumer Protection (UNGCP).

The event was organised by CI in collaboration with CUTS and co-hosted by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Government of India at New Delhi, India on February 26-27, 2013. The meeting was attended by experts working on consumer issues across various sectors around the globe.

The UNGCP adopted in 1985 are an international reference point for the consumer movement and CI has been recognised by United Nations Committee for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 2012 to work with its members to feed in proposals on how guidelines can better address concerns of today's consumers.

Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS expressed concern over lack of international efforts towards consumer protection since 1985. Underlining that Guidelines was revised only once in 1999 to insert a new section on sustainable consumption and production to reflect environmental concerns that emerged during the 1990s, he welcomed the



move to revise Guidelines now after a decade.

Pankaj Agarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution expressed the plight of existing legislations in country that are heavily production-oriented. New instruments of consumer protection need to be devised or framed rather than approaching courts to the rescue.

In addition to the revision of the UNGCP, several topics were discussed, including the state of the consumer protection in developing countries and countries with economies in transition; developing a comprehensive framework for consumer law and strategy to advocate for amendments to Guidelines. George Cheriyan, Jai Shree Soni and Simi T B from CUTS attended the meeting.

## Corruption Free and Transparent Service Delivery in 'MGNREGS'

A 'Dissemination cum advocacy meeting' was organised 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" at Jaipur on March 21, 2103.

The objective of the meeting was to discuss ground realities and systemic issues related to the MGNREGS and ponder upon the survey objectives keeping the survey facts in mind. The key speakers were Badri Narayan, Additional Commissioner (Employment Guarantee Scheme-II); N R Pareek, Director, Social Audit, Government of Rajasthan; Bhagwan Sahay Sharma, Ex Chief Executive Office and Special Secretary, Chief Whip of Government of Rajasthan; and George Cheriyan, Director CUTS.

The survey findings, project overview and advocacy issues were presented by Madhu Sudan Sharma. More than 90 participants attended the meeting.

## Seminar on Consumer Awareness

A seminar on consumer awareness was organised by Grand Kerala Shopping Festival (GKSF) in association with the Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala and Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India, for guiding consumers in making smart shopping choices.

Prof KV Thomas, Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution inaugurated the seminar at Kochi on January 05, 2013.

Pankaj Agrawala, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India; Riji G Nair, Managing Director, Consumerfed; and UV Jose, Director, GKSF spoke in the inaugural session.

Manoj Parida, Joint Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India chaired the technical session, in which Riji Nair; Biju Prabhakar, Kerala Food Safety Commissioner and George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International spoke. George made a presentation on 'Consumer Act & Protection of Consumer Rights.'





## Resolving Grievances of Citizens

With an aim of improving the service delivery through citizen's engagement, CUTS launched a project entitled, 'Improving Service Delivery by Urban Local Government in the City of Jaipur through Enhanced Civic Engagement' (MyCity) in partnership with the Asia Foundation by implementing various social accountability tools and approaches to enhance the engagement and



voice power of citizens.

Interface meetings are conducted to solve problems related to various service deliveries thereby giving an opportunity to provide the citizens with a platform for direct interaction with service providers and getting solutions. Jagroop Singh Yadav, Chief Executive Officer, Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) said that the project has helped JMC in reaching households in different wards and engaging directly with the citizens which is enhancing the quality of services under JMC. Manish Parik, Deputy Mayor, stated that mass awareness among citizens can only drive improvement in the service delivery.

## International Expert Group Meeting on Financial Services

Access to stable, secure and fair financial services is important for consumers everywhere. As a result of global financial crisis and the double dip economic recession, the importance of financial consumer protection has increased. Keeping in mind the need to have focused work on financial services, an international expert



group on financial services was formed in October 2010 by CUTS International. The group was reconstituted in October 2012 and given the work that CUTS has done in this area, CUTS was invited to re-join the group for 2013. The reconstituted group had its first meeting in London. George Cheriyan attended the meeting.

## World Consumer Rights Day 2013

### Street Plays

CUTS organised street plays on four public places located in four corners of Jaipur city on March 15, 2013. The purpose of conducting these street-plays was to make people (general masses) aware of consumer rights and responsibilities and also to make them know about the WCRD theme of this year through traditional and conventional styles, such as story-based street-plays with traditional trumpets, singing, dancing using musical instruments.



### Awareness Event at School

CUTS with the support of Consumer Coordination Council Organised an educative event at the 'Rani Senior Secondary School' located at Pratap Nagar, Sanganer, Jaipur, on March 15, 2013 where the team interacted with school children and educate them on various



consumer issues, rights, responsibilities and about the theme. On the occasion, various pamphlets and literature on consumer protection were also distributed to the students.

## Evaluation of NEAC

The Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India appointed D. C. Khanduri, Consultant and Alok Yadav, Scientist of Indian Council of Forestry Research & Education (ICFRE), Dehradun for the evaluation of National Environment Awareness Campaign. Both the officials visited CART on March 12, 2013 to evaluate the NEAC in Rajasthan. George Cheriyan along with Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Amar Deep Singh and Arjun Kant Jha met with the evaluator and interacted.

Four partner organisations were also invited to share their experiences with the evaluators. Cheriyan explained in detail the whole process of NEAC and shared the highlights of campaign.

## Context Analysis in Nepal

'Context Analysis of Nepal for Social Accountability Interventions' was conducted in February 2013. Om Prakash Arya and Amar Deep Singh visited Nepal during February 05-12, 2013 and done the study in the districts of Kathmandu, Rasuwa and Biratnagar of Nepal and met with various stakeholders for gathering information in order to understand context of Nepal for social accountability interventions. The visit was coordinated by the Pranav Bhattarai, GoGo Foundation, Nepal.



## REPRESENTATION IN MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS ETC.

### Lecture on Consumer Awareness

Dharmendra Chaturvedi delivered a Lecture on consumer awareness in NSS camp at Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Choti Choper, Jaipur on January 08, 2013.

### Public Lecture by Gopal Gandhi

Madhu Sudan Sharma attended a lecture on 'Neta, Netagri and Netratav' delivered by Gopal Gandhi, former Governor of West Bengal organised by 'School of Democracy', Jaipur in the memory of Late Ajit Bhattacharjee at Pinkcity Press Club on February 01, 2013.

### Creative Workshop on Disability

Madhu Sudan Sharma participated in a Creative Workshop on Disability organised by *Rajasthan Patrika* at Jaipur on February 01, 2013.

### Bridging the Employability Gap: The Way Forward

Amarjeet Singh attended a meeting on 'Bridging the Employability Gap: The Way Forward' organised by the State Planning Board, Rajasthan at Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Yojana Bhawan, Jaipur on February 14, 2013.

### Power Sector Reforms in Rajasthan

Deepak Saxena and Amarjeet Singh attended an event on 'Power Sector Reforms in Rajasthan: The Expectations, Achievements, Challenges and Way Forward' organised by Prayas, Energy Group, Pune; Samta Power, Jaipur; The Institution of Engineers (India), Jaipur Chapter and RSEB retired Abhiyanta evam Adhikari Jan Kalian Trust.

### Upcoming Project

Community Monitoring of Roads constructed under *Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana* under the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India in partnership with Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore supported by National Rural Roads Development Agency (NRRDA),

### Pre Budget Consultations of CM with NGOs

George Cherian along with Madhu Sudan Sharma took part in the Pre-budget consultations of NGOs with the Rajasthan Chief Minister on February 19, 2013. Cherian presented the key points during the consultation and presented a copy of the CUTS memo to the Chief Minister.

### Meeting of Tobacco Control Steering Committee

Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended District Level Steering and Coordination Committee meeting (Tobacco control) at the Police Commiserate office at Jaipur on February 19, 2013.

### Meeting with State Minister for Home & Transport

Deepak Saxena and Arjun Kant Jha visited the office of the State Minister for Home & Transport Virendra Beniwal and updated him about the road safety work of CUTS on February 07, 2013.

### Seminar cum Consultation on Mediation in Consumer Disputes

Amarjeet Singh attended a National Seminar cum Consultation on Mediation in Consumer Disputes organised by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry at New Delhi on March 07, 2013. This programme was organised under the Mediation Advisory Centre (MAC) Project- A joint initiative of Department of Consumer Affairs, FICCI and GIZ.

### Institutional Partnership

A long term cooperation agreement has been signed between Research Centre for the Law and Policy of Global Consumer Protection, China and CUTS at Wuhan University, China on March 16, 2013. Pradeep S. Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS signed the agreement on behalf of CUTS.



## CART IN MEDIA

