

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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Rhoda Karpatkin International Award & Lecture

George Cherian, Director, CUTS International and Head, CUTS Centre for Consumer Action Research & Training (CART), was recognised as the Rhoda Karpatkin International Consumer Fellow for 2013 in the Annual conference of American Council on Consumer Interests (ACCI) held in Portland, Oregon, US on April 11-12, 2013.

ACCI established in 1953, is a leading membership organisation for academicians and other professionals involved in consumer and family economics.

Rhoda Karpatkin Consumer International Award was established in 2005 to honour the pioneering work of Rhoda Karpatkin to enhance the welfare of consumers throughout the world. The award recognises those who have made significant contributions to the welfare of consumers on an international stage and be a member of ACCI or Consumers International.

Specialised lawyer in consumer and education law, Karpatkin is presently President Emeritus of Consumers Union (CU) of US. She was the President of CU for 27 years from 1974-2001 and served two terms as President of Consumers International (CI).

Currently, Karpatkin serves as a member of US President's Advisory Committee on Trade Policy and Negotiations and the Committee on Trade and Environmental Policy. She is a member of various boards of several International Trade, Human Rights and Policymaking organisations.



During the occasion of receiving the award, Cherian delivered the Rhoda Karpatkin International lecture on the topic *Consumer Protection Regimes around the World with Special Reference to the State of the Indian Consumer*.

In his address, Cherian said that mere existence of a law does not guarantee protection to consumers, there has to be commitment on the part of governments. The United Nations Guidelines on Consumer Protection (UNGCP) need to be further strengthened to guide individual governments for protection of consumers. He referred to various studies done by CUTS International and CI and concluded by stressing on the need to have more concerted, intensive and aggressive efforts at national and international levels to deal with emerging challenges.

Cherian also made a presentation on 'Financial Inclusion: A Key Driver for Inclusive Growth' in the concurrent session entitled *Keeping Up with the Times: The Impact of Emerging Trends on Personal Finance*.

More than 100 researchers from all over US and from ten other countries, Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, and the UK attended the lecture and conference.

Building the Case for Social Accountability: Lessons from ANSA-South Asia

George Cherian attended various meetings with Officials at the World Bank and also to a make a presentation in a BBL event at the World Bank on 'Building the Case for Social Accountability: Lessons from ANSA-South Asia' on April 09, 2013. He spoke about the history and relevance of governance work in South Asia, objectives, activities, definition and key characteristics of CoP, challenges and the way forward. The presentation was well appreciated by the participants.

Jeff Thindwa, Manager, Social Accountability Practice, World Bank Institute chaired the BBL. Naimur Rehman, Chief Operating Officer of Affiliated Network for Social



Accountability in South Asia Region (ANSA SAR) made an introductory remark through an audio link introducing ANSA SAR and its work in South Asia. Janmejay Singh, Senior Social Development Specialist, Social Development Department was the discussant.

MyCity: Interface Meetings

First round of the Interface Meetings were organised by the all eight partner CSOs in April 2013, which was attended by representatives of all key stakeholders. These meetings were an effort towards bringing service providers and community on a common platform to discuss limitations and problems so that they can join hands towards deriving solutions.

A total of 11 community meetings in different wards took place to enhance civic engagement for improving service delivery. The ownership among citizens could be enhanced through active intervention of Citizens Action Groups (CAGs). In April 2013, all partner CSOs organised meetings of CAG members in their respective wards. These meetings were aimed to discuss future strategies and preparations of ward-level activities as well as the interface meetings. The analysis of feedback collected through interviews could be completed during this period.

Felicitations

Sunny Sebastian, Member, CART Advisory Committee, who was appointed as the Vice Chancellor, Haridev Joshi University of Mass Communication & Journalism recently, was felicitated during CART retreat.



International Conference on Social Accountability' in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Amrit Deep Singh attended an International conference on 'Social Accountability in Practice: Lessons, Challenges and Way Forward' organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation at Dhaka, on June 08-09, 2013.

He made a presentation in the first technical session on 'Creating Better Access to Basic Services through Social Accountability: Approaches and Tools'. The presentation was based on the experience from TAP project implemented in Tonk district supported by Results for Development. Speakers from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Philippines and US presented their case studies.

Training on Financial Consumer Protection



CUTS CART organised a four-day training on Financial Consumer Protection to a group of nine delegates from Uzbekistan representing Central Bank, German International Cooperation (GIZ)-supported consumer organisations (Federation of Consumer Protection Societies of the Republic of Uzbekistan, National Association of Microfinance Institutions) and GIZ, during May 13-16, 2013.

The objective of the training was to make the visiting team familiar with consumer protection mechanisms/organisations and a developed regulatory framework in India and to help increase their knowledge about existing regulations/grievance redressal mechanisms in dealing with complaints related to financial services. In addition to various sessions facilitated by CUTS staff and external resource persons, delegates also visited Reserve Bank of India, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, CUTS and Centre for Community Economics and Development Consultants Society to learn and enhance their knowledge.



Supervision Mission of the World Bank to Arab World

Being part of the *Supervision and Orientation Mission* of the World Bank to ANSA Arab World, George Cherian visited Cairo, Egypt from May 25-30, 2013. ANSA-Arab World is a regional programme supervised by MNSSO Unit at the World Bank, started in 2011 and implemented by CARE Egypt in seven countries of the region: Egypt, Yemen, Lebanon, Jordan, West Bank and Gaza, Morocco and Tunisia. The purpose of the mission was to overall supervision of programme implementation entailing meeting with the ANSA Secretariat Board of Trustees and review of action plan prepared by ANSA-AW Board and CARE and to address the coordination issues and the accountability mechanisms they will have put in place.

The activities started a meeting with the World Bank mission team members on May 26, 2013. Cherian made various presentations and oriented ANSA Secretariat, consisting of six members at CARE office during May 26-28, 2013.

He attended the meeting of the Board of Trustee of ANSA on May 29, 2013 and made a presentation on 'Lessons Learned from other Networks and Challenges in Coordination and Information Flow', which was well received and appreciated. Mariana Felicio, Social Development Specialist, MNSSO, The World Bank Washington DC and Sima Kanaan, Lead Social Development Specialist, MNSSO, The World Bank, Washington DC were other members of the mission.



Visit of SSNC Staff to CUTS

Eva Eiderström, Head of Department, Shop and Act Green-Good Environmental Choice Ecolabel; Sara Nilsson, Programme Officer, Sustainable Consumption; and Annelie Andersson, Staff in-charge, Green Action Week Cooperation from Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) visited CUTS, Jaipur during May 03-05, 2013.

The purpose of the visit was to explore the possibility of collaboration between SSNC and CUTS on sustainable consumption-related issues under the Green Action Fund. The team visited CART office and had detailed discussions and made presentations. The team also met with Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS and had detailed discussions about CUTS and its various activities.



The team visited Chittorgarh and met with CHD team and farmer groups and had discussions about their farming activities. The team visited International Centre for Environment Audit and Sustainable Development under the Comptroller and Auditor General of India in Jaipur. In the afternoon the team visited an outlet, which sell organic products and CITEE and discussed about the eco-labelling work. The visit concluded with a debriefing meeting at CART, where in principle it was agreed to work together in the area of organic farming.

CART Retreat

CART Mini Retreat was held at Royal Orchid, Bani Park, Jaipur, on June 11, 2013. Sunny Sebastian, Member, CART Advisory Committee and newly appointed Vice Chancellor, Haridev Joshi



University of Mass Communication & Journalism participated in the retreat as a special guest and delivered the opening remarks. Rijit Sengupta, Archana Jatkar and Kshitiz Sharma participated representing other centers. Based on the presentation made, detailed discussions were held on agenda points including a critical review of projects concluded during 2012-13.

CUTS Senior Management Retreat

CUTS Senior Management Retreat was held at Institute of Leadership Development (ILD), Jaipur during June 28-30, 2013. Representatives from all centers of CUTS attended the retreat. The retreat commenced with an opening address by Mehta explaining the objective of the retreat. It was followed by the presentation of Strategic Business Plan by each of the Centres and detailed discussions on the same. Group



discussions on cross-cutting challenges and opportunities also were held. Representing CART, George Cherian and Om Prakash Arya attended the retreat.

REPRESENTATION IN MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS ETC.

Peer Learning Workshop

Madhu Sudan Sharma and Arti Pandey Tiwari participated in the Peer Learning workshop organised by Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF) at New Delhi during April 30-01 May, 2013.

Unfair Commercial Practices

George Cherian and Amarjeet Singh attended a workshop on 'Unfair Commercial Practices and Misleading advertisements in India', organised by GIZ at New Delhi on April 01-02, 2013.

ICLD Regional Training

Amarjeet Singh participated in the regional phase of the Decentralisation and Good Governance with a Gender Perspective International Training Programme organised by Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy at Bengaluru during April 08-12, 2013.

Advisory Committee of RERC

Deepak Saxena and Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended the meeting of the Advisory Committee Meeting of Rajasthan Energy Regulatory Commission on April 17, 2013.

Appellate Authority of Telecom Service Providers

Deepak Saxena and Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended the meeting of the Appellate Authority of Tata Docomo and Aircel, on April 08 & 23, 2013 respectively. They also attended an open house organised by MTS on April 26, 2013.

'Two Decades of Panchayati Raj – The Search for Support'

Om Prakash Arya and Madhu Sudan Sharma attended a National Roundtable on 'Two Decades of Panchayati Raj – The Search for Support' at New Delhi on April 19, 2013.

Lecture on Consumer Protection

Dharmendra Chaturvedi delivered a lecture on Consumer Protection to 50 students of different law universities at OTS, Jaipur on May 27, 2013. Student's internship programme was organised by the Rajasthan State Human Rights Commission.

Child Labour

Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended a workshop on 'Child Labour' organised by the *Rajasthan Bal Adhikar Sajha Abhiyan* and Action

Aid on the occasion of World Anti Child Labour Day at Jaipur on June 12, 2013.

Consultation on 'State Child Policy'

Jai Shree Soni and Arti Pandey Tiwari attended the Consultation on "Exploring the Role of NGOs in Implementation of State Girl Child Policy" organised by Ajit Foundation with the support from United Nations Population Fund & United Nations Children's Fund at Jaipur on June 14, 2013.

Open House with BSNL

Arjun Kant Jha attended an open house convened by BSNL on June 22, 2013 to discuss various consumer issues. Senior officials of BSNL attended the meeting.

Consultation on Improving Urban Services

Arti Pandey Tiwari attended a half-day consultation on improving various urban services organised by Centre for Advocacy & Research under its Water Sanitation and Hygiene programme at Jaipur on June 26, 2013.

Updating UNGCP for the Digital Age

Amarjeet Singh attended launch function of CI book entitled 'Updating UNGCP for the Digital Age' at New Delhi held on June 28, 2013. Pankaj Agarwala, Secretary, Consumer, Government of India and representatives from various other organisations attended the function. Singh spoke about UNGCP, on-going amendment procedure and some issues based on CUTS' work on internet/digital products.

Inauguration of iCED, Jaipur

George Cherian Participated in the Inauguration function of the International Centre for Environment Audit and Sustainable Development (iCED) under the Comptroller and Auditor General of India in Jaipur by the Hon'ble Vice President of India M Hamid Ansari on May 04, 2013.

CCC Northern Regional Convention

Dharmendra Chaturvedi and Abhimanyu Singh participated in the 2nd Northern Regional Consumer Convention 2013 organised by Consumer Coordination Council in Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh) on May 11, 2013.



CART IN MEDIA

