

Catalyst



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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.

INSIDE

- Projects and Programmes
- Representations
- Visits
- CART in Media



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Governance Agenda in Africa Facilitating Training in Uganda

Advocate Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) is one of the organisations in Uganda working to improve governance, despite weak democratic space. On invitation from ACODE, CUTS partnered and facilitated a 'Methodology Training Course on Social Accountability Tools' for the senior staff of ACODE and from their partner organisations working in various parts of the country. The training was attended by 27 participants including key officials from ACODE and its partner organisations. George Cherian and Om Prakash Arya as resource persons facilitated the training programme held during July 09-12, 2013.

The training programme commenced with an inaugural session. Cherian introduced CUTS and its work spread over countries of Asia and Africa. Arthur Bainomugisha, Director, ACODE delivered the opening address.



The inaugural session was followed by three technical sessions – 'An Introduction to Governance & Accountability', 'Comparative Analysis of Social Accountability Tools & Approaches' and 'Approach and Examples of Engaging Citizens to Improve Governance and Results'.

To develop a comprehensive understanding about the tool Citizen Report Card (CRC), an elaborate session on CRC – 'Citizen Report Card: A Powerful Tool for Improving Service Delivery' was held describing the purpose, concept, components, steps etc. Followed by the session on CRC, sessions on 'Disseminating Findings and Advocacy for Improving Service Delivery' and 'Developing and Implementing Projects, Studies and Evaluations by Applying Social Accountability Tools' were deliberated.

The concept of Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) along with the examples of PETS from Uganda and India and steps of Community Score Card were presented. Break-out sessions were held to conduct simulation exercises. Participants provided their feedback about the programme which was appreciative and encouraging. Certificates were distributed to participants in the valedictory session where both CUTS and ACODE exchanged felicitations.

After the training, Cherian and Arya visited the office of ACODE. They also met with colleagues of HEPS-Uganda, which is a Coalition for Health Promotion and Social Development that advocates for more access to affordable services.

This visit to Africa was meaningful for CUTS when it is putting its endeavour towards spreading and strengthening the governance in the African continent where scope for such work is high. The event was also important for establishing a partnership with ACODE, which can be continued further.



Orientation to CUTS, Nairobi on SAc Approaches

On the way back from Uganda, George Cherian and Om Prakash Arya visited CUTS Nairobi on July 13, 2013 to orient the team on SAc tools. Governance is one of the programmatic areas of CUTS Africa Resource Centres and to strengthen this programmatic area, the team needs capacity. CUTS Nairobi is also executing SAc intervention where skills to implement tools were required. It is in this context, the visit was planned annexed to the trip to Uganda.

Cherian made presentations to develop the understanding of the team especially on SAc and how various tools could be utilised for different purposes in different contexts. The presentation was followed by questions and discussions in order to grasp the concept. He also provided his views to implement the project on SAc in hand and build profile of the Centre.



MyCity: Dissemination cum Advocacy Meeting

A final dissemination-cum-advocacy meeting of MyCity project was organised at Jaipur on July 19, 2013 to disseminate the key findings of the project. The meeting was attended by more than 80 participants including partner organisations, selected ward councillors, Citizens Action Group members, Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) officials, and representatives of civil society organisations, electronic and print media.

M L Mehta, President CUTS & former Chief Secretary of Rajasthan; Shomikho Raha, Senior Adviser, The Asia Foundation; Rajendra Borah, Senior Journalist; and Manish Pareek, Deputy Mayor, JMC as special guest shared their views and responded to findings. Media provided good coverage to the study and findings.

A partners meeting and an exclusive presentation of key findings to Jagroop Singh Yadav, Chief Executive Officer, JMC was organised on July 30, 2013. The purpose was to advocate with key officials of JMC for taking appropriate decisions to ameliorate the situation of services and amenities.



Community Monitoring of Roads under PMGSY

The new project entitled, 'Community Monitoring of Roads under PMGSY' in partnership with Public Affairs Centre and supported by National Rural Roads Development Authority, Bangalore commenced to monitor 30 selected roads in Rajasthan constructed under 'Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)'.

The training for Citizen Monitoring and Audit Teams (CMATs) was organised at Jaipur during September 04-07, 2013 in two batches. The introduction to PMGSY and the status of road construction in Rajasthan was given by Akhilesh Gupta, Assistant Engineer, PMGSY and R K Sharma, Assistant Engineer PMGSY. They provided a detailed orientation to the participants. A team consisting of four members from Public Affairs Centre, led by M P Harish, provided technical knowledge to participants about different tools used for testing the quality of roads.

During the training, participants did the practical of all aspects imputed in the training. For this purpose, two roads – one ongoing and completed were monitored from Phagi and Chomu blocks. The monitoring of roads by CMATs started on September 23, 2013.



Safer and More Sustainable Food for All

CUTS signed an Memorandum of Understanding with Consumer Coordination Council, New Delhi on September 03, 2013 to implement the Green Action Fund campaign in Rajasthan supported by Consumers International (CI) and Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC). The intervention is to conduct an awareness campaign in 10 selected *gram panchayats* on the theme 'Safer and More Sustainable Food for All'. Nine sensitisation meetings were conducted during September, 2013 at selected *Gram Panchayat* in Sambar block of Jaipur district in Rajasthan. SKN Agriculture University, Jobner provided support to the campaign as a resource organisation.



Unfair and Misleading Advertising in India

CUTS entered into a consultancy agreement with *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ), India on September 19, 2013 to undertake a work to study, analyse and document the knowledge gaps for issues/challenges arising from unfair and misleading advertising in India. The consultancy is for a period of two months, i.e. September 20-November 20, 2013. A detailed methodology was submitted to GIZ on September 24, 2013 and the same was finalised with comments/suggestions on September 25, 2013. The desk research is in progress.

Evaluation of ANSA SAR



On completion of the initial Development Grant Facility phase of Affiliated Network for Social Accountability-South Asia Region & Global (ANSA SAR & G) an evaluation was scheduled. As part of the evaluation process, Amanullah Khan, Team Leader for the Evaluation commissioned by ANSA-SAR/IGS visited CUTS on July 31, 2013 and met with George Cherian and governance team members.

National Environment Awareness Campaign

This year, the process of National Environment Awareness Campaign (NEAC) 2013-14 was initiated in July 2013 on the theme 'Biodiversity Conservation'. A total of five divisional levels pre-proposal workshops

were held during July 31-August 05, 2013 covering all 33 districts of Rajasthan. The last date for submission of the proposal was August 08, 2013. CUTS received a total of 353 proposals in 2013.



The scrutiny of the proposal by Centre of Excellence appointed by the Ministry of Environment & Forests took place on September 12-13, 2013. Rashmi Gangwar from Centre for Environment Education, Uthrakhand visited CART and did the scrutiny. The Regional Committee Meeting (RCM) was held in New Delhi during August 23-27, 2013. CUTS was made a special invitee in the RCM. A total of 250 proposals were sanctioned with a total disbursement grant of ₹2,739,000.

REPRESENTATION IN MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS ETC.

Consumer Complaint Redressal and Mediation

Abhimanyu Singh and Jai Shree Soni participated in training programme on 'Consumer Complaint Redressal and Mediation' organised by Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi and sponsored by Consumer Coordination Council (CCC) of India at New Delhi during July 15-19, 2013.

Basic Life Saving Skills

Arjun Kant Jha attended a training 'Basic Life Saving Skills' conducted by Transport Department, Government of Rajasthan on July 24, 2013 which was demonstrated by Maya Tandon.

Innovations in Urban Governance

Om Prakash Arya participated in a conference on 'Innovation in Urban Governance' co-hosted by the Ministry of Urban Development, National Innovation Council and the World Bank at New Delhi on August 26-27, 2013.

Decline and Fall of the Civil Service in India: The Role of Political Masters

Pradeep S Mehta and Madhu Sudan Sharma attended the lecture in the memory of Late Shiv Charan Mathur, former Chief Minister of Rajasthan and former Governor of Assam organised by Shiv Charan Mathur Social Policy Research Institute, Jaipur. The lecture was delivered by Mani Shankar Aiyar, MP.

The Use of Eco-label Blue Angel in India

Pradeep S Mehta, George Cherian & Madhu Sudan Sharma attended a Blue Angel Roundtable meeting on 'The use of eco-label Blue Angel in India – a helpful instrument for achieving climate change goals?' organised by the Oeko-Institut, Germany and the Indo-German Chamber of Commerce at New Delhi, on August 13, 2013.

Gender Responsive Budgeting in India

Jai Shree Soni attended National Workshop on Gender Responsive Budgeting in India held at Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Jaipur organised by Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre (BARC), Jaipur on August 30, 2013.

State Level Meeting by SHIVA

Amar Deep Singh participated in a state level workshop on 'Call to Action Survive 5' organised by the Social And Health Institute for Voluntary Action with the support of World Vision (India) on September 10, 2013.

Disability Rights & Rehabilitation

Arti Pandey Tiwari participated in the two-day State Level Seminar on Disability Rights and Rehabilitation at Jodhpur on September 17-18, 2013.

Consumer Outreach Programme

Deepak Saxena and Arjun Kant Jha attended a 'Consumer Outreach Programme' organised by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India at *Indira Gandhi Panchayati Raj Sansthan* on September 19, 2013.

Upcoming Projects

Insights into Indian States (I3S) in partnership with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India

A pilot project to promote organic consumption in the State of Rajasthan, India (ProOrganic) in partnership with Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC)



CART IN MEDIA