



COMPLETION REPORT

Grassroots Reachout and Networking in Rajasthan through Consumer Action (GRANIRCA)

Support by



Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF)
Department of Consumer Affairs
Ministry of Consumer Affairs,
Food & Public Distribution
Government of India

About CUTS International

Established in 1983-84 as a rural development communication initiative, Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) is now at the cutting edge of the consumer movement in India as well as across the globe and has expanded into trade and development, competition, investment and economic regulation and human development. Today, CUTS International, with a staff of over 100, operates out of:

- Three programme centres in Jaipur (CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics and Environment, CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research and Training and CUTS Centre for Competition, Investment and Economic Regulation), one in Chittorgarh (CUTS Centre for Human Development);
- An advocacy centre in New Delhi, and a Centre in Calcutta (focusing on Consumer Safety and Grassroots Economic Development), India; and
- Four resource centres in Lusaka, Zambia; Nairobi, Kenya; Hanoi, Vietnam, and Geneva, Switzerland.

The organisation elects its Board/Executive Committee every fourth year, while the Secretary General heads the Secretariat. The organisation is accredited to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Commissions for Sustainable Development (UNCSD).

CUTS works with several other regional, national and international organisations, such as: Consumer International (CI); International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD); South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE); World Trade Organisation (WTO); the World Bank; International Finance Corporation (IFC); Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); the Commonwealth Secretariat, East Africa Community Secretariat; various development cooperation and trade ministries all over the world and, in India, various federal and state ministries and departments, National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD), the Consumer Coordination Council of India, etc. It also serves on several policy-making bodies of the Government of India.

CUTS International's vision is "consumer sovereignty" and mission is "consumer sovereignty is in the framework of social justice and equality, within and across borders". In all its work, it follows the method of research-based advocacy and connects the grassroots with the international policy making processes.

CUTS CART

CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART) is a Programme Centre of CUTS established in 1996. This programme centre was created as a result of the diversification of CUTS in order to move ahead with its inherited agenda consumer protection and education - and to create a more responsible society. In order to contribute in the CUTS' vision of consumer sovereignty, CUTS CART endeavors through the mission 'To enable consumers, particularly the poor and the marginalised to achieve their right to basic needs, sustainable development and good governance through strong consumer movement'. Continuous pioneering work in the area of consumer protection found CUTS CART at the forefront of the consumer movement in India and beyond.

For more information please visit: www.cuts-international.org/CART/index.htm

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Implementing Organisation: CUTS International

With the support from:



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Preface

We are pleased to present the Completion Report of the project “Grassroot Reachout and Networking in Rajasthan through Consumer Action” GRANIRCA which was implemented in 12 districts of Rajasthan, since January 2010 and has successfully completed final phase on January 07, 2013.

Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) has been instrumental in bringing various changes at the policy level as well as in the redressal mechanism for protection of consumers’ interests. CUTS was instrumental in the enactment and strengthening of the Consumer Protection Act (COPRA) 1986.

The COPRA, enacted in 1986 is one of the benevolent social legislation intended to protect the large body of consumers from exploitation. It has become the vehicle for enabling people to secure speedy and inexpensive redressal of their grievances. If we examine the distinction between urban and rural areas, the situation in the latter is worse. In rural areas, literacy levels, information asymmetry and access is lower than in urban areas. Therefore, to spread awareness and empowerment in rural areas becomes a challenging task.

According to the *Report of the National Survey on COPRA commissioned by the Comptroller & Auditor General of India (CAG) released in May 2006* ‘82 percent of the consumers are not aware of the Consumer Protection Act and 66 percent are not aware of consumer rights. Consumer Protection Act had not been effective in ensuring speedy and inexpensive redress of

consumer grievances'. This being a serious issue and it is a very crucial time for all of us, so all the stakeholders must come forward.

Lack of consumers' access to adequate information, improper understanding about the redressal mechanism/procedure as well as other socio-economic vulnerabilities of individuals and households are the reasons that the under-privileged classes are not getting justice. The purpose of this project was "to ensure and enhance strong consumer movement at the grassroots in 12 districts of Rajasthan by way of ensuring an enabling environment for protecting consumer interest, which will in turn ultimately contribute towards the national interest".

The changed scenario of globalisation, technological advancement and emergence of various new sectors has further posed many new challenges before consumers today. Therefore, to address such issues, CUTS initiated a project entitled, 'Grassroots Reachout & Networking in Rajasthan through Consumer Action' GRANIRCA with the support of the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India supported under the Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF).

The objective of the project GRANIRCA was to develop more capable consumers by way of equipping them with knowledge and skills and to build up zealous grassroots' activists through intensive training, capacity building and orientation programmes on consumer protection issues to create an enabling environment at the grassroots.

Linking the objective with the outcomes, and based on the internal and external evaluations of the project we have reached at the conclusion that the project achieved its objectives and succeeded in empowering people in all the 12 districts as assertive consumers

to uphold their rights and fight for justice which resulted in Questioning Society and CSOs are now capable of playing a “watchdog” role in their respective district. During the project period we also tried to improve the service delivery areas related to basic needs and efficient redressal mechanism in place, particularly in rural areas in the target division. The three years long project also created an enabling environment in all the 12 target districts protecting the state interest which resulted in replicable model for the other districts of Rajasthan as well.

Overall the project contributed towards strengthening the consumer movement at the grassroots in Rajasthan. In addition’ with the learning from the three year implementation of GRANIRCA, a replicable model is developed, which can be implemented in remaining districts of Rajasthan or elsewhere in India.

This project completion report is a product, designed to showcase the project progress along with outreach, observations, findings, assessments, and lessons learned on issues related to consumer protection from the perspective of the state of Rajasthan, as per the objectives and final outcomes envisaged in the project. This document can also be conceived as a work in progress to encourage the exchange of ideas about issues of consumer protection.

We sincerely express our thanks to the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India, especially to Shri Pankaj Agrawala, Secretary, Consumer Affairs and Shri Manoj Kumar Parida, Joint Secretary, Consumer Affairs for the funding support from the Consumer Welfare Fund. We also thank the Chairman and members of the Monitoring Committee of project under the Department of Consumer Affairs for their valuable guidance and suggestions.

We thank the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of Rajasthan, especially Dr. Lalit Mehra, present Principal Secretary, Consumer Affairs, Food and Civil Supplies for the valuable support and meaningful collaboration in the project and all the District Supply Officers (DSOs) in the target districts for their support and active participation in the project activities. We also thank all the line departments in Rajasthan, especially the Dept. of Weights and Measures. We thank the State Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (SCDRC) and all the district forums in the 12 target districts, especially the President and members, who participated in our activities.

We thank both print and electronic media for providing wide coverage to all the project activities.

We are grateful to 12 district partners for providing their support in project implementation especially in the activities done at the field level and that of concerned departments/ consumer forums in respective districts.

I sincerely thank my colleagues Deepak Saxena, Amarjeet Singh, Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Arjun Kant Jha, Abhimanyu Singh and Jai Shree Soni for the successful implementation of the project activities. I also acknowledge the valuable guidance of Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS International in the conception and implementation of the project. We also gratefully acknowledge the guidance and support of the members of the Project Advisory and Resource Group.

We acknowledge the contribution of Madhuri Vasnani in editing and that of Mukesh Tyagi and Rajkumar Trivedi in the layout of the report and other publications of GRANIRCA.

We also thank the IT and the Finance team of CUTS, for their support for developing and maintaining the project webpage, as

well as for maintaining the accounts of the project and fulfilling all the accounting and auditing requirements of the project respectively.

We express our sincere gratitude to all without whom the successful implementation of the activities all over the three years' duration of the project would not have been possible.

We look forward for the valued partnership with Dept. of Consumer Affairs all other stakeholders in expanding GRANIRCA to remaining districts of Rajasthan and elsewhere in India.

Jaipur
April 2013

George Cheriyan
Director, CUTS &
Head, CUTS CART

1

Background

Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) has been instrumental in bringing various changes at the policy level as well as in the redressal mechanism for protection of consumers' interests. CUTS was instrumental in the enactment and strengthening of the Consumer Protection Act 1986. To know more about CUTS, please visit our website <http://www.cuts-international.org>.

However, even after about 25 years of enactment of such a dynamic and unique Act, the situation of consumers is still not good in India. The changed scenario of globalisation, technological advancement and emergence of various new sectors has further posed many new challenges before consumers today. Therefore, to address such issues, CUTS initiated a project entitled, 'Grassroots Reachout & Networking in Rajasthan through Consumer Action' (GRANIRCA) with the support of the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India under the Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF).



Sushila Devi

Efforts do Matter: Successful Interventions by

Shubham Mahila Prasikshan Sansthan
Alwar

Asserted rights and pursued remedies

Jitendra Somwanshi of Sheopura area in Alwar district purchased BPL category of wheat from a ration shop. He had to pay for the sack as the shopkeeper assured him to refund the money after he return the sack. But, when Jitendra went to return the sacks to get his money back the shopkeeper denied him by saying that the sacks is of no use as it is torn. There was a heated argument between the Ration dealer and Jitendra.

Padma Devi, one of the field staff of our district partner Shubham Mahila Prasikshan Sansthan, Alwar intervenes in the matter and asked the dealer to refund the money but he refused to do so. Then Jitendra was asked to contact the district office of the organization who will guide him to get his case resolved. The organization took the matter seriously and asked the dealer to refund the money immediately but the dealer denied to so. After this the organization contacted District Supply Officer (DSO) and complained about the dealer and requested him to solve the matter. On knowing this, the dealer was afraid and he agreed to take the sack back and refund the amount to Jitendra Somwanshi.

**District partner negotiated with electricity
company to successfully resolve the issue**

There was uncontrolled electric voltage near to *Aate Wali Gali* in Alwar during 2010. Community got troubled and various electric apparatus got damaged due to up and down of voltage. Community members complained verbal and in written to the Department. An urgent action should have been taken but no one took any interest to resolve the grievance.

When consumer organisation *Shubham Mahila Prashikshan Sansthan* came across this problem, organisation filed a complaint to Assistant Engineer on its letter head stating that “if the grievance was not resolved then organisation along with the community will go to Consumer Forum”.

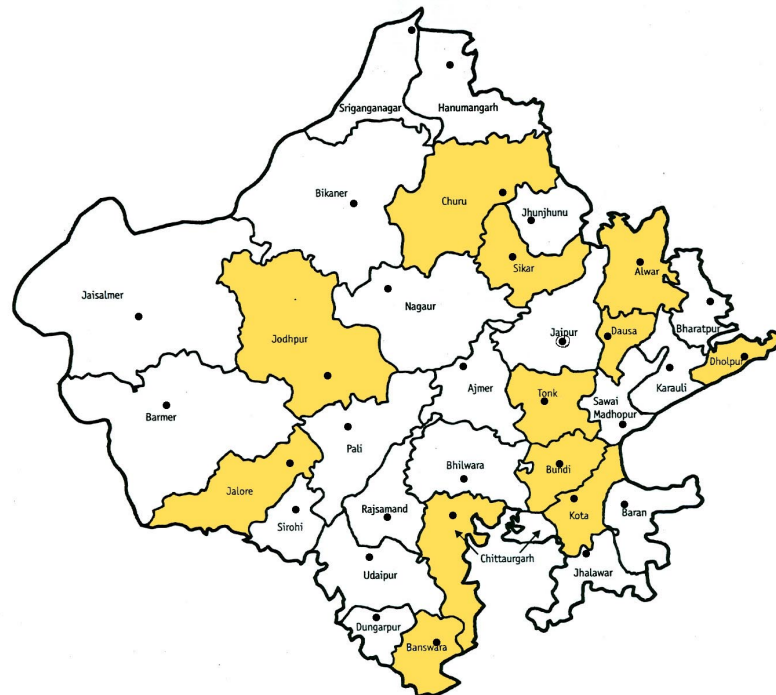
That step taken by organisation and community helped resolve the grievance within two hours of receiving the complaint; engineer came to the colony and solved the voltage issue and also controlled voltage from the office.

2

Project Coverage and Duration

The project period was three years, i.e. from January 2010 to December 2012 and was implemented in 12 districts of Rajasthan; namely Tonk, Chittorgarh, Kota, Bundi, Alwar, Banswara, Jodhpur, Jalore, Churu, Sikar, Dholpur and Dausa.

The Project Map





Nemraj Shehlot

Efforts do Matter: Successful Interventions by

Shubham Mahila Prasikshan Sansthan

Banswara

Defective mobile got replaced through effective advocacy

Surendra Pagariya a resident of Rati Talai in Banswara district purchased a Micromax handset mobile model X600 for Rs. 4000 from Taqdeer Mobile shop, Banswara on January 26, 2011 with a warranty period of one year. But he found that the product is defective from the date of purchase. He asked the shop owner to replace the set but the owner replied it will not be replaced rather he will rectify the defects and correct the set. But, after 10 days the mobile was with shopkeeper and his behavior was quite rude to the consumer.

At last, Surendra approached *Wagad Vikas Sansthan* (WVS), our district partner for guidance and help. A letter of complaint in which the shopkeeper was asked to replace the handset or rectify the defects within one week and hand it to the aggrieved customers was written by the organization and Surendra was asked to hand it over to the shopkeeper. Within one week Surendra was provided with a new handset with the help of regular follow up by WVS.

Guarantee period used efficiently

Premkant S/o Bhogilal Kansara from Banswara purchased a cooler of Rs 4250 with one year warranty from Kalyaan G Steel Traders, new cloth market, Banswara on April 27, 2011 for which he had taken the bill also (Bill No. 146). After 20 days of purchasing, motor of that cooler was not working. After

complaining, shopkeeper/seller replaced old motor with new one on May 24, 2012, but that also again got disordered after four days of replacement, which was communicated to seller. Seller never attended to any call whenever Premkant called.

Then with the help of consumer organisation, *Vagad Vikas Sansthan* one letter was sent to seller on June 06, 2012 stating that if the grievance is not resolved or new cooler is not given within 15 days then Premkant has to approach the District Consumer Forum and ask for his consumer right. After receiving the letter, seller provided a new cooler. Hence, a grievance was resolved with the efforts of consumer organisation, awareness of consumer and the image of District Consumer Forum.

3

Project Staff

Project Director

- George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International

Full time staff deployed for the project comprised

- Deepak Saxena, Senior Programme Coordinator
- Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Project Officer

Additionally, following staff were also involved for implementation and allied project activities as per their professional capacity

- Amarjeet Singh, Project Coordinator
- Arjun Kant Jha, Project Officer
- Abhimanyu Singh, Project Officer
- Jai Shree Soni, Project Officer
- Badri Narayan Sharma, Editor-Hindi
- Madhuri Vasnani, Publications Officer
- Mukesh Tyagi, Desktop publishing Officer
- Rajkumar Trivedi, Desktop publishing Assistant
- Sudhir Kumar, Accounts Officer



Rajeev Saxena

Efforts do Matter: Successful Interventions by

Richmonds' Kala Sahitya and Shikshan Society
Bundi

Aware consumer always wins

Rajesh Jain, a resident of Balchand Pada in Bundi district purchased an electric fan from Gurunanak Electric Centre, Bundi on January, 2012. The manufacturing date of the battery as indicated was 2010, but the shopkeeper manipulated and made it 2012. After one week of purchase, the battery stopped working as it was an expired piece. When Rajesh contacted with the shopkeeper he refused to replace it. Seeing no other alternatives, he contacted Rajeev Saxena of Richmonds' Kala Sahitya and Shikshan Society, our district partner and asked him to intervene in the matter. With the regular efforts and interventions by the organization, the shopkeeper finally agreed to replace the products and provided relief to the consumer.

If awareness is 'ok' than 'Life Ok'

Rajani Jain, a resident of Bundi purchased five packets of *Agarbatti* named 'Life Ok' cost of Rs 10 per packet from a domestic shop owned by Nitesh Mandowara at Vikas Nagar, Bundi. After reaching home Rajni found only 7 *Agarbattis* in one packet, she doubt on the quantity of *Agarbatti*, and then she opened another packet which contained only 8 *Agarbattis*, other packets were not containing more than 9 *Agarbattis*. Rajni complained to seller and asked to change the packets; seller denied and said that packets were made by the company. When Rajni informed a consumer organisation named *Richmonds' Kala Sahitya and*

Shikshan Society about the malpractice, the organisation itself purchased the same brand of *Agarbattis* and found less quantity as mentioned by Rajni. The organisation threatened the shopkeeper/seller and said if he will not stop such kind of malpractices then this issue will be taken to Consumer Forum, and asked to fill all packets with complete no. of *Agarbattis*. After hearing name of Consumer Forum, seller first of all changed their packets, filled another packets which he was having and promised not to do such malpractices. The organisation monitored him regularly.

4

District Project Partners

The project was implemented in a partnership mode, having a partner at the district level to implement the project activities as well as to manage the District Consumer Complaints Handling, Information and Advisory Services (CHIAS) cell. The name and coordinate of the district partners are as given below.

S. No.	District	Coordinates of the Nodal Person	Contact
1.	Banswara	Nemraj Shehlot Vagad Vikas Sansthan 3/16, Ratti Talai Banswara – 327001	Ph.: 02962-244781 Mob: 9414103139 (Malot) 9887144675 (Shehlot) Fax: 02962-244781 Email: vagad_vikas@rediffmail.com malotavdhesh@gmail.com
2.	Chittorgarh	CUTS Centre for Human Development (CUTS-CHD) Rawla, Senth Chittorgarh – 312025	Ph.: 01472-241472 Fax: 01472-247715 Mob: 9829285938 (Madan Giri) E-mail: chd@cuts.org dy@cuts.org
3.	Bundi	Rajeev Saxena Richmonds' Kala Sahitya and Shikshan Society Tilak Chowk Old Post office Street Bundi – 323001	Ph.: 0747-2444124 Mob: 9461332814 Email: rajivshawari@yahoo.co.in

Contd...

S. No.	District	Coordinates of the Nodal Person	Contact
4.	Kota	Anwar Ahmed Khan Oxford Shikshan Prashikshan Vikas Sansthan House of Munshi Mohd. Yasin, Hiran Bazar Chandra Ghata Kota – 324006	Ph.: 0744-2501712 Mob: 9351499789/ 9314629282 Email: anwar.kotasw@gmail.com
5.	Jodhpur	Tejveer Choudhary Native Institute of Desert Awareness and Knowledge Society (NIDAN) 9B/2, Opp. Bishnoi Dharmashala, Nr. Mangal Tower, Ratanada Jodhpur – 342011	Ph.: 291-2100742 Mob: 9413249745 Email: nidanjodhpur@gmail.com C_tejveer@rediffmail.com
6.	Jalore	Mahendra Kumar Ojha “SANKALP” Sanstha Hospital Road P.- Ahore Jalore – 307029	Ph.: 02978-222312 (R) 222147, Fax: 222966 Mob: 9414534193 Email: sankalpsansthan6@gmail.com
7.	Churu	Pradeep Poonia Manav Pragati Sansthan Usmanabad Colony Behind New Bus Stand Churu – 331001	Ph.: 01562-258054 Mob: 9414665855 Email: mpsrajarh170@yahoo.co.in
8.	Tonk	Gopal Lal Saini MMM Sikshan Evam Jan Seva Sansthan Khoja Bawari Near Police Line Tonk – 304001	Ph: 0143-2687730 Mob: 9829347200/ 9214167972 Email: mmmsansthan_tonk@ rediffmail.com
9.	Dholpur	Rakesh Kumar Parmar Samajik Vikas Samiti VP- Attarsuma (Baseri) Dholpur – 328022	Ph.: 05646-272012 (O) Fax: 05646-266263 Mob: 9784016835/ 9460646335 Email: svsdholpur@gmail.com

Contd...

S. No.	District	Coordinates of the Nodal Person	Contact
10.	Alwar	Sushila Devi Shubham Mahila Prashikshan Sansthan Aate Wali Gali Alwar – 301001	Ph.: 0144-2345295 Mob: 08890991173 Email: smahilasansthan@yahoo.com
11.	Dausa	Kamlesh Kumar Bohra K.B. Social Welfare Society Nidhivan Colony Near Shyam Mandir Nai Mandi Road Dausa – 303303	Ph.: 01427-220684 Mob.: 9414271208 Email: kbmsvskamlesh10@gmail.com
12.	Sikar	Satya Narain Sikhwal Jila Upbhokta Jagaran Samiti H.No. 548, Sector 10 Anand Nagar Sikar – 332001	Phone: 01572-252705 Mob: 9414039705/ 9928106349(Mukesh) Email: mukesh.sikhwal@yahoo.com



Madan Giri

Efforts do Matter: Successful Interventions by

CUTS Centre for Human Development
(CUTS-CHD)

Chittorgarh

District partner helped consumer in getting resolved complaint against AVVNL

Tulsi Bai W/O Mangilal Sharma resident of Begun village in Chittorgarh district wrote a letter to Chittorgarh Resource Centre (CHD) our district partner against Ajmer Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited (AVVNL) asking to connect electricity in her house. Despite depositing demand draft in AVVNL the department had not connected electricity in their house.

CHD took the matter seriously and forwarded the complaint letter to the Associate Engineer of AVVNL asking him to provide electricity connection to the consumer as soon as possible. But after waiting for three months no action was taken on the matter. On this CHD again reminded the AE regarding the matter marking copy to the Superintendent Engineer of Chittorgarh. After regular follow up by the district partner in this matter finally Tulsi Bai got electricity connection after 10 months.

BPL Consumer benefited by successful advocacy

This case story belongs to Shankar Bheel (tribe) a below poverty line (BPL) person residing in Udpura tehsil of Chittorgarh district. His house was connected under Rural Electrification Scheme by the Rural Assistant Engineer of Chittorgarh. The last bill which was paid to the Department was Rs 242 in April 2007. In June 2007, the customer was provided with the bill of 2090 units which comes to around Rs 5609 which was neither justifiable

nor he was in a condition to pay it. Few months later he was handed over the bill of Rs 17, 560 as penalty for not paying the bill on time. Since he was unable to pay the bill he was debarred of the electricity connection. He followed up through letter with the Department to reconnect the connection but all his efforts were in vain.

At last he approached CUTS Centre for Human Development. He was advised to write an application to CUTS CHD and the matter was further taken to the Department. Finally, the Department accepted the mistake and waived his penalty and the new line was connected in his house with the rigorous efforts by CUTS.

5

Objective of the Project

The following were the objectives of the project

The direct objective is “to ensure and enhance strong consumer movement at the grassroots in the selected districts of the state by way of ensuring an enabling environment for protecting consumer interest”.

The development objective is “A major contribution towards achieving the national interest and in turn contributing towards achieving the National Development Goals (NDGs) through consumer action at the grassroots woven around basic needs”.

The programme objective is “to generate a more capable consumer by way of equipping with knowledge and skills and build up zealous grassroots activists through intensive training, capacity building and orientation programmes on relevant consumer protection issues so as to create an enabling environment at the grassroots.”

The specific objectives are:

- Understanding the consumer protection issues and status of redressal mechanisms, and awareness generation among the common consumers, especially in the rural areas.
- Building up of a large group of grassroots activists, who in turn can mobilise and assist illiterate and helpless consumers to access consumer justice and uphold their rights.
- Mobilisation of consumer protection groups at the grassroots in twelve selected districts in the five selected divisions (three from each).

- Creation of a vibrant network of small consumer organisations, groups and interested individuals extending down up to the block level.
- Enhancement of the capacity of identified CSOs to handle emerging and relevant consumer issues woven around basic needs, ensure improvement in service delivery and to play the “watchdog” role in their respective district.
- Initiation and building blocks for strengthening and sustaining consumer movement at the grassroots.

5.1. Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the project were as follows:

- Empowerment: People in all the 12 districts will be empowered as assertive consumers to uphold their rights and fight for justice.
- Questioning Society: Twelve CSOs capable of playing a “watchdog” role in their respective district.
- Improvement: Better service delivery areas related to basic needs and efficient redressal mechanism in place, particularly in rural areas in the target division.
- Enabling environment: Protecting consumer interest in all the 12 districts, which will ultimately create an enabling environment towards protecting the state interest.
- Good Governance: In turn, the programme will contribute towards achieving the MDGs at the state level.
- Replicable Model: The programme will result in a model of empowering consumers through networking, and thus offer a model for further expansion in the identified district and elsewhere.



Pradeep Poonia

Efforts do Matter: Successful Interventions by

Manav Pragati Sansthan

Churu

District partner helped aggrieved consumer teaching a lesson to bank

This is the story of an orphan student Ashok Kumar of a village Jhadsar Kalandhan in Churu district whose parents died during childhood. Somehow, he managed to pass his senior secondary exams. But, later on it was very difficult for him to further continue his study due to financial crisis. Somehow with the help of his neighbors he completed his graduation. While studying he qualified for MCA in an institute in Noida (Uttar Pradesh). This time his teacher Prem Prakash Dhayal told him to apply for study loan from a bank to carry his study forward.

Ashok applied for study loan in State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur, Taranagar, but his application was rejected by the bank officials and he was denied of loan. Knowing this Ashok with his teacher approached to Manav Pragati Sansthan our district partner in Churu and asked for proper guidance. The organization contacted Branch Manager of the bank and asked the reason for disapproval of the loan. Finally, with the rigorous effort of the organization and continuous follow up with the bank staffs the loan was granted to Ashok and now he is carrying his study forward.

Telecom service provider made efforts to redress complaint

Vikram Singh a resident of *Gram Post Baas Bhareenda*, Churu was preparing for competitive examinations. He was a Tata DOCOMO consumer. One day all of sudden without any intimation company disconnected the Tata services and sim was not functioning. Any how he spoke to customer care and officers at Tata Telecom Company but no satisfactory answer was provided.

Through *Manav Pragati Sansthan Vikram*, Singh contacted CUTS, the case was forwarded to Tata telecom company and requested to take proper action and resolve the grievance at the earliest. Company took the grievance seriously and continued the sim.

6 Activities

The following were the main activities of the project

6.1. District Partner's Meeting

- i. On February 24, 2010, the first District Partner's Meeting was convened. GRANIRCA team provided a brief overview of the project. After the presentation, team members presented the evaluation of survey which had been conducted to shed light on the level of awareness of district partners on consumer protection issues. Simultaneously, budgetary provisions under the project were also disclosed in the meeting and the process of applying for honorarium and activity costs were discussed in detail with district partners.



- ii. George Cheriyan, Director briefed about the past experiences and interventions made by CUTS on consumer protection issues and requested them to extend their full support to make the project a success. Further, he elaborated how denial of justice and socioeconomic oppression of the vulnerable groups, particularly in rural areas, remains unabated even though the government has established several legal instruments to address these. One of the reasons for the persistence of injustice involving the under-privileged classes was their lack of access to adequate information, improper understanding about the redressal mechanism/procedure as well as other socio-economic vulnerabilities of individuals and households. At the same time, emergence of second-generation issues was becoming a serious, which needed to be tackled on a priority basis. He stated that under the project, consumer's voice could be strengthened through capacity building, networking and awareness generation.
- iii. Copy of Memorandum of Understanding and Terms of Reference (ToR) was handed over to partners to read and raise any query/objection/clarification. The meeting concluded upon signing of the MoAs.



- iv. The first formal orientation to partners was organised on March 17-18, 2010 which was to build as well as enhance the capacity of 12 district partners. Eminent personalities Justice Vinod Shankar Dave, Former President, Rajasthan State Consumer, Dispute Redressal Commission, Rajesh Jain, Advocate, Haneef Mohd., Former President, District Consumer Redressal Forum, were invited to share their experiences and to provide expertise for technical sessions.
- v. The GRANIRCA team discussed the planned activities with the district partners. Research questionnaire prepared for the data collection in the district was shared and the partners were requested to provide inputs. Other issues such as preparation for Complaints Handling, Information and Advisory Services (CHIAS), Public Interface Meetings, District Level Trainings as well as financial matters were discussed at length with the partners.
- vi. In the second year, on March 16, 2011 district project partner's meeting was organised to obtain feedback of the past activities and to share the schedule of activities of the year along with orienting them with news issues.
- vii. Subsequently, in the third year, on March 15, 2012, partners' meeting was conducted to get the responses on project implementation activities and methodology and to show- case the achievements. At the same time, in the meeting, partners' time plan of activities for the coming months was discussed with them.

6.2.State Launch of the Project

On March 17, 2010 the project was formally launched through a meeting, which was attended by more than 80 stakeholders including officials from state food department, members of district consumer forums, registrar, representatives of the State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (SCDRC) and Civil Society Organisations, other link departments, service sectors directly



dealing with consumers such as post office, telecom etc., district partners and media representatives. The meeting received wider media coverage (both in print and electronic). Babu Lal Nagar, the then Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs of Rajasthan; Rajiv Agarwal, the then, Secretary of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India; M L Mehta, President, CUTS and Former Chief Secretary, Government of Rajasthan (GoR); Justice S K Garg, the then President, SCDRC were the key speakers along with Pradeep Mehta, Secretary General of CUTS and George Cheriyan Director, CUTS.

The objective of the meeting was to bring all the stakeholders, civil society organisations (CSOs), line departments, media, consumer activists and experts working on consumer issues on a common platform to make them aware of the project initiatives, activities and strategy in order to ensure their active participation and support for the project and also discuss emerging consumer issues.

Another objective was to orient the district partners about the project and key issues, concepts, legal provisions related to consumer protection and discuss future activities with them so that they could work efficiently to ensure the success of the project

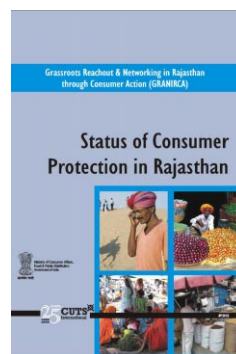
Detailed report of the event is available on project website: http://www.cuts-international.org/CART/GRANIRCA/Event-GRANIRCA_Launch_Meeting.htm

6.3. Field Research

6.3.1. Year 2010: Status of Consumer Protection in Rajasthan:

The primary objective of the research was find out the status and performance of the key authorities/institutions responsible for strengthening consumer protection at the district level in all the 12 project districts.

The secondary objective was to build the capacity of the district partners about the functions and schemes etc. of these departments as well as to initiate communication between them and the partners. It further resulted in good participation of these officials in Public Interface Meetings (PIMs) held in these districts.



Key authorities for enhancing consumer protection at district level:

- a. District Consumer Dispute Redressal Fora
- b. Collectors of the Districts
- c. District Supply Officers
- d. Drug Control Officers/Inspectors
- e. Chief Medical and Health Officers
- f. District Weight and Measures Inspectors

Recommendations:

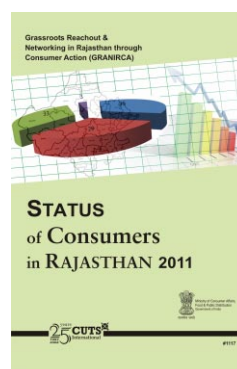
- The Consumer Protection Councils should be made fully functional.
- The vacancies in districts should be filled immediately and the recruitment process should start well in advance.
- These departments should work in a proactive manner to protect the interest of consumers, not merely fulfilling the minimum targets.
- There should be separate department for legal metrology.

- Large districts should have more than one permanent District Forum.
- There should be proper follow up and monitoring of cases registered to ensure that the culprits are punished as soon as possible.
- The schemes of consumer clubs, financial assistance to consumers filing complaints, financial assistance to consumer organisations and reward to consumer activists should be provided adequate financial resources and implementation ensured. These are crucial for ensuring consumer protection in the state.
- For better transparency and accountability these departments should make proactive disclosure of their functions, schemes and action taken by them. Till date, the Consumer Fora, Department of Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution, Legal Metrology etc. do not have their websites even at the state level. Some officials even refused to provide information required for the study. In some cases, information was sought under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

Detailed report of the event is available on project website: http://www.cuts-international.org/CART/GRANIRCA/Research_Reports.htm

6.3.2. Year 2011: Status of Consumers in Rajasthan: The objective of the research under the second year of the project was to gauge the level of consumer awareness on consumer issues at the grassroots.

2349 consumers belonging to different educational, socio-economic, literacy and gender background from 12 districts provided their responses. 62 percent of the total respondents belonged to rural area of Rajasthan.

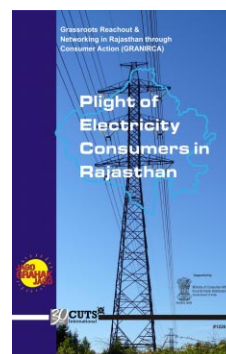


Recommendations:

- The law should be implemented rigorously in consonance with the objectives with which it was enacted, i.e., speed, just and economic redressal to consumers.
- Members should be appointed without political influences and connections.
- Retired judges or the judges on the verge of retirement should not be appointed as presidents of district forum, State Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission and National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission.
- Members should have some legal background in order to actively participate in the forum's proceedings.
- Lawyer's presence should be restricted, though some respondents pointed out their presence should be made mandatory.
- Issue pertaining to consumers buying goods for commercial purposes should be made clear.
- There should be some flexibility with regard to the compulsion of producing bills and a system should be set in case consumer is not in a position to produce bills or other supporting documents.
- Time limit for redressal should be maintained.
- Vacancies of both members and presidents should be filled up immediately prior to retiring of the incumbent.

Detailed report of the event is available on project website: http://www.cuts-international.org/CART/GRANIRCA/Research_Reports.htm

6.3.3. Year 2012: Plight of Electricity Consumers in Rajasthan: The objective of this study of year three of the project was not only to gauge the level of awareness of consumers in electricity reforms but also to understand the level of their satisfaction regarding all electricity services provided to them by the service provider. The key



findings would then be taken as issues for advocacy and lobby with government, utilities and the regulator.

The basic problem of developing countries like India is inadequate infrastructure and due to this, by the mid-1990s; most of the state electricity boards incurred heavy financial losses and became dependent on financial support from their respective state governments. When the state provided this service, it had to cross subsidise between different classes of consumers to achieve the stated socio-economic objectives of the state. Introduction of subsidies made the electricity market inefficient and lack of competition further aggravated the situation. These included high Transmission & Distribution Losses (T & D Losses), skewed tariffs, poor quality of supply, weak and deteriorating T&D network and rapidly declining capability of State Governments to provide budgetary support to the power sector.

Out of the total 2419 respondents from twelve districts, almost quarter were female participants and 33 percent of these respondents had passed higher secondary. 96 percent of these respondents had electricity at home or elsewhere, and out of this, 84 and 60 percent had both domestic and agriculture connections. Very few respondents had industrial or nondomestic connections.

Recommendations:

- Need for proactive and responsive grievance handling.
- Need to create more awareness on reform process, role of Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission and the available grievance redressal mechanism.
- Need to promote more consumer participation, which is a concern even after 12 years of reforms.
- Need to take intensive steps to stop power pilferage and to improve quality of service, which would ultimately reduce consumer dissatisfaction.
- High tariffs and corruption among utility employees were observed as main reasons for power theft. Immediate and stern action is required to be taken on these issues.



6.4.3. Empowering the consumers to make informed choices and thereby protect their health and safety and get more value for money.

6.4.4. To obtain feedback from the people about the existing redressal mechanism condition, environment and accessibility; and

6.4.5. To bridge the gap between consumers and service providers/ officials responsible for consumer protection.

Some key observations and highlights of Public Interface Meetings (PIMs):

1. Overwhelming response was received from media, youths, panchayat representatives and women.
2. Majority of the participants at blocks were unaware of the consumer rights, availability of redressal mechanism and procedure of filing complaint at their respective districts.
3. Unawareness towards packed items, standardisation and food adulteration is prevalent at rural areas.
4. Public Distribution System (PDS), Electricity and Mobile phones emerged as the main problematic areas.
5. At most of the places people at the level of Zila Pramukh, Zila Up Pramukh, Chairman Sarpanch, Pradhan and Members of District Consumer Forum etc. actively participated.

- Poor service delivery was identified as the major reason for consumers not reaching to electricity services. To resolve this issue, consumer consultation process should be simplified and widely disseminated.
- Many issues mentioned above require collective engagement, which should be different from grievance redressal that usually works on individual basis. While collective engagement helps in identifying and solving long term general problems and if the situation is ripe in setting long term goals and objectives, grievance redressal is concerned with mostly complaints of individuals on certain service point.
- To increase the number of public hearings at urban as well as rural areas with publicity.
- Collaboration with NGOs will be one of the ways for ensuring people's participation.
- Alternate source of energy should be promoted among commercial units to foster efficiency to protect the consumer from monopoly.

Detailed report of the event is available on project website: http://www.cuts-international.org/CART/GRANIRCA/Research_Reports.htm

6.4. Public Interface Meetings (PIMs)

Basically these were outreach meetings on burning consumer issues emerged out the field research, in remote areas of each of the twelve districts.

Objectives of PIM

6.4.1. Raise consumer awareness at the grassroots to build a strong consumer movement at the grassroots level in Rajasthan.

6.4.2. To share the existing appropriate mechanisms for exchange of information on measures of consumer protection, nationally and regionally.



6. Participants raised few very good points and showed interest on several issues.

Public Hearings/Outreach Meetings								
S.No.	Districts	Yearly No. of Participants						
		2010	2010	2011	2011	2012	2012	Total
1.	Alwar	41	112	109	84	35	47	428
2.	Banswara	52	93	82	61	62	49	399
3.	Bundi	27	67	63	131	63	62	413
4.	Chittorgarh	54	138	78	48	35	62	415
5.	Churu	44	123	111	60	30	33	401
6.	Dausa	66	185	106	82	72	62	573
7.	Dholpur	35	226	122	89	38	54	564
8.	Jalore	64	100	100	123	40	90	517
9.	Jodhpur	54	135	109	93	55	54	00
10.	Kota	62	103	107	116	67	81	536
11.	Sikar	55	154	185	160	72	59	685
12.	Tonk	59	104	103	76	40	64	446
	Total	613	1540	1275	1123	609	717	5877

Geographical Coverage of Public Interface Meetings												
	Dausa	Chittorgarh	Alwar	Banswara	Sikar	Jodhpur	Churu	Jalore	Bundi	Kota	Tonk	Dholpur
2010	Dausa	Chittorgarh	Alwar	Banswara	Sikar	Jodhpur	Churu	Jalore	Bundi	Kota	Tonk	Dholpur
	Mahwa	Bhupalsagar	Ramgarh	Talwada	Laxmangarh	Phalodi	Ratangarh	Jaswantpura	Talera	Sultanpur	Uniarra	Baseri
	Dausa	Dungla	Umen	Gadhi Partapur	Peeprali	Mandhor	Taranagar	Ahore	Hindoli	Kota	Deoli	Bari
	Dausa	Rashmi	Alwar	Partapur	Ringus	Jodhpur	Churu	-	-	Ladpura	Niwai	Dholpur,
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Sapauw and Mani
2011	Lalsot	Chittorgarh	Thanagazi	Ghatol	Sri Madhopur	Luni	Ratangarh	Sayla	Nainwa	Kota	Jhelai Gram Panchayat	Dholpur
	Sainthal	Bhadesar	Laxmangarh	Bagidora	Gondh	Bilada	Sardarshahar	Bhawrani	-	Ladpura	Duni	Rajakheda
	Sikaray	Chittorgarh	Behror	Sarwan	Khatushyamji	Onsia	Churu	Bheenmal	Kaafreen	Ladpura	Diggi	Bari
	Bandiqui	Chittorgarh	Kishangarh	Kushalgarh	Losal	Bhopalgarh	Taragarh	Ajeetpura	Hattipura	Mandana	Toda Raysingh	Basari
2012	Dausa	Bhensroadgarh	Bansoor	Banswara	Dantaramgarh	Balesar	Sujangarh	Aahore	Devpura	Kota	Todaraisingh	Sarmathura
	Chandrana	Chittorgarh	Rajgarh	Partapur Gadi	Nechwa	Balesar	Taranagar	Thumba	Matunda	Ladpura	Amianeel	Taseemo
Detailed report of the event is available on project website: http://www.cuts-international.org/CART/GRANIRCA/Event-Public_Interface_Meetings-II.htm												



Efforts do Matter: Successful Interventions by

K.B. Social Welfare Society

Dausa

Kamlesh Kumar Bohra

Poor insured consumer benefited through LIC

This is the case of a widow named Kaushalya Devi W/O Late Mohanlal Sharma, a resident of Dausa District against Life Insurance Corporation of India. Mohanlal Sharma insured himself for Rupees Two Lakh through Jeevan Anand Beema Policy of LIC with a half yearly premium of Rs 7,885 for 18 years on August 02, 2008. He nominated his wife Kaushalya Devi as a nominee. After paying the second premium, he suddenly died of high fever on June 15, 2009. After the death of her husband, Kaushalya Devi demanded the claim, but she was denied saying that since the insurer died within eight months and twenty-five days of purchasing policy, so there should be a proper investigation in this matter.

After the investigation, Insurance agency informed that the insured person died of a disease called Herpes Simplex Encephalitis and not of high fever, which she had given the reason of his death. Mohanlal Sharma was suffering from the disease before purchasing the policy and he had a treatment for the same in a hospital in Jaipur. The claimant was well informed of all this but still he provided wrong information about his health while taking the policy. So the agency is not liable to pay any amount to the nominee as a claim, because it was a case of forgery.

Victim informed all these issues to our district partner K B Memorial Social Welfare Society, Dausa that works for consumer

rights. After hearing the matter, it was decided to file a case in District Consumer Forum. Our partner for the project GRANIRCA, Kamlesh Kumar Bohra decided to fight the case for the victim and after fighting for almost three years the Forum gave the judgment in favour of Kaushalya Devi and asked the agency to pay her the insured amount with the interest of three years at the rate of nine percent per annum and the court fee of Rs 2, 000. The decision came on May 17, 2012.

Vipul Motors fined Rs 2000

Anjana Bhatnagar got ECO Maruti car booked from Vipul Motors, Dausa by filling order form and giving case of Rs 10,000. In the order form delivery date was mentioned, but when Bhatnagar went on that particular date then car was not delivered and seller tried to convince her by saying that there was less supply of ECO Maruti car. When booking amount was asked to return on the basis of no delivery on time then it was said that the amount would be given through either money-order or cheque, but Vipul Motors did not send any cheque or money order.

When Bhatnagar attended one of the activities of GRANIRCA, she came to know about Consumer Forum and with the help of a consumer organisation *K.B. Social Welfare Society* she filed a complaint before the District Consumer Forum against Vipul Motors. The Forum ordered Vipul Motors to give Rs 2000 for expenses towards complaining as compensation apart from booking amount Rs 10000.

7 Media Workshops

These were workshops to sensitise the media on emerging consumer issues, the need for more space for coverage on consumer issues and to equip the media with updated knowledge on emerging issues for more informed reporting. On the first and third year the workshops were held at the state level and the second year the media workshops were held at the district level.

7.1. State Level (Year I & III)

Objectives

Consultations and involvement of media was on the forefront of all activities implemented under the project and to give it more focus, two state-level consultation workshops was organised in Jaipur. The main objectives of the workshop was to sensitise the



state and district level media representatives, both from print and electronic on consumer protection issues and discuss the possible interventions to strengthen and take the consumer movement effectively to common masses. Under this project as an essential part to strengthen the consumer movement, there was a strong feeling that the media has to be sensitised in order to promote awareness amongst the common masses through informed reporting.



Participation

The workshop was attended by representatives of print and electronic media from Jaipur as well as 12 project districts. District level project partners and representatives from concerned government departments and the project team was also part of this consultation.

Major Recommendations of the two media workshops:

- i. To establish a joint network of media and voluntary consumer organisations to enhance consumer protection in state.
- ii. To highlight the lowlights of all consumer-linked departments through reporting to help improve the system.
- iii. To be cautioned against misleading ads.
- iv. To conduct similar programmes at regular intervals.

- v. To publish material in Hindi to the extent possible for wider circulation and outreach to the beneficiaries.

Participants Number: On October 25, 2010 total 51 and on October 30, 2012 total 68.

Detailed report of the event is available on project website: http://www.cuts-international.org/CART/GRANIRCA/Event-Indian_Consumer_in_the_New_Age.htm

7.2. District Level (Year 2011)

Under the district level media workshops, the project team presented the findings of survey under project through a power point presentation. Key findings emerged from the overall targeted 2349 consumer's belonging to different educational status and socio-economic background from 12 districts, out of which seven percent of the respondents were illiterate, whereas 62 percent of the total respondents belonged to rural areas.

Open Discussion: Under open discussions, the below mentioned are the issues which were discussed:

1. Instead of informing the media about the activities, consumers can jointly make efforts to highlight various common issues like trade, derivative and forward trading, healthcare, out-dated education system, food adulteration fast urbanisation etc. with



an object to raise awareness on these issues and build pressure on government for preventive steps.

2. Media to capture and publish stories related with corruption, consumer abuses, various malpractices, issues related to piracy, non-standard consumer goods and services etc. CSOs to support in forwarding the same to media, so that together they could fight the evils and benefit large sections of the common consumers.
3. It was also suggested that a platform could be created to bring consumers and media at a stage to jointly fight against evils and malpractices.
4. Despite all constraints media would continue to highlight the issues of common man, which are backed with proper evidence. Issues of misleading of consumers should also be taken on priority.

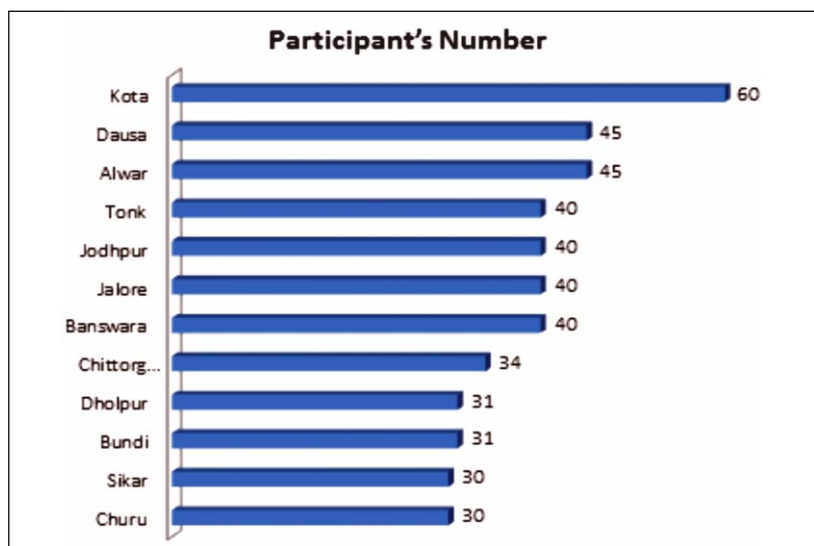
Outcome and Recommendations

1. Active participation by media persons in all the workshops and understanding the issues pertaining to consumer protection and the actual status of consumers in the state at large, which ultimately motivated them for agreeing to work jointly on all such issues was the main outcome of the workshops.
2. As part of recommendations derived from workshops, establishing a joint network to enhance consumer protection in state. Media should help in highlighting the lowlights of all consumer-linked departments through prominent reporting in order to help improving the whole system. Media should also caution consumers against misleading advertisements and help in conducting similar programmes at regular intervals. Media should publish consumer education related material to the extent possible for wider circulation and outreach to the beneficiaries were the other main outcomes.

Schedule of the workshop along with number of participants was as under:

S. No	Date	District
1.	August 05, 2011	Kota
2.	August 05, 2011	Dausa
3.	August 06, 2011	Alwar
4.	August 17, 2011	Tonk
5.	August 12, 2011	Jodhpur
6.	August 11, 2011	Jalore
7.	August 24, 2011	Banswara
8.	August 23, 2011	Chittorgarh
9.	August 09, 2011	Dholpur
10.	August 06, 2011	Bundi
11.	August 18, 2011	Sikar
12.	August 17, 2011	Churu

Detailed report of the event is available on project website: http://www.cuts-international.org/CART/GRANIRCA/pdf/Report_District_Level_Media_Workshop.pdf





Rakesh Kumar Parmar

Efforts do Matter: Successful Interventions by

Samajik Vikas Samiti

Dholpur

Successful advocacy to benefit the whole village

The transformer of a street in Jarga village of Dholpur district was burnt for almost four years and there was no electricity in that locality. In spite of this the residents of that locality regularly received electricity bills. Despite their regular complaints in this regard to officials of *Jaipur Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited* (JVVNL) no action was taken against the issue.

Seeing, this the villagers went to our district partner, Rakesh Kumar Parmar of Samajik Vikas Sansthan (SVS) and asked him to interfere in the matter. After collecting evidence from few more villagers he sent legal notice to the officials of JVVNL asking them to resolve the issue. However, seeing that no steps were being taken by the officials, Rakesh Parmar along with few people went to meet the Associate Engineer of JVVNL, Baseri who after hearing the matter assure them to resolve the matter. After few days their bills were surrendered and a new transformer was installed in their area.

**District partner helped a widow
consumer getting her accident claim**

LIC refused to give the accident claim amount of Rs 50,000 to widow, Kiran (a resident of Dholpur) when her husband met with an accident and died. Her husband took the LIC from Bharatpur Branch through an agent. LIC gave only normal benefit amount and refused the amount of accidental claim. Kiran requested the agent to get the amount of Rs 50,000 as an accidental claim, but nothing happened. She also gave up since she was unaware of the Consumer Forum and her rights as a consumer.

She came to know about a consumer organisation *Samajik Vikas Samiti* and shared all details, and then on behalf of consumer, the organisation filed a complaint to LIC Bharatpur but did not receive any response. Then *Samajik Vikas Samiti* filed a complaint before the District Consumer Forum at Dholpur and informed this to LIC, Bharatpur. After receiving that information LIC gave the cheque of Rs 50,000 before any order from the Consumer Forum.

8

State Level Feedback Roundtable

State Feedback Roundtables were to share and consolidate the learning from various districts and to build and strengthen the network. Three state level feedback roundtables were held during the project period, one each in each of the year.

Objective

The objective of the Feedback Roundtable was to consolidate and share the key learning obtained from various districts and stakeholders and to identify the points for advocacy. Another objective of the event was to critically review the activities carried out under the project for effective implementation of the project activities in the coming years.

Methodology

1. Power Point Presentation: Brief information was provided about the activities conducted along with their expected outcomes.
2. Resource Kit: Publications (newsletters, research report, training manual, brochure and informative pamphlets) were provided to participants, which provided detailed information of the activities and the project.
3. Speech: Key experienced resource persons, representing various departments in the government delivered lectures based on experience.
4. Open Discussion: A special session was allocated in the meeting for participants to provide their assessment on the activities conducted.

Detailed report of the event is available on project website: http://www.cuts-international.org/CART/GRANIRCA/Event-State_Level_Feedback_Round_Table_Meeting.htm

8.2. November 29, 2011

Participation

More than 57 representatives consisting of all the stakeholders, including representatives of CSOs, print and electronic media, the judiciary and the government were present. Twelve project district partners also participated in the roundtable.

Recommendations

Participants shared their experiences and grievances. A few of the questions and suggestions, which emerged from the participants are as follows:

1. Raised concern about the impact on small retailers due to FDI in retail.
2. Stressed the need to build a better infrastructure for consumer courts and a need to create benches of district forums at the block level.
3. Emphasised the need to build an atmosphere where shopkeepers are compelled to give bills.
4. Stressed the need of having a lab in each district for product and food testing.

Besides, participants also gave various suggestions in order to improve infrastructure and working of the consumer forums.

Detailed report of the event is available on project website: http://www.cuts-international.org/CART/GRANIRCA/pdf/Report-State_Level_Feedback_Round_Table_Meeting-2011.pdf

8.3. December 20, 2012

Participation

Some of the prominent personalities who participated in the meeting were P N Pandey, Joint Director, Legal Metrology, Department of Industries, Government of Rajasthan; Liyaqat Ali,

8.1. December 15, 2010

Participation

More than 52 representatives of print and electronic media, judiciary, civil society organisations (CSOs) from Jaipur as well as 12 project district partners along with Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA) participated.



Outcome

1. Gaps in way of consumer protection system were delivered to a larger audience inclusive of legislature.
2. A debate on the issue of complaints represented by advocates in consumer fora against spirit of the Act was initiated.

Recommendations

1. A system should be put in place to take advance steps to fill the vacant position at district/state consumer forum immediately.
2. There should be well-equipped product testing labs at district level for quick redressal of complaints.
3. Large districts/cities should have more than one permanent District Forum.
4. Special attention should be given to farmers and deprived sections of the society.



Additional District Supply Officer, Government of Rajasthan, D R Mathur, Electricity Ombudsman, Rajasthan; Rajendra Bora, Senior Journalist, Dr. Ashok R Patil, Professor, Chair Consumer Law and Practice, National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, Karnataka and Shiv Prasad Gude, Additional Director, Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS). More than 92 representatives consisting of all the stakeholders, which included representatives of CSOs, print and electronic media and the government were present. Apart from this, twelve district project partners participated in the roundtable feedback meeting.

Recommendations

The floor was then thrown open for all participants and stakeholders to share their grievances as well as recommendations. J D Saini of Jila Upbhokta Jagaran Samiti, Sikar raised some questions, such as why the mobile labs run by the government departments are not functioning and why there are urban charges on the electricity bill. K B Agrawal of Indian Institute of Comparative Law, Jaipur expressed his concern on whether consumers are getting justice within the stipulated time.

Hari Parasad Yogi of Consumer Legal Help Society; Laxmi Saxena, an activist from Jaipur, Govind Tailor of Sankalp Sansthan, Ahore, N K Chobisa of Hind Seva Sansthan, Udaipur; Madan Goswami

of CUTS CHD, Chittorgarh, Rajendra Sen of Saarthi Sansthan, Surajgarhmanddi, Jhunjhunu also raised their concerns on tackling various consumer-related grievances. Some of the suggestions and recommendations, which emerged from the discussions, are as under:

1. Redressal period mentioned in Consumer Protection Act needs to be strictly adhered
2. Need for better infrastructure for district consumer forums
3. Need to fill vacancies at district level consumer forum
4. Appoint persons with requisite legal knowledge as Presidents of district forum rather than appointing retired judges
5. Lawyer's presence should be restricted or discouraged in consumer fora
6. Need for well-equipped product testing labs at district level
7. Need for increased inter-sectoral cooperation
8. Constitution of a State Consumer Protection Council (SCPC)
9. Proper training of the President and members of district forum on consumer protection law and how to deal with and dispose cases expeditiously thereby providing relief to the aggrieved consumers
10. Opening of consumer club

Detailed report of the event is available on project website: http://www.cuts-international.org/CART/GRANIRCA/pdf/Report-State_Level_Feedback_Round_Table_Meeting-2012.pdf



Efforts do Matter: Successful Interventions by

“SANKALP” Sanstha

Jalore

Mahendra Kumar Ojha

Voltas company forced to replace defective part

Purav Raj a resident of Ahor in Jalore district purchased a 165 Litre Voltas Refrigerator from Phalna Enterprises, Phalna with a warranty period of one year for the fridge and five year for the compressor. He collected the bill and warranty card for the products. Initially it was working well but after a few months there was some sound coming out from the compressor. He immediately contacted the shopkeeper about the problem but it was diagnosed and corrected after three months by the mechanic. He was told that the problem occurred due to the fluctuations of electricity and asked to install a stabilizer. He immediately installed the stabiliser to protect his refrigerator from further damage.

But, later on to his surprise he found that the chilling system of the fridge is having fault. He again complained about the defect to the shopkeeper. But, after spending two months no mechanic came to repair the defects. Annoyed by this, Purav contacted Sankalp Sansthan, our district partner in Jalore, where he was asked to write a complaint letter against the shopkeeper and send it to the regional office of Voltas Company in Jaipur seeking reply within 15 days and asking them to repair the refrigerator. Within 15 days of his complaint his compressor was replaced with the new one and till now it is working properly.

Effective advocacy leading to big relief

Om Prakash a resident of Ajeetpura, Jalore took the electricity connection without parrot rate (means bill will be according to electricity consumption) at his water well (*Kuwa*) for agricultural purpose. In December 2011, transformer near to water well got out of order which led to burning of meter. Om Prakash sent complaint application to Assistant Engineer at *Jodhpur Vidyut Vitran Nigam*. Four months were passed and every month Om Prakash received bills and he did not deposited the bill amount since meter was burnt. The Department audit sent bill of Rs 52384 in March 2012, expenses of transformer was also imposed on Om Prakash and he was threaten about cancellation of connection.

He went to a consumer organisation ‘SANKALP’ *Sansthan*, block Ahore, Jalore with all bills. The organisation contacted Assistant Engineer; he informed that the amount was calculated by auditor and it was mandatory to deposit the amount. Despite regular follow-ups when the grievance was not resolved then Om Prakash went to the District Level Settlement Committee and shared the issue. The committee took the complaint seriously and made decision in favour of Om Prakash. He deposited Rs 7850 instead of Rs 52384 in July 2012, and the Department fixed new transformer and meter. Hence, through District Level Settlement Committee the grievance was redressed and the consumer did not need to go to Consumer Forum.

9

District Level Training Workshops (DLTWs)

District Level Training Workshops filled the need of proper information, methodology, procedures and the need for an approachable redressal mechanism to the people. The workshops also helped activists gets acquainted with grievance redressal system for speedy, inexpensive and effective justice in project districts, which would further support underprivileged classes.

Apart from participants, people from the media, the judiciary, the administration and service providers participated in the programme as resource persons. A wide coverage was given by the print as well as electronic media.

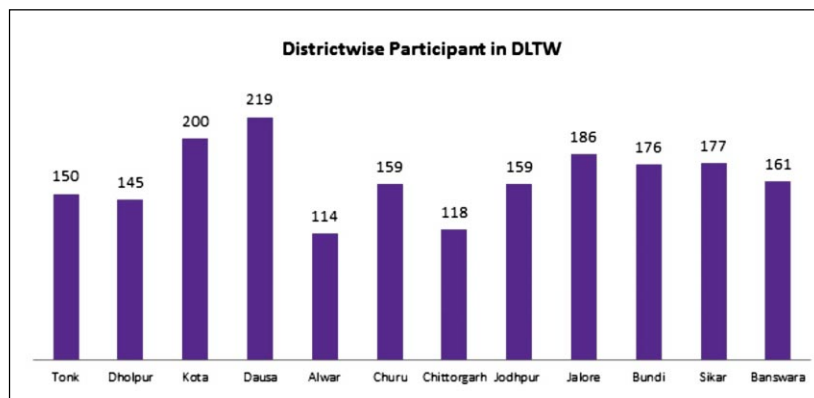


Number of Participants					
S.No.	Districts	2010	2011	2012	Total
1.	Tonk	48	50	52	150
2.	Dholpur	49	50	46	145
3.	Kota	83	62	55	200
4.	Dausa	84	67	68	219
5.	Alwar	39	36	39	114
6.	Churu	87	36	36	159
7.	Chittorgarh	39	36	43	118
8.	Jodhpur	50	47	62	159
9.	Jalore	43	77	66	186
10.	Bundi	66	48	62	176
11.	Sikar	85	51	41	177
12.	Banswara	51	50	60	161
	Total	724	610	630	1964



Objectives of DLTWs

1. Understanding the consumer protection issues and the status of redressal mechanisms and awareness generation among the common consumers, especially in rural areas.
2. Building up of a large group of aware and literate grassroots activists, who, in turn, could mobilise and assist illiterate and helpless consumers to access consumer justice and uphold their rights.
3. Creating a vibrant network of small consumer organisations, groups and interested individuals, extending down to the block level.



4. Enhancing the capacity of identified CSOs to handle emerging and relevant consumer issues woven around the basic needs, ensuring improvement in service delivery and playing the “watchdog” role in their respective districts; and
5. Building blocks for strengthening and sustaining consumer movement at the grassroots.

Target Group

- a. Activists working on consumer protection issues; and
- b. Common consumer/people.

Duration: Two days

Feedback

- a. Similar specific-issue based programmes with short duration should be conducted.
- b. Expansion of consumer forums at the sub-district level so that overburdened district consumer forum may work smoothly.
- c. Local governance must be incorporated in the movement.

Outcome

- a. Increased number of people having the capacity, skill and knowledge to support consumer rights in the project districts.
- b. Creation of a network of motivated people belonging to different spheres, which would further support the consumer movement.

- c. Core Group: A core group was formed consisting of activists, who have been taking part in almost all the activities since the very first field activity in the year 2010 and have been quite active in their respective areas. The major role of this dedicated core group would be to act as barefoot lawyers and serve the aggrieved consumers both in terms of helping them to redress their grievances and generating awareness among common masses. This will help in taking the consumer movement forward in each of the 12 districts, where this project has been implemented during the last three years.

Synthesis reports of all the three year's DLTWs can be viewed at:
http://www.cuts-international.org/CART/GRANIRCA/Event-District_Level_Training_Workshop.htm



Tejveer Choudhary

Efforts do Matter: Successful Interventions by

Native Institute of Desert Awareness and
Knowledge Society (NIDAN)

Jodhpur

District partner 'NIDAN' provided *nidan*
– means redress to consumer

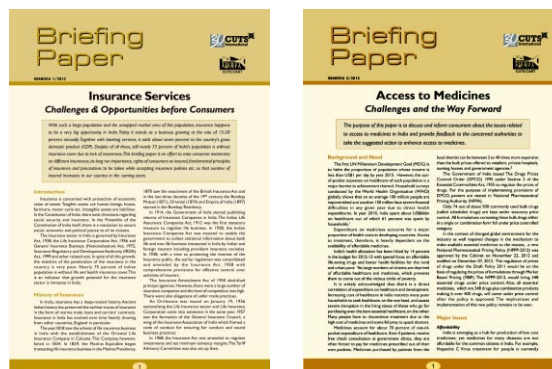
Dr. Roshan Gehlot, a resident of Jodhpur is having bank account in UCO Bank, Jodhpur. He tried to withdraw Rs 8000 from the ATM of Punjab National Bank on February 08, 2012, but due to some technical problems he did not receive the cash, instead he received the mini statement of debiting Rs 8000 from his account. The incident occurred at night. He immediately informed Tejveer Choudhary of Native Institute of Desert Awareness and Knowledge Society (NIDAN) our district Partner for Jodhpur to which he was asked to inform both the banks immediately and register the complaint but it was not possible so he filed the complaint online. Next day on February 09, 2012, he personally visited the bank and informed about the situation.

Dr. Gehlot was informed by the member of the organisation that as per the provision bank should credit the deducted amount within 12 working days. If the bank fails to do so, he can file a complaint in the forum. With the rigorous efforts of the organisation, Dr. Gehlot received the deducted money exactly on the 12th working days i.e. on February 20, 2012.

10 Outreach

Objective of the producing the publication was to inform the readers about the overview of consumer protection in the respective field, especially the challenges faced by consumers and suggestions to move ahead to ensure stable, secure and services consumers.





Consumer Dialogue

A bi-monthly E-newsletter disseminated to national as well as international audience presenting the emerging regime of consumer protection and also to update project progress.

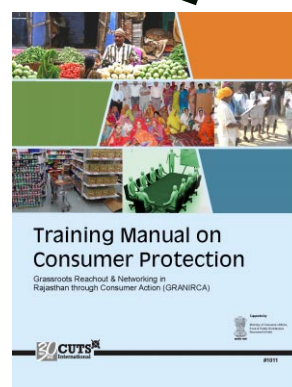
Consumer in Action

A bilingual quarterly newsletter which was targeted to the people and policy makers, unable to access internet for making them aware of the project progress and raise key consumer issues of state/region.



Training Manual on Consumer Protection

This has been the most downloaded output of the project and was always in demand. This training manual has been prepared by GRANIRCA project team, to help in imparting effective training and to prepare a cadre of grassroots consumer activists on various issues related to consumer protection, with special focus on the state of Rajasthan.



This manual covers basic information required for training of grassroots level consumer activists and provides maximum information related to problems faced by consumers in their day to day life.

Advocacy Document

The findings and recommendation mentioned in the advocacy documents are those that emerged from the field research studies as well as interactions/discussion with various stakeholders during project activities. These are result of joint efforts of GRANIRCA project team and district partners of the project under the overall guidance of George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International & Head, CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART).



The suggestions are collated with the aim to present the same before the authorities responsible for consumer protection in the state and national level for their consideration and action. The advocacy points raised here will be addressed for the protection of consumer interests and the larger social benefit in the state of Rajasthan. These issues have also triggered actions in other states and at the national level, as the scenario in other states is not much different.

Annual Reports

During the project period, annual report for the financial years January to March 2010, April 2010 to March 2011, April 2011 to March 2012 were prepared and submitted to CWF for ready reference and needful. Apart from annual reporting, the document also contains the financial statements.



Posters and Stickers

Under the project, stickers on six issues and four varieties of posters were printed and distributed among districts partners. They further distributed these stickers and posters during the project public events.



Anwar Ahmed Khan

Efforts do Matter: Successful Interventions
by
Oxford Shikshan Prashikshan Vikas Sansthan
Kota

Aware consumer could manage to get her mobile replace

This is the case story of a woman Seeta Sharma W/O Mahesh Sharma residing at Ladpura block of Kota district. She purchased a mobile of Rs 2700/- from a store in Kota. It was of spice brand. But, after a few days it was having problems. She complained about it to the shopkeeper with a proper bill as evidence and asked him to replace the handset with the new one. The shopkeeper didn't replace the defective handset with the new one.

The lady was an active consumer and she had attended various PIMs and DLTWs organized by Oxford *Shikshan Prashikshan Evam Vikas Sansthan*, Kota one of the partner of CUTS under the project GRANIRCA. She contacted Anwar Ahmed Khan of the organization and Rambahadur Kulsreshta, Member of District Consumer Forum and asked for their advice. They send her to the shopkeeper and asked her to warn that if he will not replace the handset she will file complaint at Dist. Consumer Forum. On hearing this, dealer assured her not to file any complaint and he replaced her mobile instantly. This is how an aware consumer can fight against injustice.

GRANIRCA trainings helped consumer getting defective goods replaced

Mehrunisha is M.A. qualified a resident of Rajeev Colony, Gumanpura, Kota. She has attended every activity of GRANIRCA. In year 2011 her father gave contract to Mohd. Haarun (contractor) a resident of Chawani, Kota for Kota Stone of Rs 25,000 including material, labour charges etc. Haarun was paid Rs 25,000. After five days few Kota stones got cracked automatically. Haarun was informed immediately, he said that it does happen, he was not faulty and he will charge extra for another material and labour to replace the cracked Kota stone.

Mehrunisa and her father argued with contractor that it was only contractor's fault; he has used poor quality material and requested to replace cracked stones free of cost. When contractor did not agree and not willing to replace then Mehrunisha informed him about consumer rights and mentioned that if she files a complaint before the District Consumer Forum then he has to give the whole amount Rs 25,000 including the compensation amount too. The contractor became afraid and thanked Mehrunisha for the information and replaced cracked Kota stones without any extra charges.

11

Advocacy, Networking & Representation

The project team was able to raise the issues emerging from the grassroots pertaining to consumer protection at national as well as international levels. Few of the representations made are as under:

- George Cheriyan, Director CUTS International, attended the meeting on 'Financial Services Campaign' organised by the Consumers International (CI) in the London office on November 29-30, 2010.
- GRANIRCA team members participated as resource persons in various open house meetings organised by telecom companies like BSNL, Idea, Vodafone and others to demystify second-generation consumer issues, as envisaged in the project.
- GRANIRCA team members attended the TRAI open house discussion on the consultation papers "Review of Measures to Protect Interest of Consumers in the Telecom Sector" and "Certain Issues Relating to Telecom Tariff" on December 13, 2010.
- George Cheriyan, Director, attended the 19th Consumers International World Congress and General Assembly held in Hong Kong, from May 03-06, 2011 on the theme 'Empowering Tomorrow's Consumers'. George Cheriyan presented the status of Financial Consumer Protection Bodies (FCBs) and the regulatory bodies in financial sector in India.
- Deepak Saxena participation in Workshop on the "Possible Amendments in Consumer Protection Act, 1986" sponsored by Indian Institute of Public Administration.

- Held at Chennai on June 18-19, 2011 and organised by Consumer Association of India (CAI), Chennai. Department of Consumer Affairs, Food and Civil Supplies of Government of Rajasthan and the newly constituted Food and Civil Supplies Corporation under the Rajasthan government jointly organised the day long orientation workshop on June 13, 2011. The objective of organising this orientation workshop was to basically explore the possibility of including some identified non-PDS items like tea, salt and soap etc. as non-PDS consumer items and sell to consumers through PDS channel on subsidised rates and make the same available at lower rates as compared to the market. The other objective was to bring fair price shops (FPS) in the mainstream of consumer markets, which at present is on the low priority side with restricted marketing of select consumer goods.
- Participation in Monthly Feedback Meeting of Department of Food and Consumer Affairs, Government of Rajasthan. The project team attended meetings on April 21 and May 19, which were organised by Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs on every third Thursday of each month.
- George Cheriyan attended a meeting of the Committee for Utilisation of Telecommunication Consumers Education and Protection Fund (CUTCEF) of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on October 21, 2011.
- George Cheriyan attended the Consumer Coordination Council (CCC) convention held at Chandigarh, on November 25, 2011.
- Deepak Saxena participated in the 26th SEBI-Investor Association in Mumbai, on December 23, 2011.
- Deepak Saxena, Amarjeet Singh and Dharmendra Chaturvedi participated in the State Level Function to commemorate National Consumer Day on December 24, 2011, which was attended by State Minister, Secretary, Food and Consumer Affairs and other dignitaries.
- Amarjeet Singh attended the regional workshop on consumer education for the Northern Zone organised by TRAI at Jaipur, on December 26, 2011.
- Deepak Saxena attended the event on occasion of launch of Investor Helpline SEBI at Jaipur, on December 30, 2011.

- Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Project Officer attended the ‘National Seminar on Consumer Mediation’ on 24th March, 2012 at New Delhi organised by Consumer Coordination Council.
- George Cheriyan, Director attended the Middle East Regional Members Meeting of Consumers International held on March 5-7, 2012 and the meeting titled ‘Consumers in the Digital Age’ held on March 8-9, 2012 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- On March 01, 2012 Deepak Saxena, Senior Programme Coordinator and Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Project Officer conduct a District Level Telecom Consumer Education Workshop at Dausa supported by TRAI.
- Amarjeet Singh, Project Coordinator, on February 18, 2012 attended a workshop at Chennai organised by Consumers Association of India to review the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act.
- George Cheriyan, Director attended National Seminar on ‘Consumer Protection in India: The Way Forward’, on February 1, 2012 organised by IIPA, New Delhi in New Delhi.
- George Cheriyan, Director represented CUTS in the 26th meeting of the Central Consumer Protection Council (CCPC) held on January 31, 2012 in New Delhi.
- Arjun Kant Jha, Project Officer participated in the workshop entitled “Protecting Consumers against Misleading Advertisement” conducted by CERC at Ahmedabad on January 07, 2012.
- Deepak Saxena, Senior Programme Coordinator attended the 13th Advisory Committee Meeting of RERC organised on April 27, 2012 at RERC Jaipur.
- On June 01, 2012 George Cheriyan, Director along with Deepak Saxena, Senior Programme Coordinator met with Mr. Tapesh Pawar, Principal Secretary, Consumer Affairs, GoR and briefed him about the on-going activities of CUTS.
- George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS attended the Consumer Coordination Council (CCC)/Department of Consumer Affairs supported National Seminar on Unfair Advertisements and Unfair Trade Practices at Mumbai on August 24, 2012. He made a presentation on ‘Misleading Advertisements’.

- Deepak Saxena along with Kaveri Dutt, Associate Director attended North Zone Member's Convention organised by CCC at Shimla on October 06, 2012.
- Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended the second meeting of Divisional Railway Users' Consultative Committee (DRUCC) held on Oct. 10, 2012, at Jaipur Rly Divisional Office.
- Deepak Saxena participated in a TV talk show on 'Kaise Karen Khariddari-Aaj Ka Mudda' organized by HBC TV channel on 1st November, 2012.
- Deepak Saxena attended the 27th meeting of the Central Consumer Protection Council (CCPC) held in Kochi on November 16, 2012 chaired by Prof. K.V.Thomas, Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India. Kerala Chief Ministers, Oommen Chandy, other ministers from states and DoCA officials attend the meeting along with members of Central Consumer Protection Council.
- Deepak Saxena & Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended the 14th meeting of the Advisory Committee of Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission on November 23, 2012 held at office of RERC. George Cheriyan attended the national consumer convention of CCC held at Kochi, Kerala organized in partnership with NOCER at Ashir Bhavan, Kochi, Kerala as a speaker and spoke about the state of the Indian consumer on December 29, 2012. Prof. K.V.Thomas, MoS (I/C) for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution attended the inaugural session of the convention as the Chief Guest.
- George Cheriyan on January 5, 2013 attended a Seminar on Consumer Awareness organised in connection with the Grand Kerala Shopping Festival by the Dept. of Tourism, Government of Kerala and supported by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India as a resource person and made a presentation on 'Consumer Protection Act & Protection of Consumer Rights'



Efforts do Matter: Successful Interventions by

Jila Upbhokta Jagaran Samiti

Sikar

Satya Narain Sikhwal

Aware consumer asserted his rights

Radheshyam Pareek a resident of Sikar district purchased one kilogram of sweets from a sweet shop in Sikar. The MRP of the product as Rs 90 but he was charged Rs.100. Seeing this when he asked the shopkeeper that he is charging Rs 10 extra, he was misbehaved by the shopkeeper.

Aggrieved by this Radheshyam filed a complaint against the shopkeeper in district consumer forum for charging extra amount than the MRP. A bench of district forum with Ganga Singh Shekhawat as President and Indira Chaudhry and Ashok Pareek as members gave the decision in favor of the consumer and asked the shopkeeper to pay the aggrieved consumer Rs 2000 for the mental harassment and Rs 2000 as the expense incurred by him for filing complaint and other charges. In this way a message was conveyed to all the others shopkeepers in the district that charging any extra amount can be a punishable offense. The case was advocated by our district partner Mukesh Sikhwal of *Zila Upbhokta Jagran Samiti*, Sikar.

12 Evaluation (Midterm and Final)

As per the terms and conditions, as laid down in MoU with the Ministry, a midterm evaluation was conducted, which was conducted during July 4 to 6, 2011, by Dr. Santosh Kumar, Professor, School of Liberal Studies, Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University, Raisan, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, as an external evaluator. The three day programme included meetings with project staff and finance department, project filed visit at Kota and Tonk, meetings with districts partners and meetings with project advisory members.



The recommendations that emerged in the midterm evaluation are as under:

- i. More material in Hindi, whether research or others is needed
- ii. To prepare posters in Hindi as this could be an effective tool for creating awareness.
- iii. Partners need constant nurturing and encouragement.
- iv. Success stories column needs to be added in the reporting format and such stories need to be published for wide reading through e-newsletters and newsletters
- v. A team of dedicated and effective resource persons need to be built up and used frequently in the trainings and other activities.
- vi. Expectations from the partners, project activities and the overall outcome, as envisaged from the project, need to be communicated to the partners periodically.
- vii. To continue the project web-page, as it is user friendly and simple.

Final Evaluation

Prof. Dr. Ashok R. Patil, Chair Professor, National Law School of India University Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Government of India, Bangalore, Karnataka conducted the final evaluation of the GRANIRCA project during December 19-21, 2012 as an external evaluator.

The three days evaluation program covered reviewing of project documents/ publications, presentation on project activities by the



project team, meetings with Project Advisory Group Member(s) and media representatives, review of financial progress report and interaction meeting with project district partners mainly on impacts/outcomes.

The conclusions drawn by Prof. Ashok R. Patil are as under:

- i. The biggest challenge before Rajasthan is the lack of awareness on consumer protection laws and making the three-tier quasi-judicial consumer grievance redressal forums accessible and workable for rural consumers and extending it below the district level. Also strengthening the consumer movement and developing consumer activists at the grassroots through intensive training, capacity building and orientation programmes on consumer protection and rights are needed.
- ii. This challenge was partially reduced by the GRANIRCA project which was very effective, sustaining and created an impact in the 12 district partners in its true letter and spirit.
- iii. A proper competition policy needs to be in place, so that there is a strict regulatory mechanism and fewer instances of consumers being cheated. However, for a sustained effect, it is significant that a culture of proper service delivery is nurtured in the society. To that extent, GRANIRCA's objective of creating Good Governance so that a contribution can be made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the state level can be accomplished.
- iv. The Consultant is hopeful, and this hope is generated through the positive impact – qualitative and quantitative – that has been created, that this will be milestone project in the state of Rajasthan in the field of consumer protection and awareness. The 12 partners, who were selected in the pilot phase and have been active throughout the three year's period, have the potential of being the resource persons in the up-scaled phase of the project.
- v. The GRANIRCA is a successful pilot project in 12 districts. Therefore, this project should be extended to all other districts of the Rajasthan State to bring Rajasthan state on top place on Consumer Awareness Index.



Gopal Lal Saini

Efforts do Matter: Successful Interventions by

MMM Sikshan Evam Jan Seva Sansthan
Tonk

Consumer took shopkeeper to ride

Ashish Jain who is a resident of Uniara Tehsil in Tonk district purchased a printer from Kota worth Rs. 5000 with a guarantee of one year. But, it got defected within five months of its purchase. He went to the local shopkeeper, but since it was under the guarantee period the shopkeeper advised him to visit the service centre of the company. After contacting the service centre he was told that the drum of the printer is having problem and it needs to be replaced. The dealer refused to replace it and asked him to contact to Kota dealer.

On contacting the dealer in Kota, he was refused by the dealer saying that it can't be replaced. Then he contacted Gopal Lal Saini of MMM Shikshan & Jan Seva Sansthan our district partner of Tonk, who contacted the dealer in Kota and asked him to resolve the case and replace the printer. The dealer denied this but after threatening him of going to consumer forum; he finally agreed to replace the printer without charging any extra money. In this way Ashish Jain got justice with the help of the organization.

District partner resolved issue amicably

Gopal Lal Saini a resident of village *Dhola Kheda*, Tonk runs a Senior Secondary School and one Hostel, where rural students stay for study purpose. Gopal purchased a refrigerator of Whirlpool Company with one year warranty period from a shop at Vijay Patel circle, Tonk. Refrigerator was working well for three months, after three months rats cut the rod at the back of refrigerator which was connected to ice box that led to leakage of gas and refrigerator stopped cooling.

Gopal complained to seller about this and seller informed to the company. Second day one engineer came, and said that there is need to change the ice box which cost around Rs 3600. Gopal said that refrigerator was in warranty period so why should he give Rs 36000. He spoke to company manager who also denied and informed that company will not replace the ice box since it got damaged through rat, there is no fault of company.

Gopal consulted CUTS, Jaipur about this case, which guided and informed that it is true there is no fault of company since ice box damaged by rat, but still negotiation can be done on the basis of poor quality of manufacturing.

Gopal spoke to Senior Manager of Whirlpool Company, negotiate and ultimately he gave Rs 1200 and company replaced old ice box with new one.

13

Additional Activities

13.1. Training of Trainer

A two-day residential training of trainers (ToT) was held at CUTS Jaipur office on July 26-27, 2010. The main objective of the training was to equip identified consumer activists with the required skills for undertaking training sessions along with GRANIRCA team in the DLTWs. More than 10 people from various districts of Rajasthan working on consumer issues were invited to the training. It included various sessions such as history of consumer movement, COPRA 1986, advocacy, communication and writing skills and moot courts.



The training enabled the participants to become master trainers, and along with GRANIRCA team, would facilitate technical sessions in the upcoming DLTWs.

15.2. World Consumers Rights Day (WCRD)

- **Year 2011**

CUTS organised a public event in Jaipur, on March 16, 2011 on the occasion of WCRD under the project in partnership with the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India and in collaboration with Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of Rajasthan.

The main objective of this event was to join with consumers around the world to demand access to safe, fair and competitive markets in financial services for all and also to show solidarity within the international consumer movement.



Participants

54 representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), 12 district partners from Rajasthan, representatives from service providers like banks etc. and media were present.

Key Speakers

The event was enlightened by S N Panda, General Manager, Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Jaipur circle; K Sundari Deputy General Manager, Office of Banking Ombudsman (BO), Jaipur; Justice Vinod Shankar Dave, former Chairman, Rajasthan State

Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission; S N Senapati, AGM, Banking Ombudsman Office, Jaipur and George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International and Head, CUTS CART as the speakers.

Synthesis reports of all the three year's DLTWs can be viewed at: http://www.cuts-international.org/CART/GRANIRCA/Public_Event-Observe_World_Consumer_Rights_Day_2011.htm

- **Year 2012**

CUTS organised a public event on the occasion of World Consumer Rights Day 2012 in Jaipur on March 16, 2012 under the project in partnership with the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India and in collaboration with the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of Rajasthan.

The main objective of this event was to join hands with consumers around the world to demand access to safe, fair and competitive markets in financial services for all and also to show solidarity within the international consumer movement.



Participants

More than 70 representatives which included senior officials from the regional office of Reserve Bank of India at Jaipur, who also serves as Secretary in the office of Banking Ombudsman; Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of Rajasthan,

Senior managers of banks based in Jaipur such as the State Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, South Indian Bank, State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur, and Cooperative Bank etc. and representatives of various consumer organisations, ten district partners from Rajasthan, activists and media participated.

Key Speakers

The main speakers were K Sundari, Deputy General Manager, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Secretary, Office of Banking Ombudsman, Jaipur; Sanjay Jhala, Enforcement Officer, Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of Rajasthan and George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS.

Synthesis reports of all the three year's DLTWs can be viewed at: http://www.cuts-international.org/CART/GRANIRCA/Public_Event-Observe_World_Consumer_Rights_Day_2012.htm

- **Year 2013**

CUTS organised a public event on the occasion of WCRD with the theme 'Consumer Justice Now!' at Jaipur on March 18, 2013 under the project in partnership with the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India.



Objectives

The main objective of this event was to join hands with consumers around the world to demand implementation of simple, quick and inexpensive mechanism in consumer protection and to show solidarity within the international consumer movement. The other objective was to honour few consumer activists and networkers for their outstanding contribution in the field of consumer protection in the state.

Key Speakers

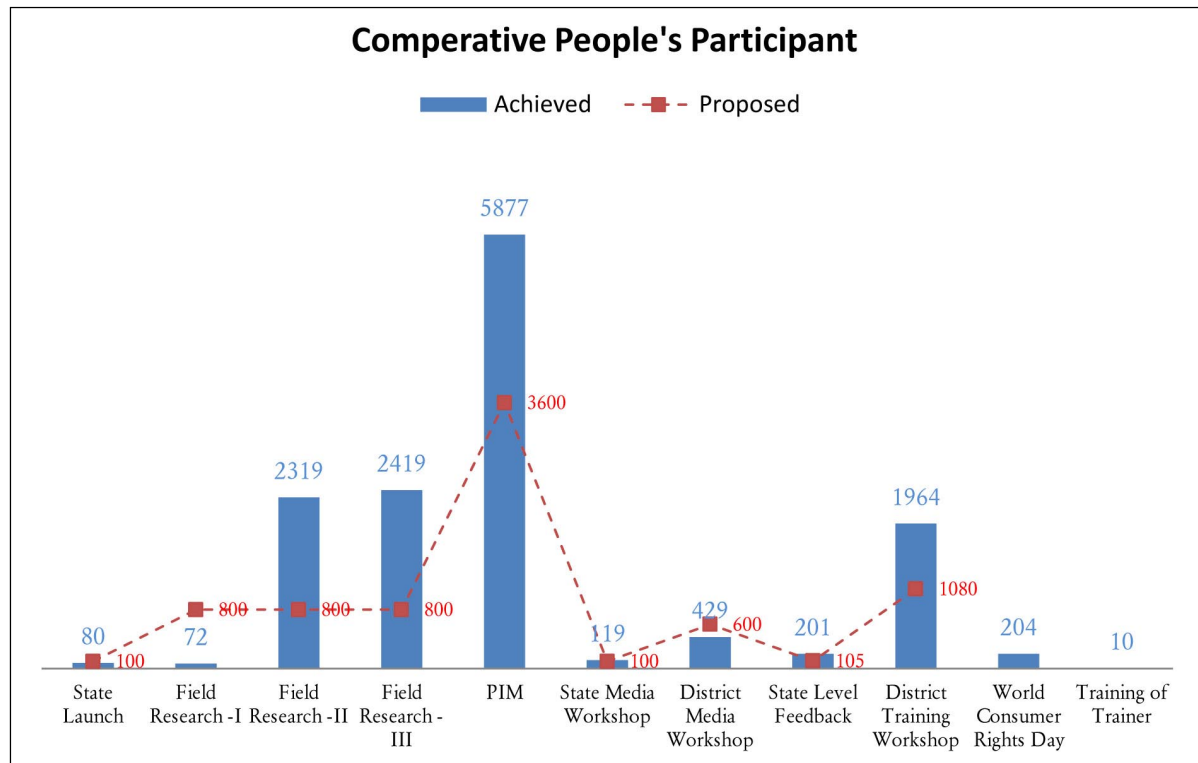
The event was enlightened by Lalit Mehra, IAS, Principal Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of Rajasthan; Ruth Anna Buettner, Programme Director, Consumer Policy & Protection GIZ, New Delhi; Amrit Lal Saha, Chairperson, Consumer Coordination Council (CCC) of India; Poonam Pandey, Technical Expert, GIZ, New Delhi; S. Saroja, Consumer Awareness Group, Chennai; Rajendra Prasad Bora, Senior Journalist, Jaipur; George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS; Keya Ghosh, Director, CUTS, Kolkata.

Participants

More than 80 representatives from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), consumer activists covering almost all 33 districts of Rajasthan, local Jaipur-based CSOs, Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of Rajasthan, GIZ, print and electronic media, academics, judiciary etc. attended the event.

Synthesis reports of all the three year's DLTWs can be viewed at: http://www.cuts-international.org/CART/GRANIRCA/Event-Celebration_of_World_Consumer_Rights_Day_2013.htm

Quantitative Assessment of the Project



Outcomes

S.N.	Head	Expected	Achievements
i	Empowerment	People in all the 12 districts will be empowered as assertive consumers to uphold their rights and fight for justice.	1. Total 13694, were directly sensitised by the field based activity.
ii	Questioning Society	Twelve CSOs capable of playing a “watchdog” role in their respective district.	2. 30.33 percent average growth rate of filing complaint in district consumer forum is noted in 12 districts. 3. Out of district consumer forum over 200 cases were resolved by Consumer Complaint Handling and Advisory Services (CHIAS) by districts partners. 4. Formed network core groups at project districts to sustain project objectives after the project tenure.

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iii	Improvement	Better service delivery areas related to basic needs and efficient redressal mechanism in place, particularly in rural areas in the target division.	<p>5. Establishment of State Consumer Help line.</p> <p>6. Constituted district level PDS vigilance committees in all districts.</p> <p>7. The District Consumer Protection Councils (DCPC) was constituted in year 2010 by the state government.</p> <p>8. Increased and more informed reporting of consumer issues by media.</p>
iv	Enabling Environment	Protecting consumer interest in all the 12 districts, which will ultimately create an enabling environment towards protecting the state interest.	<p>9. State government establishment of two more district foras at Jaipur and one at Jodhpur.</p> <p>10. Process of filing up the vacant positions at district fora began by appointing district persons with required legal experience instead of long practice of appointing only retired district judges.</p> <p>11. Formation of Bench by SDRC.</p>
v	Good Governance	In turn, the programme will contribute towards achieving the MDGs at the state level.	<p>12. Good representation of various link departments and civic representative in all project activities.</p> <p>13. Regular followup meetings by Principal Secretary Office.</p>

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			<p>14. Tie-up with local NGOs for effective disposal of PDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of State Consumer Help line. - State government establishment of two more district foras at Jaipur and one at Jodhpur.
vi	Replicable Model	The programme will result in a model of empowering consumers through networking, and thus offer a model for further expansion in the identified district and elsewhere.	<p>15. Sharing of knowledge department to NGOs and vis-à-vis.</p>

Conclusion

As explained earlier, the purpose of this project was to enhance strong consumer movement at the grassroots in seven divisions of the State by ensuring an enabling environment for protecting consumer's interests, which will, in turn, contribute towards national interest. As per internal and external evaluation the project is winner in terms of completing all the proposed activities and achieving the expected outcomes.

The three-year project made an effort to provide adequate information and clear understanding of the existing redressal mechanism, which leads towards invulnerabilities of individual and equal accessibility of justice by the peoples at grassroots. 13694 people representing various spheres of society were directly benefited from the interventions made by the project team. Resulting 30.33 percent average growth rate was noted in filing of complaints at district consumer forums. Reform and revitalisation of several policy and enforcement issues were observed during the project period like constitution of district consumer protection councils (DCPCs), formation of PDS vigilance committees and constitution of State Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission.

Most of the link and line departments extended their full cooperation and support at district head quarter level as well as Panchayat level. Still, issues pertaining to consumer protection and empowerment are not resolved, which need strong policy level intervention to get the desired results, as envisaged during framing of Consumer Protection Act, 1986.



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