

Grahak Suvidha Kendra (GSK)

The Launch

September 15th, 2015

Grahak Suvidha Kendra: An Overview

Grahak Suvidha Kendra (GSK) is a new initiative of the Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA), Government of India as a **One Stop Centre** catering to a spectrum of services for consumer welfare. The GSK portal will function as an extended arm of State Helpline on a common Information Technology or IT platform of National and State Consumer helplines. It will be in



local language, English and Hindi and services will be provided by trained personnel, experienced counsellors. Complaints regarding the consumer issues will be registered and all relevant information will be provided by the experts.

Recognising the importance of digital governance and to provide a simple, efficient and integrated solution that will link these various platforms is underway. The DoCA is presently working on integrated electronic platform that will provide a nation-wide consumer grievance network. This will be part of a network of GSKs to serve as integrated consumer advocacy centres that will extend a host of services – information dissemination, counselling, grievance redressal, mediation, class action, product testing, capacity building and training and mobilising popular support to the consumer movement. GSKs will be run and managed by voluntary consumer organisations.

GSKs would also be given an interface to access Grievances Against Misleading Advertisements (GAMA) for lodging grievances of consumers (<http://gama.gov.in/Default.aspx>). Citizens can approach any of these centres to lodge their grievances against misleading advertisements.

CUTS was selected for managing one such GSK for the western region based in Jaipur. The provisional sanction for the GSK to CUTS was issued by Ram Vilas Paswan, Honorable Cabinet Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution on March 18, 2015 during the National Conference on Consumer Rights organised in Delhi in connection with the World Consumer Rights Day. The formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was

signed between the DoCA and CUTS on June 30, 2015. The GSK commenced functioning on July 01, 2015. Handling consumer complaints, information and advisory services are provided by GSK.



The Launch

The formal launch of Grahak Suvidha Kendra was held on September 15, 2015 in the benign presence of Justice V S Dave, former High Court Judge and Ex-President Rajasthan State Consumer Disputes

Redressal Commission; Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General CUTS International; Anant Sharma, President Consumer Action and Network Society (CANS); George Cherriyan, Director, CUTS International and Sanjay Jhala, Deputy Director, Consumer Affairs, Department of Food and Consumer Affairs, Government of Rajasthan.

Proceedings

Opening Session

Varidhi Singh welcomed all the participants and stated the objectives of the meeting. She later invited the Chief Guest and other speakers on the dais and as a mark of gesture, presented a bouquet to all.



George Cherriyan (also Head of CUTS Consumer Action Research and Training or CART), in his welcome speech, elucidated three tier consumer grievance redressal system provided under Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and how it was introduced as an alternative to the existing civil court system to make the consumer

redressal forum free from the technicalities of the judicial process. Recently, National and State Consumer Helplines were introduced as an option for alternate system of consumer forums. Moving forward *Grahak Suvidha Kendra* has been launched on the pattern on European Consumer Centre Model.

George also mentioned about the study on State of the Indian Consumer conducted by CUTS in 2012 and highlighted the some of the highlights in brief specifically on poor status of awareness among the consumers in the country. Cheriyan said that the Government's aim is to empower the consumers and thus to provide more and more options to the aggrieved consumers for speedy and timely solutions to their problems. Thus schemes like helplines and GSKs are in force. George quoted the key objectives of GSK viz. to inform consumers about their rights, give advice, pre-purchase or post purchase counseling, provide direct assistance to resolve complaints and to redirect consumer to appropriate body, if not able to resolve their grievances. He informed that these centers will work on four principles: Information, Advice, Advocacy and Handling Complaints.

Deepak Saxena, Sr. Programme Coordinator CUTS and Coordinator of GSK presented the brief of GSK with its objectives and the functions. Starting with a brief history of CUTS, its establishment and activities, he reiterated that Consumer Advocacy has been one of the core strength of CUTS' work. Advocacy has



been instrumental in various pro-consumers changes in laws, regulations, policies and better implementation of schemes and programmes. CUTS has been successful in many of the class action suits filed, resulting in benefit to lot of consumers. Complaint Handling Information and Advisory Service (CHIAS) has been an inherent and vibrant activity of CUTS.

Saxena gave a detailed power point presentation on the GSK focusing on its prime functions and objectives.

It will cater to a spectrum of services for consumer welfare. The Centre will have telephonic/online/in person facility for submission of consumer complaints and seeking other relevant information on consumer issues. GSK will be a centre for advising and counseling consumers in redressing their grievances and will assist the Consumers in registering their complaints in appropriate consumer fora, if necessary.

GSK will also facilitate the consumers to seek information or register their complaints online after office hours and on public holidays too through a dedicated helpline and electronic devices. Continuing with presentation, Saxena elucidated the fact that GSK will record all

calls and information received beyond office hours including public holidays also and proceed with the acquired information on the following working day and ensure that the complainants receive prompt response and required help. GSK will also be producing a monthly report of data, indicating the activities undertaken, classifying the nature of the complaints on sectorial and geographical basis. GSK will serve as an integrated consumer advocacy centre that will extend a host of service-information, dissemination, counseling, grievance redressal, mediation process, class action suits, product testing, capacity building and training and mobilising adequate support to the consumer movement. Saxena also mentioned that there will be an Advisory Committee comprising of a President and a member of any District Fora and one representative of VCOs and a social worker.



Honourable Justice V S Dave in his key note address opined that it was a wise decision on part of the Government to start GSK and these GSKs definitely will be able to protect the interests of the consumers. Dave also said that such platforms will be able to give direct and easy access to the consumers for getting compensation. He also

suggested that such a platform should also be utilised to bring all the stakeholders under a common roof, so there can be an easy and speedy resolution through intervention. Easy access to the redressal system is an important part of any redress system. The existing redressal mechanism for dispute resolution is not easily accessible. If a person is waiting for a long time in a queue for getting justice this is not justice. Dave further stated that the procedural technicalities should be removed from consumer forums. The system for dispute resolution must be simple and first step towards the resolution should be advocacy then mediation, which is followed by arbitration and litigation is the last resort. Citing examples of developed countries, Justice Dave said that in USA, Department of Consumer Affairs is overseen by President's Office and Government of India should also give importance to consumer affairs.

Pradeep S Mehta mentioned that CUTS has been fighting for the rights of consumers since 1983 and has been at the forefront for protection of these rights. He stated that CUTS has been successful in achieving these goals with the help of tools like 'Consumer Advocacy', which also contributed in creating



awareness among the consumers. Moreover, GSK will also work with the same objectives and on the same guidelines. Mehta said that earlier, only private service providers were under the purview of Consumer Protection Act, but later on government authorities providing services to the public were also covered under the Act through the efforts of consumer advocacy groups. Mehta said that when the Act came into being, there were provisions of only National and State Consumer Protection Councils but looking to its importance and the need, the District councils were also introduced afterwards in due course of time. Sharing some of his own personal experiences in the midst of his involvement in the movement, Mehta said that nothing is impossible as to achieve any defined goal and enactment of COPRA is a live example of it.



Sanjay Jhala addressed the audience and highlighted the commitment of the Government for better implementation of the Consumer Protection Act and its support to any scheme for protection of interests of the consumers.

Anant Sharma stated that any legislation, scheme or project cannot be declared successful until and unless it reaches to the lower strata of the society because these are the people, who need such protection more.



Distribution of *Gram Gadar* Award



Since its inception CUTS has been publishing *Gram Gadar*, a monthly wall newspaper, which covers the all social issues including consumer issues for the purpose of imparting information specifically to rural population and thus help in creating and generating mass awareness. In its endeavor of providing a platform, every year CUTS announces an award to encourage the rural journalism, which is given for the best 'Write up' on any specific issue. Surendra Chirana, a resident of small Devipura village near Nawalgarh in Jhunjhunu district and associated with Hindi daily *Dainik Bhaskar* was awarded the *Gram Gadar* award for best journalism at the rural-level for the year 2014. The write up focussed on 'Organic Farming'.

Participation

About 51 representatives from various Non-government Organisations (NGOs), VCOs, Telecom Service Providers, Jaipur Distribution Companies (Discoms) and other consumer service providers, regulators took part in the event.



Recommendations

- Easy access to Dispute Resolution Agencies
- Resolution of disputes through involvement of Traders' Association
- Dispute resolution process needs to be devoid of procedural technicalities
- Need to take up consumer affairs as an important issue and
- Criminal aspect of a consumer dispute to be analysed

Vote of Thanks

Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Project Officer, CUTS summarised the event and delivered the vote of thanks to all participants. The event generated a good response from the participants. Chaturvedi also requested all the participants to impart the information of Grahak Suvidha Kendra among friends, relatives and other stakeholders to the maximum level, so that people comes to know about it.

शुभांभ

ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र

उपभोक्ता मामले विभाग, भारत सरकार की परियोजना

15 सितम्बर 2015, जयपुर

Timings	Schedule	
02:00–03:00 pm	Registration and Welcome drink	
03:00–03:10	Welcome and Introduction	George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS
03:10-03:25	Presentation : <i>Grahak Suvidha Kendra</i>	Deepak Saxena, Sr. Programme Coordinator, CUTS
03.25 - 03.35	Opening Address	Pradeep S Mehta Secretary General, CUTS International
03:35 – 03:55	Address by the Chief Guest	Justice V S Dave, former President, State Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission, Jaipur
03:55 – 04:00	Distribution of <i>Gram Gadar</i> Award to Shri Surendra Chirana (Hindi Journalist)	By Chief Guest
04.00-04.15	Felicitation Address	Shri Sanjay Jhala Dy. Director (Consumer Affairs), Dept. of Consumer Affairs, Government of Rajasthan
04:15-04.30	Felicitation Address	Shri Anant Sharma, Convener, State Consumer Helpline and President CANS
04:30–04:35	Summing Up and Vote of Thanks	Dharmendra Chaturvedi Project Officer, CUTS
4.35 onwards	High Tea	

List of Participants

S.N.	Name	Name and address of the Organisation	Phone/ Mobile No.	Email
1.	Mukesh Sikarwar, Advocate	Samajik Vikas Samiti, Dholpur	9414584831	
2.	Tasheer Khan	Daily News	9928036141	
3.	Manu Sharma	S.V.S., Jaipur	9829091601	
4.	Surendra Chirana	Dainik Bhaskar, Sikar	9983734512	
5.	M.L. Pareek	Labour Education & Development Society, Jaipur	8104811813	
6.	Hitesh Gupta	Jeevan Asha Samajik Sanstha, Jaipur	8952001224	jeevanasha.india@gmail.com
7.	Swatantra Kumar Mittal	Agrasen Shikshan Samiti	9828704313	
8.	Rizwan Khan	Gram Chetna Kendra, Kheri Milk	9694899111	rizwanrizw972@gmail.com
9.	Nita Agarwal Arora	Tata Teleservices Ltd.	9214309382	nita.agarwalarora@tatatele.co.in
10.	Alaknanda Abrol	Idea Cellular Ltd.	9887005659	alaknanda.abrol@idea.adityabijla.com
11.	Shahanshah	Upbhokta Manch	7737214085	
12.	Apeksha	Vodafone		
13.	Anita Goswami	Vodafone		
14.	Arun Vyas	Vision Youth Action Society, Sanganer	9214321211	
15.	Tara Chand Saharan	SAHAYATA, Jaipur	9829297297	
16.	Prakash Mathur	Malayala Manorama	9414086846	
17.	Sushma Sharma	Shradha Mahila Prashikshan Kendra & Shikshan Sanstha, Jaipur	9828622490	
18.	Suman Bhatnagar	Madhukar Adarsh Vidhya Mandir Samiti, Kotputali	9828048928	
19.	Himanshu Jhankal	Ras Rang Munch Sanstha, Jawaahr Nagar, Jaipur	9929633997	ras-rang-munch@yahoo.co.in
20.	Faiz Mohd.	Raza Public School, Jaipur	9829163539	
21.	Siya Ram Sain	Sahara Public Shikshan Samiti, Jaipur	9887527619	
22.	Suresh Kumar Sain	Sahara Public Shikshan Samiti, Jaipur	9929054955	
23.	Ram Kumar	Ugriyawas Jagraty Kendra Sanstha, Ugriyawas, Jaipur	9166491406	ujksjpr@yahoo.in
24.	Ashok Jhaju	Upbhokta Adhikar, Phulera	9468757336	

S.N.	Name	Name and address of the Organisation	Phone/ Mobile No.	Email
25.	George Cheriyan	CUTS International, Jaipur		
26.	Deepak Saxena	CUTS International, Jaipur		
27.	Dharmendra Chaturvedi	CUTS International, Jaipur		
28.	Varidhi Singh	CUTS International, Jaipur		
29.	Renu Beniwal	CUTS International, Jaipur		
30.	B.N. Sharma	CUTS International, Jaipur		
31.	A.K. Thalia	CUTS International, Jaipur		
32.	Gajendra Khichi	CUTS International, Jaipur		
33.	Rakesh Kumar Parmar	Samajik Vikas Samiti, Jarga, Dholpur	9784016835	svsdholpur@gmail.com
34.	M.L. Sharma	Sahyog Samajik Sansthan, Jaipur	9314874064	sahyogml@gmail.com
35.	Dayaram Swani	Swajan Social Development and Health Education Samiti, Jaipur	9784618462	
36.	Sitaram Jajoriya	Prayas Kendra Sanstha, Harsoli, Jaiur	9875157705	prayas.ks@gmail.com
37.	A.R. Sharma	Awareness Training and Motivation for Action (ATMA), Jagmalpura, via- Jobner, Distt.- Jaipur- 303 328	9413063961	atmango11@gmail.com
38.	Suman Saini	Udaipurwati, Jhunjhunu	7665237151	
39.	Vimla	Udaipurwati, Jhunjhunu		
40.	Ramesh Chandra Kumhar	Chandra Public School, Jaipur	9636564698	
41.	Vishnu Agarwal	Agrasen Shiksha Samiti, Jaipur	9414207149	
42.	Ajay Singh Rathore	Aadhar Research Institute, Jaipur	7742277291	infa@aadhar.org.in
43.	Dinesh Dixit	SEBI, Jaipur	9783787007	dineshd@sebi.gov.in
44.	Vijendra Prakash	Consumer Action and Protection Society, Phulera, Jaipur	9214536903	upbhoktaadhikar@gmail.com
45.	Hari Prasad Yogi	Consumer Legal Help Society, Alanpur, Sawai Madhopur	9950164523	consumer_orgswm@rediffmail.com
46.	Dr. Seema Joshi	Maulik Foundation, Jaipur	9461308400	maulikfoundation@rediffmail.com

S.N.	Name	Name and address of the Organisation	Phone/ Mobile No.	Email
47.	Manini Pareek	Maulik Foundation, Jaipur	8387960093	manni.pareek@yahoo.com
48.	Rukmani Soni	Mahila Jagrati evam Vikas Samiti, Jaipur	9314427648	
49.	Gulam Mustafa, Advocate	Raza Public School Samiti	9829388276	gulammustafa732@gmail.com
50.	Navneet Bissa	Nav Sankalp Sansthan, Jaipur	9660670111	nav.bissa@gmail.com
51.	Suleman Shaikh	Gramin Manav Kalyan Shikshan Sansthan, Kachroda, via- Phulera, Jaipur	9351185136	gmkss.org@gmail.com
52.	Rajesh Meena	SEBI, Jaipur	9887417688	rajehsk@sebi.gov.in
53.	Dr. Prabha Sharma	S.V.S., Jaipur	9829091601	
54.	Lalit Verma	ETV Rajasthan	9828323111	
55.	Namrata	WORLD Organisation	9610672172	
56.	Priyanka Malakaar	Upbhokta Adhikar, Phulera	8233157138	
57.	Nitin Mahnot	Aircel Ltd., Vaishali Nagar, Jaipur	9782000369	nitin.mahnot@aircel.co.in
58.	Dr. Maya Tandon	Chairperson & Managing Trustee, SAHAYATA, Jaipur	9414078998	
59.	Virendra Prakash Halchal	Upbhokta Adhikar, Phulera		
60.	Dr Anant Sharma	Convener, State Consumer Helpline and President, CANS, Jaipur		
61.	Justice V S Dave	Former President, SCDRC, Jaipur		
62.	Sanjay Jhala	Deputy Director, Department of Food and Consumer Affairs, Govt of Rajasthan		
63.	Pradeep S Mehta	Secretary General, CUTS		

‘ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र उपभोक्ता हित के लिए महत्वपूर्ण’



जयपुर कासं। भारत सरकार की ओर से प्रायोजित ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र का शुभारम्भ जयपुर में किया गया। कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत में ‘कट्स के

ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र का शुभारंभ

जयपुर। कट्स की ओर से भारत सरकार का प्रायोजित ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र का शुभारंभ अजमेर रोड स्थित एक होटल में बुधवार को राजस्थान राज्य उपभोक्ता विवाद निवारण आयोग के पूर्व अध्यक्ष वीएस दवे ने किया। मुख्य अतिथि ‘कट्स’ इंटरनेशनल के महामंत्री प्रदीप एस मेहता, कैन्स के अध्यक्ष अनंत शर्मा व उपभोक्ता विभाग के उपनिदेशक संजय

जयपुर में भारत सरकार द्वारा प्रायोजित ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र का शुभारम्भ

जयपुर 18 सितम्बर। भारत सरकार द्वारा प्रायोजित ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र का शुभारम्भ

ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र का शुभारम्भ

जयपुर, भारत सरकार द्वारा प्रायोजित ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र का शुभारम्भ होटल ओम टॉवर में 15 सितम्बर को वी.एस. दवे, पूर्व अध्यक्ष, राजस्थान राज्य उपभोक्ता विवाद निवारण आयोग, प्रदीप एस. मेहता, महामंत्री, ‘कट्स’ इंटरनेशनल, अनंत शर्मा, अध्यक्ष, ‘कैन्स’ एवं श्री संजय झाला, उप निदेशक, उपभोक्ता मामले विभाग, राजस्थान सरकार की उपस्थिति में किया गया। इन केन्द्रों के मुख्य उद्देश्य सूचना, सलाह, सीधे ही उपभोक्ता को सहयोग, उपभोक्ता मंच में पिकायत पहुँचाना है। कार्यक्रम में मुख्य रूप से पूर्व न्यायाधीश वी.एस. दवे ने ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र को सरकार द्वारा उपभोक्ताओं के लिए उठाया जाएगी, क्योंकि यही वह तबका है

नहीं पहुँचाई जाएगी, क्योंकि यहीं वह तबका है जिसे इन सब आधारभूत सुविधाओं की सबसे ज्यादा जरूरत है।

उपभोक्ता मामले विभाग, राजस्थान सरकार का प्रतिनिधित्व करते हुए उपनिदेशक संजय झाला ने कहा कि सरकार समय-समय पर उपभोक्ताओं के हितों के संरक्षण के लिये कार्य करती रहती है। ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र और ही परियोजनाओं की शुरुआत के लिए सरकार द्वारा

जयपुर में भारत सरकार द्वारा प्रायोजित ग्राहक सेवा केन्द्र का शुभारम्भ

जयपुर। भारत सरकार द्वारा प्रायोजित ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र का शुभारम्भ होटल ओम टॉवर में 15 सितम्बर को वी.एस. दवे, पूर्व अध्यक्ष, राजस्थान राज्य उपभोक्ता विवाद निवारण आयोग, प्रदीप एस. मेहता, महामंत्री, ‘कट्स’ इंटरनेशनल, अनंत शर्मा, अध्यक्ष, ‘कैन्स’ एवं श्री संजय झाला, उप निदेशक, उपभोक्ता मामले विभाग, राजस्थान सरकार की उपस्थिति में किया गया।



कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत में ‘कट्स’ निदेशक जॉर्ज चेरियन ने उपभोक्ता संरक्षण अधिनियम की जानकारी देते हुए बताया कि भारत सरकार के उपभोक्ता मामले मंत्रालय के सहयोग से भारत के पांच राज्यों में ‘ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र’ की शुरुआत की गई है, जयपुर में जिसके संचालन की जिम्मेदारी ‘कट्स’ को दी गई है। इस केन्द्र के माध्यम से उपभोक्ताओं की शिकायतों का समाधान आसानी से हो सकेगा। तत्पश्चात् संस्था के वरिष्ठ कार्यक्रम समन्वयक दीपक सक्सेना

द्वारा ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र के बारे में पाँच पॉइंट प्रस्तुतिकरण द्वारा विस्तृत रूप से जानकारी दी गई। जिसमें उन्होंने बताया कि ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र राजस्थान, गुजरात, बिहार, पश्चिम बंगाल और कर्नाटक में स्थापित किए गए हैं। इन केन्द्रों के मुख्य उद्देश्य सूचना, सलाह, सीधे ही उपभोक्ता को सहयोग, उपभोक्ता मंच में शिकायत पहुँचाना है।

कार्यक्रम में मुख्य रूप से एस. मेहता ने संस्था द्वारा उपभोक्ताओं के हितों में किये गये कार्यों के बारे में जानकारी दी। उन्होंने बताया कि उपभोक्ताओं के हित के संरक्षण के लिए उठाया गया एक महत्वपूर्ण कदम बताया तथा कहा कि इस मंच को माध्यम से सभी हितधारी मिलकर उपभोक्ताओं की समस्याओं का समाधान के लिए सभी तरह के प्रयास करने के लिए कार्य करेंगे। इसी संदर्भ में उन्होंने सुझाव दिया कि व्यापारी वर्ग को भी ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र की कार्यप्रणाली के बारे में जागरूक करना होगा।

‘कट्स’ के महामंत्री प्रदीप मेहता ने संस्था द्वारा उपभोक्ताओं के हितों में किये गये कार्यों के बारे में जानकारी दी। उन्होंने बताया कि उपभोक्ताओं के हित के संरक्षण के लिए उठाया गया एक महत्वपूर्ण कदम बताया तथा कहा कि इस मंच को माध्यम से सभी हितधारी मिलकर उपभोक्ताओं की समस्याओं का समाधान के लिए सभी तरह के प्रयास करने के लिए कार्य करेंगे। इसी संदर्भ में उन्होंने सुझाव दिया कि व्यापारी वर्ग को भी ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र की कार्यप्रणाली के बारे में जागरूक करना होगा।

पहुँचाई जाएगी, क्योंकि यही वह तबका है जिसे इन सब आधारभूत सुविधाओं की सबसे ज्यादा जरूरत है।

उपभोक्ता मामले विभाग, राजस्थान सरकार का प्रतिनिधित्व करते हुए उप निदेशक संजय झाला ने कहा कि सरकार समय-समय पर उपभोक्ताओं के हितों के संरक्षण के लिए कार्य करती रही है और ग्राहक सुविधा केन्द्र और ऐसी ही परियोजनाओं की सफलता के लिए अग्रसर रहेगी।

कार्यक्रम के दौरान सुरेन्द्र चिराना, पत्रकार को वर्ष 2014 के लिए ग्रामीण पत्रकारिता के लिए ‘ग्राम गदर’ पुरस्कार भी प्रदान किया गया। पुरस्कार में प्रमाण पत्र व दस हजार का नकद पुरस्कार दिया गया। कार्यक्रम में स्वयंसेवी संस्थाओं, विभिन्न सेवा प्रदाताओं तथा नियामक एजेंसियों के प्रतिनिधियों ने बड़ी संख्या में भाग लिया।