

Consumer Care Centre (Grahak Suvidha Kendra) Jaipur

Quarterly Report (October-December, 2015)

1. Introduction

Grahak Suvidha Kendra (GSK) an 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 portal will function as an extended arm of State Helpline and on a common IT platform of National and State Consumer



helplines. It will have local language, English and Hindi service with trained personnel, experienced in counselling, drafting complaints and providing information.



Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) has been 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, Honourable 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 started its functioning on July 01, 2015. GSK was formally launched in a programme held in Jaipur on September 15, 2015. Consumer Complaint Handling, Information and Advisory services are provided by GSK.

Completing the formalities and receipt of first instalment of funds

The bond was submitted on July 06, 2015 along with other related documents like stamped duly signed pre-receipt, bank details etc. The same was re-submitted with some minor modifications on July 13, 2015. On the query from the department, had send the revised Utilization Certificates of earlier grants received from Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF) along with the resolution for the signing authority. Regular follow ups were made with DoCA on routine basis for the release of 1st installment funds. The first installment of ₹ 26.1 lakh has been received in CUTS bank account on August 19, 2015.

2. Advisory Committee Members

The members of the Advisory committee were finalised in the month of October:

1. Shri O.P. Singh
Chairperson
District Consumer Dispute Redressal Forum,
Jaipur- III,
6th Floor, Mini Secretariat,
Banipark, Jaipur- 302 016
2. Smt. Geeta Pareek
Member
District Consumer Dispute Redressal Forum,
Jaipur- III,
6th Floor, Mini Secretariat,
Banipark, Jaipur- 302 016
3. Dr. Seema Joshi
Maulik Foundation Society
D- 4, Hari Kripa Apartment
Flat No. 503, Meera Marg
Banipark, Jaipur- 302 016
Mob: 94613 08400
4. Shri Rakesh Parmar
Samajik Vikas Samiti,
Bus Stand,
VP- Jarga, Distt.- Dholpur
Pin- 328 022
Mob: 97840 16835, 84326 19582,
Email: svsdholpur@gmail.com

3. First Advisory Meeting of GSK on December 30, 2015

The First Advisory Meeting for *Grahak Suvidha Kendra* was convened at 3:00 P.M. on December 30, 2015 at CUTS CART, Bani Park, Jaipur. The members of Advisory Committee Smt. Geeta Pareek, Dr. Seema Joshi and Shri Rakesh Sharma were present at the meeting.

In accordance with the provisions II (h) and (i) of MoU signed between Department of Consumer Affairs and CUTS on June 30, 2015 the meeting was held at December 30, 2015 from 3:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M. (*minutes of the meeting are attached herewith*)

4. Consumer Protection and Awareness Programmes

GSK team visited various schools and other places to facilitate the programme on protection and awareness of consumer. The awareness programme was organised with the objective to create awareness among school children about the rights and duties of consumers and

introduce them with Consumer Protection Act, 1986 under the banner of *Grahak Suvidha Kendra*. The following programmes were organised:

- Maharani Senior Secondary Girls School, Bani Park, Jaipur on November 28, 2015. The programme was attended by around 200 school girls of IX to XII standard and their teachers.
- Rural Development and Self Employment Training Institute (RUDSET), Vidhyadhar Nagar, Jaipur on December 05, 2015. The programme was attended by around 50 students of Institute and their teachers.
- Surbhi Parivaar, Vivekanand Industrial Area, Jaipur on December 12, 2015. The programme was attended by 15-20 women.
- National Social Service Camp at Rajkiya Maharani Senior Secondary Girls School, Bani Park Jaipur on December 25, 2015. The programme was attended by about 50 girls.

4.1 Other Programmes/Interventions

Besides organising the above awareness programmes, GSK team had the chance to attend various other programmes on different issues of consumer's interest. These are as following:

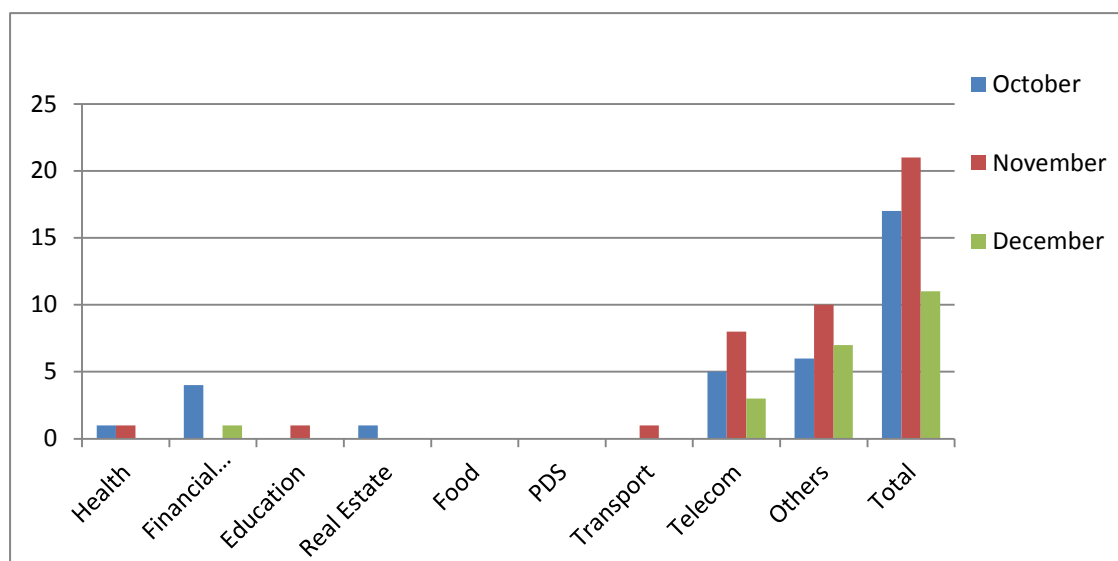
- **Human Rights Day on December 10, 2015**
Organised by High Court Bench, Jaipur on December 10, 2015 to observe Human Rights Day, the main objective behind the event was to bring the leading judges, advocates, Non-Government Organisation (NGOs) and members of the society together to protect and make vulnerable group of people aware of their human rights. The ceremony was attended by around 50 persons.
- **Workshop on Prevention of Child Abuse on 19th December 2015**
Organised under *Khilti Kaliyaan Pariyojana* by Alarippu Organisation with the support of Antakshri Foundation, RIHR Organisation and Action Aid Rajasthan, the workshop emphasised on three issues: Child Labour and Trafficking, Corporal Punishment and Child Sexual Abuses. The workshop was attended by around 100 persons.
- **National Consumers Day Observations**
The Department of Consumer Affairs of Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs, Government of India organised a seminar to commemorate National Consumers Day on the theme 'Safe and Healthy Food-Combating Food Adulteration' on December 22 2015, New Delhi. George Cheriyan, Director, along with Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Project Officer of CUTS attended the event. George was felicitated on the occasion for being elected as member in the governing council of Consumers International (CI) and he spoke on CI and the revision of the United Nations Guidelines on Consumer Protection (UNGCP) in the event.



- Similarly, a State-level function to commemorate National Consumers Day was also organised on December 24, 2015 at Indira Gandhi Panchayati Raj Sansthan (IGPRS), Jaipur on the same theme. George Cheriyan got the opportunity of being one of the key speakers on the occasion. The event was attended by the entire GSK team.



5. Complaints Handling and Advisory



**Grahak Suvidha Kendra, Jaipur-Category wise Complaint Status
(October-December, 2015)**

Grahak Suvidha Kendra has been receiving consumer complaints through all modes viz. in person, telephone, through post and email. Since its inception in July and till September, 2015, GSK has received and attended a total of 49 complaints pertaining to telecom, education, electricity, online shopping, real estate, consumer durable buying etc. during the month of October-December, 2015. On all the complaints regular follow up has been done through e-mails or telephone. There has been positive response from the side of consumers and sellers/service providers. In very few cases consumers have opted to approach the consumer forum for resolution of their complaint. And efforts were made to solve the complaints amicably.

The complaints records has been maintained in registers as well as on excel in soft copies. Most of the complaints were from telecom sector and online store sector. When a complaint is received, first it is forwarded to concerned seller and in most of the cases there is positive response from their side for amicable resolution of the problem. If the complaint is not resolved at this stage then the same is forwarded to the regulatory authority. *(Copies of the complaints received and advisory given month wise by GSK, Jaipur is attached herewith in excel sheets)*

The above complaints and advisory relates to:

- Providing authentic information
- Giving pre-purchase and post-purchase advise
- Giving advice on consumer rights
- Giving advice on methods for resolving consumer disputes
- Giving solutions on disputes of consumers
- Pursuing for mediation in case it is required and
- Follow up of cases, which are already registered

5.1 Future Interventions of GSK

Based on participation, activities and complaints received from various sectors following interventions are listed as below:

- To impart information about Grahak Suvidha Kendra through other modes.
- To offer advice to those consumers, who wants to get before buying goods or services to help save money and avoid problems.
- Rigorous follow-up for complaints getting from different sectors
- To create an environment among consumers through various programmes, so that there are less hassles, trust and confidence
- Advice on consumer rights when shopping online
- To offer an effective, easy and quick alternative to legal action against traders/service provider etc. and explore possibility of filing some class action suits.

6. Attending Complaints on GAMA

GSK is also started receiving complaints referred from GAMA (Grievances Against Misleading Advertisements) portal, pertaining to the region. Four complaints have so far been received from GAMA portal referred by the department, out of which one was attended immediately, resolved and the action was reported on GAMA portal as well. This complaint was against the Big Bazar show room in Sri Ganganagar regarding the misleading advertisement about an offer price. The other three complaints posted at GAMA, were withdrawn back as they were rejected because these were not related to misleading issues but still GSK, Jaipur addressed these three complaints and asked for further information on the basis that these were general consumer complaints.

7. GSK, Jaipur on Website, Facebook and Whatsapp Group

7.1 A webpage has been created on CUTS website and all the postings with latest update of complaints handled and other activities are posted from time to time.

<http://cuts-international.org/cart/>

CUTS Centre for Consumer Action Research & Training (CART)

Consumer Care Centre (Grahak Suvidha Kendra)

Project Overview

Grahak Suvidha Kendra (GSK) is a new initiative of the Dept. of Consumer Affairs (CoCA), Government of India as a ONE STOP CENTER catering to a spectrum of services for consumer welfare. It will function as an extended arm of State Helpline and will function on a Common IT platform of National and State consumer Helplines. It will have local language, English & Hindi service. It will have trained personnel, experienced in counselling, crafting complaints, and providing information.

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

Grahak Suvidha Kendras would also be given an interface to access Grievances Against Misleading Advertisements (GAMA) for lodging the grievances of consumers (gama.gov.in). Any citizen can go to any of these centres to lodge his/her grievances against Misleading Advertisements.

Consumer Unity & Trust Society (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 Shri Ram Vilas Paswan, Hon'ble Cabinet Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution on March 13, 2015 during the National Conference on Consumer Rights organised in Delhi in connection with the World Consumer Rights Day. The formal MoU was signed between the Dept. of Consumers Affairs & CUTS on June 30, 2015. The GSK started functioning from July 1, 2015. Consumer Complaint handling, Information and Advisory services are provided by GSK.

Services available at Grahak Suvidha Kendra:

- Advice on consumer protection related issues and complaints
- Publication of books, pamphlets, magazines and other materials on consumer related issues; and

7.2 Facebook Account

Similarly, a Facebook account has also been created in the month of September, where consumer related information is being posted regularly, which includes latest news, decisions and government initiatives for consumer's interest. Besides, consumers are given an option to post their complaints on this Facebook page. Till now, one complaint has been received through Facebook page, which has been resolved.

People Outreach: 1207 (India:1097)

Complaints Received: 1

Complaints Resolved: 1



<https://www.facebook.com/Grahak-Suvidha-Kendra-GSK-Jaipur-1459230614407574/>

7.3 A WhatsApp group

WhatsApp has also been activated comprising all the coordinators of five GSK, all the counsellors and most of the members of National and State Helplines, which contributes in sharing each other's experience, a specific consumer related news, government decisions and various other issues on consumer's interest.

CUTS is in the process to construct an **Online Mobile Application** of complaints handling, which will be available on the GSK webpage and consumers will be able to submit their complaints online also directly on this application. Besides, an answering phone machines is also being installed at GSK, Jaipur, which will be a dedicated phone cum fax line and this will enable consumers to lodge their complaints even after office hours at any time or any day, so that these are attended on the next working date.

8. GSK Initiatives to Interact with Service Providers and Regulators

In the process to develop relations with service providers of various consumer services, a series of discussions have been initiated, which comprises of regulator, consumers and the service providers.

In the reporting period of October-December 2015, one such meeting was organised with an electricity regulator and followed by number of meetings either organised by telecom regulator or telecom service providers comprising consumers, telecom service providers and regulator. GSK team attended all the mentioned meetings, the details are:

8.1 Power Sector Seminar

The Power Sector Seminar was organised on November 19, 2015 by Institution of Engineers, Rajasthan in association with the SAMTA POWER and Rajasthan State Electricity Board Retired *Abhiyanta evam Adhikari*, Jan Kalyan Trust, Jaipur. The Seminar was attended by all the stakeholders including the representatives from Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited and consumer organisations. The event was organised with the objective to discuss the situation of the power sector companies in Rajasthan. From the GSK team, Deepak Saxena, Coordinator along with Varidhi Singh and Gajendra Khichi as counsellors attended the event.

8.2 Telecom Customer Outreach Programmes

The Open House held at Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) Office, Mansarovar, Jaipur was attended by GSK Counsellors on October 05, 2015 where C L Verma General Manager, BSNL and BSNL Officers of Jaipur were also present at the open house. It was organised with an objective to resolve the complaints of the consumers directly. Dharmendra Chaturvedi and Gajendra Khichi (counsellors) attended the event. Besides, CUTS networkers Anwar Khan and Yudhishter Chansi in Kota attended Open House in Kota organised on October 17, 2015 by Idea Cellular.

8.3 World's Standards Day

The event was organised by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Jaipur Branch on October 17, 2015 for the occasion of 'World Standards Day', with the theme, 'Standards World's Common Language'. Representatives from the industries, media, and consumer organisations participated in the programme. The event was organised with the objective of observing 'World Standards Day'. The aim was to highlight the importance of standards in day to day life. Deepak Saxena, Coordinator along with Dharmendra Chaturvedi and Gajendra Khichi, attended on behalf of GSK.

9. Comments were also provided on proposed Consumer Protection Act, 2015 to Standing Committee on Lok Sabha

The team worked on the Consumer Protection Act, 2015 and provided its comments (written) before the departmentally related Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution of Lok Sabha.

10. Spreading Awareness

- 10.1 In order to spread awareness about GSK, several methods have been adopted like news on All India Radio (AIR) of Jaipur Centre; spreading awareness about GSK in other CUTS meetings, seminars, workshops etc. by distributing pamphlets and taking brief session on GSK and its press releases.
- 10.2 GSK team distributed pamphlets of GSK through local news vendors and also sent these to all the 33 districts of Rajasthan through CUTS local district-level networkers for making it popularise among masses, which will enable GSK to receive more and more complaints from other parts of Rajasthan. The district-level networkers were requested to send the complaints to GSK from all districts. The GSK information was also aired through local FM Radio (100.3 mhz Radio Pink City) for a continuous period of one week. *(a copy of pamphlet is attached for reference).*

11. Human Resources and Infrastructure

- 11.1 Building: GSK started functioning at D-218 A, Bhaskar Marg, Bani Park, Jaipur-302016 w.e.f July 01, 2015. A sign-board regarding the Consumer Care Centre has been set up outside the GSK office. Besides, all office staff including four counsellors, coordinator and data entry operators have been provided with computers, phone line connected to answering machine, fax machine and separate telephone lines connected to EPABX.

11.2 **Staff:** As required the GSK staff team is placed in order comprising one coordinator, four counsellors and back office, the details of which are:

Name of Staff Member	Designation	Contact No	Email ID
Deepak Saxena	Coordinator	09799996095	gsk@cuts.org ; ds@cuts.org
Dharmendra Chaturvedi	Counsellor	09414202868	dc@cuts.org
Renu Beniwal	Counsellor	08764200317	rb@cuts.org
Arawat Kumar Thalia	Counsellor	09414788283	akt@cuts.org
Deepika Ranawat	Counsellor	09461685338	dpr@cuts.org
Manish Pareek	Accountant		
Vikram Rathore	Data Entry Operator		
Badri Narain Sharma	Data Entry Operator		
Jodhu Barmen	Messenger		

For more information:

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