

Strengthen Consumer Safety in India and Publish the ‘State of Consumer Safety in India Report’ (ConsumersUp-2)

About the Project

India is one of the largest consumer market of goods and services. In services sector, being the transition economy, India is still in the process of establishing the systems to protect consumers’ right to safety. Right to safety means the right of the consumer to be protected against products, production processes and services which are hazardous to health or life. It includes concern for consumers’ long-term interests as well as their immediate requirements.

The UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection clearly mentions the right to safety as one of the inalienable rights of the consumer. The Constitution of India also has provisions regarding the right to safety. Consumer safety issues have been dealt in at least 25 different legislations.

Despite all these, the state of consumer safety in India is not very encouraging. As evident from the ‘State of Indian Consumer Report 2012’ by CUTS itself, ‘Safety’ comes very low in the priority list of the Indian mass – this is the common perception. Empowering consumers will result in better and effective implementation of safety regulation and legislations. It will also enhance the visibility, accountability and functioning of agencies mandated to ensure consumers’ right to safety in India.



Objectives

The project aims to enhance consumer safety through research to find out ground realities, advocacy and by empowering of consumers on consumer safety issues.

Overall Objective

To enhance consumer safety in India and promotion of consumer interest contributing towards the national interest”

Immediate Objective

“To recommend actionable steps to strengthen consumer safety in India.

Programme objectives

- Research: To conduct comprehensive research on the state of consumers safety in selected sectors and come up with a research report on the ‘State of the Consumer Safety.’
- Advocacy: To advocate with relevant stakeholders on consumer safety issues emerging out of the research with the help of network of consumer organisations/activists

Duration

The duration of the project will be of one year duration, i.e. August 2015-August 2016

Target States

Six states, one from each Zone, have been selected from different zones of India (North, south, east, west, central and north east). These states are Assam, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.

Activities

- Research on the state of consumer safety: Focus would be on the consumer safety in the following service Sectors.
 - o Energy – Electricity and Gas
 - o Housing- Fire, Earthquake, Lifts
 - o Transport- Road, Rail and Aviation
 - o Health- Medicines, Hospitals, Food and Water
 - o Public Amusement Services
 - o Some commonly used products will also be taken into consideration for the research purpose
- Five inputs papers, based on the research, will be written by subject matter experts to suggest possible actionable solutions to strengthen consumer safety in the selected sectors in the country.
- Publication of ‘State of Consumer Safety Report’ based on the research. Wider circulation and outreach to concerned stakeholders will be ensured.

Support and Implementation

The project is being implemented by CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART) with the support of the Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs, Government of India under its Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF) to take the Indian consumer movement forward.

