

Final Evaluation Report

**GRASSROOTS REACH-OUT & NETWORKING IN RAJASTHAN
THROUGH CONSUMER ACTION (GRANIRCA) PROJECT**

Project Implemented By

CONSUMER UNITY & TRUST SOCIETY (CUTS)

D-217 Bhaskar Marg, Bani Park, Jaipur 302 016, India



In partnership with

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Report Submitted By

Prof. Dr. Ashok R. Patil

Chair Professor

Chair on Consumer Law and Practice

Supported by Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Government of India

National Law School of India University

Bangalore, Karnataka

31st January 2013

CONTENTS

<u>SR. NO.</u>	<u>CHAPTERS</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
	<i>Preface and Acknowledgement</i>	2
1.	Introduction	5
2.	Methodology	12
3.	Findings and Observation	14
4.	Recommendations	28
5.	Conclusions	31

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The United Nations General Assembly adopted Guidelines for Consumer Protection by consensus on April 09, 1985. The guidelines provide a framework for governments, particularly those of developing countries, to use in elaborating and strengthening consumer protection policies and legislation. They are also intended to encourage international cooperation in this field.

In India, the need for consumer protection is paramount in view of the fact that there is an ever-increasing population and the need for many goods and services of which is no matching supply. In India, the consumer awareness has a very recent origin. The reasons appear to be lack of education, poverty, illiteracy, lack of information, traditional outlook of Indians to suffer in silence and ignorance of their legal rights against the remedy available in such cases. It was, therefore, necessary that a forum be created, where a consumer not satisfied with the goods supplied or services rendered may ventilate his grievance and machinery devised to afford him adequate protection.

Therefore, Indian government enacted exclusive law for consumers' called Consumer Protection Act (COPRA) 1986. This Act provides for a separate enforcement machinery and redressal forum with the aim to provide the consumers, a simple, less expensive, expeditious solution to consumer problems. The COPRA is a milestone in the history of socio-economic legislation in India. The COPRA, 1986 has partially successful in achieving objectives after completion of 25 years. The COPRA was amended three times in the year 1991, 1993 and 2002 & presently Consumer Protection Amendment Bill, 2011 is pending before the Parliament.

In the present times, there is a need to bring law close to the people so that it is able to appreciate, understand and solve the problems of the child, the women, the downtrodden, the weak, and also the underprivileged sections of the society.

Because of shift from *Caveat Emptor* to *Caveat Venditor*, consumers are considered to be king in a free market and the sellers are guided by the will of a consumer. But even after 25 years of COPRA, the objective of the COPRA has not been achieved satisfactorily because of many reasons. One of the most important reasons is lack of awareness at the grassroots throughout India.

To address issues, such as lack of consumers' access to adequate information, their improper understanding about the redressal mechanism/procedure and other socio-economic vulnerabilities of individuals and households, which become reasons for under-privileged classes not getting justice, CUTS initiated a project entitled, 'Grassroots Reachout & Networking in Rajasthan through Consumer Action (GRANIRCA) in 2010.

The objective of the GRANIRCA project is to generate a more capable consumer by way of equipping him with knowledge and skills and 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. Several activities have been envisioned for successful accomplishment of the project. As a milestone for monitoring, a final evaluation was planned in December 2012, the overall objective of which has been to review the approach and process followed, activities conducted and the key achievement obtained from the project.

The present report on the 'Final Evaluation' is being prepared and submitted by the undersigned to CUTS following a methodology decided in consultation with the organisation. The report is divided into five chapters. The 'Final Evaluation' was taken up during December 19-21, 2012, the details of which are provided in **Chapter 1: 'Introduction'**. The chapter also contains the background of Consumerism and Consumer Movement in India, the present status and challenges of consumer rights that serves as the background of GRANIRCA. The subject matter of **Chapter 2: 'Methodology'**, deals with the processes followed for collection of qualitative as well as quantitative data; and the method in which it was analysed. **Chapter 3: 'Findings'** analyses the data, and **Chapter 4** attempts to put forward some of the **'Recommendations'** that need to be considered for successful implementation of the GRANIRCA project for the remaining period. The last **Chapter 5** provides a brief **'Conclusion'** to the report.

This evaluation would not have been possible without the collective effort of the team at CUTS and a positive environment provided by CUTS. I express my heartfelt gratitude to George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS and Head of CUTS CART for inviting me to conduct evaluation, which was more a learning experience than actually an evaluation, as successfully ruling the complex maze of activities through different partners, as envisaged in the project, appearing simple apparently but complex in nature, is a challenge in itself. The team comprising Deepak Saxena, Amarjeet Singh, Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Arjun

Kant Jha, Jai Shree Soni and Abhimanyu Singh, all of them on the mission of spreading the consumer awareness, extended their absolute support in conducting the evaluation process smoothly. I would be failing in my duties if I do not extend a word of appreciation to other staff of the organisation for making my life comfortable during the three-day exercise including my stay in Jaipur.

At the outset, I must also acknowledge the good work that is being done by the partners of CUTS under GRANIRCA. I thank all the heads of the partner organisations of 12 districts and representatives from rest of districts of Rajasthan, who actively participated in discussions.

This report is dedicated to the enthusiasm, passion, zeal and courage of CUTS CART and its partner organisations. I am hopeful that the journey of GRANIRCA pilot is successful and will be extended to all the remaining districts of Rajasthan State and up-scaled not only in the state of Rajasthan but also in other parts of India.

Prof. Dr. Ashok R. Patil

Bangalore

January 31, 2013

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Background

The consumer movement in India is as old as trade and commerce itself. Even in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, there are references to the concept of protection of consumers against the exploitation by trade and industry, short weights and measurements, adulteration along with the punishment for these offences.

After independence, under the Indian Constitution, it became the state's duty to give guarantee of everyone. In this country, everyone has a right to live with human dignity free from exploitation under the Indian Constitution. This right to live with human dignity enshrined in this article derives its life breath from the directive principles of state policy. The state shall secure a social order for the promotion of welfare of the people and shall effectively work to achieve a social order in which justice, economic and political shall inform all the institutions of the national life. State has the duty to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living to improve public health and to prohibit consumption of intoxicating drinks or drugs, which are injurious to health. This is considered as a primary duty of the state. In the sense, every state has to protect the rights of the consumer and ensure the use of public utility in the best possible manner. In every nation, there are large segments of the people, who have insufficient resources to live under reasonably good conditions of health and decency. Therefore, the society in which they live has obligations to provide support and that support is not a charity to the citizen but as of a right. Therefore, they must be brought within the scope of any law, which can be envisaged for the consumer's promotion.

1.1 Rights of Consumers

The significance of the consumer movement also lies in the fact that consumers have been extended essential rights for providing them protection from being slaves to service providers. Consumers are very important in the society. The COPRA, 1986 provides for the following rights of consumers:

1.1.1 Right to Safety: Every consumer has a right to get protection against marketing of hazardous goods, which are dangerous to life and health. The right to safety is against the selling of goods, which may create health

problems or endanger the life itself. This is in relation to medicines, drugs, food and electrical goods. Consumer has the right to receive assurance from producer about the quality, reliability and performance of goods.

1.1.2 Right to Information: Every consumer has right that he should be informed about price, quality, name of manufacturer, instructions to use, manufacturing date, expiry date, etc. This information must be given on the packet or on the label of the product. Information should not be misleading.

1.1.3 Right to Choose: This right indicates that consumers must be given full liberty to select that product, which will satisfy his needs, i.e. he should be shown variety of products from which he can make a selection but should not be compelled to buy. This will encourage competitions.

1.1.4 Right to be Heard: Every consumer has a right to complaint against companies and government. As per COPRA, 1986, there are various agencies at different levels to listen and register complaints of consumers. Consumers can make complaints and can give suggestion about quality, price, packing, packaging, durability, etc. Even consumers can suggest for services provided by the companies, its policies, etc.

1.1.5 Right to Redressal: This means, consumers must have a right to receive the compensation for inferior quality of goods. When the just and fair claims are made by customers, they should be settled immediately. This right is relating to the change of product, repair of product or refund of money, etc. This right protects victimised consumers from misleading advertisements.

1.1.6 Right to Education: It means right to acquire knowledge and skills. This right is important because consumer protection is not possible without proper education and guidance. Consumer education alerts consumer while buying the products. It can be done through various media's like newspapers, magazines, television, radio, hoardings, demonstrations, etc.

1.2 Problems in the Consumer Movement in the Country

Consumer is the most neglected in the present society. A business unit cannot dare to ignore its consumers, if it wants to flourish. But even after a lot of acts and rules, a number of problems are faced by consumers. Some of the major problems faced by consumers are as follows:

- 1.2.1 Lack of Information:** The main problems faced by consumers are lack of information. The customers even do not know the sources of getting information.
- 1.2.2 Illiteracy:** Most of the consumers in urban and remote areas are illiterate and are not able to understand policies of the organisation or the government, and even do not understand uses or misuses of products.
- 1.2.3 No Fair Return:** The customer, though pay high price for goods they purchase, but many times they do not get satisfaction from the goods they have purchased.
- 1.2.4 Exploitation:** Consumers in the Indian market are exploited by the sellers. Sellers create artificial scarcity, hoarding, black marketing, high prices etc.
- 1.2.5 Adulteration:** Most of the times consumers even after paying high price, do not get quality goods. The organisation usually supplies adulterated goods for their profit maximisation.
- 1.2.6 Irregular Supply:** One of the common problems faced by consumers is an irregular supply of goods. This is because of shortage of goods. The organisations create artificial scarcity of necessary goods by hoarding these goods resulting in high prices.
- 1.2.7 Attractive Packing:** The packed goods supplied in the market, are not up to the mark. The packing is very attractive and attracts the attention of consumers. The packets may contain inferior goods thereby fooling consumers.
- 1.2.8 Disorganised Customers:** This is also one of the most common problems faced by consumers now-a-days. The customers are widely scattered and not united. As against this, producers are organised and united. Because of various reasons, it is not possible for customers to come together and fight. This results in consumer exploitation.
- 1.2.9 Misleading Advertisements:** A large section of consumers tend to get attracted by misleading ads.

1.3 Specific Problems in the Consumer Protection in Rajasthan

Along with these issues that consumers face at the macro level, consumers in the state of Rajasthan also face problems as stated under:

- 1.3.1 The State and the District Level Consumer Protection Councils (CPCs) are not fully functional.
- 1.3.2 The vacancies in the District Fora are not filled up immediately and thus, adversely affect the functioning of the Consumer Fora.
- 1.3.3 Some of the government departments, meant for the protection of the consumer interests, are not proactive in taking up issues and have hardly fulfilled the minimum targets. Lack inter-departmental coordination.
- 1.3.4 There is no separate department for legal metrology and is being monitored by Industries Department.
- 1.3.5 Some districts have only one permanent District Forum, which is grossly insufficient.
- 1.3.6 There is lack of follow up and monitoring of cases registered.
- 1.3.7 There is a lack of transparency and accountability in the departments in making proactive disclosure of their functions, schemes and action taken by them.
- 1.3.8 CONFONET has not been operational in most of the District Forums.

Against this backdrop of the macro and micro issues at the country and state level, CUTS, in partnership with the Department of Consumer Affairs of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India, implemented GRANIRCA project in 12 districts of Rajasthan.

1.4 Background

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.

To address the problem, Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS international) has partnered with the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India to implement the project entitled, 'Grassroots Reachout & Networking in Rajasthan through Consumer Action' (GRANIRCA) in 12 districts of Rajasthan.

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, would contribute towards the national interest.

1.4.1 Specific Objective

The objective of the project was to generate a more capable consumer by way of equipping him with knowledge and skills and 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.

1.4.2 Supported & Implemented

The project was implemented by CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART), a programme centre of CUTS International with financial assistance under the Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF) by the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs, Government of India.

1.4.3 Project Activities

- State Launch cum orientation of district partnering organisations at Jaipur
- Research activities include identification of NGOs, diagnostic survey of the consumer protection, needs assessment, field study, data collection, compilation and analysis of relevant consumer issues
- Public interfaces/hearings and outreach meetings on consumer issues
- District level training workshops at each of the 12 district headquarters
- State feedback roundtables to share and consolidate the learning's from various districts and build and strengthen the network
- Media sensitisation workshops in each of the 12 districts and at the state level
- Advocacy with the government agencies in identified divisions, state and Central Government
- Complaints Handling, Information and Advisory Services (CHIAS) through a dedicated cell at the district headquarters
- Publication of reports, briefing papers and newsletters and creation of a programme webpage and a collective communication device for wider outreach

1.4.4 Project Duration & Coverage

The project was for a period of three years, i.e. January 2010 to December 2012 (official ending on January 07, 2013) covering all seven divisions of Rajasthan, comprising 12

districts (88 blocks and 3327 *gram panchayats* in these 12 districts) namely Alwar, Banswara, Bundi, Chittorgarh, Churu, Dholpur, Dausa, Jalore, Jodhpur, Kota, Sikar, and Tonk.

1.4.5 Expected Outcomes

- *Empowerment*: People in 12 districts will be empowered as assertive consumers to uphold their rights and fight for justice.
- *Questioning Society*: 12 civil society organisations (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’s interests in 12 districts, which will ultimately create an enabling environment towards protecting the interest of the state.
- *Good Governance*: The programme will contribute towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (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.

1.5 Background of the Evaluation

The project concluded on January 07, 2013. As per the terms and conditions, as laid down in MoU with the Ministry, a final evaluation was conducted during December 19-21, 2012.

1.5.1 Purpose

The purpose of the final evaluation was to review the implementation of the project and examine highlights and lowlights of the project in the span of three years of implementation and suggest measures to be taken at this point of time by the implementing agency, so that the lowlights could be converted into highlights in the next phase of the project, if any and that could achieve its mission and objectives.

1.5.2 Objective and Steps of Evaluation

The overall objective of the evaluation exercise was to review the approach, process, activities conducted during the project; and arrives at certain key recommendations/suggestions, if any, required in achieving the expected outcomes. The key objective of the evaluation was to evaluate the effectiveness of activities in achieving their specified objectives as well as contribution towards overall project objectives.

1.5.3 Scope of the Evaluation

The following points defined the scope of the final evaluation.

- **Implementation of the Project:** The evaluator would undertake a detailed exercise about the implementation and execution process followed during the course of the project. The activities conducted by CUTS as well as partners, would be examined.
- **Outputs from the Project:** The evaluator will be required to undertake a detailed review of key outputs, such as synthesis reports, training manual, vernacular handouts, event reports, e-newsletter, newsletter, quality and content of web page etc. The evaluator would examine the relevance, quality, and simplicity of these documents.
- **Outcomes of the Project:** As per the objectives of the project, the evaluator would define the expected outcomes of the project activities conducted, specifying some measurable indicators for each of the outcomes. Then, a logical analysis would be undertaken comparing the expected outcomes with the achieved ones. Further, the factors responsible for poor/non achievement (if any) of the targets would also be analysed.
- **Project Management:** The issues in project management such as constitution/expertise of project team and the district partners should also be examined. The efficacy of communication and involvement of these stakeholders in key developments/events should be studied.
- **Recommendations and Suggestions:** On the basis of findings from evaluation process, the evaluator would come with key recommendations and suggestions for CUTS, partners as well as donor agency to be taken in the future course of work.

The next chapter highlights the methodology, steps followed for the evaluation and also the process of analysis of data thus collected.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

The methodology for the process was decided by the organisation in consultation with the Consultant. A detailed schedule was drawn in order to have maximum interaction with the team responsible for the implementation of the project as well as partners.

2. Process of Evaluation

Overall process of the evaluation included the following activities:

- Review of project proposals – objectives, activities, outputs, outcomes, etc.
- Review of project documents pertaining to various activities conducted as part of the project such as process documents, various publications, research activities undertaken, etc.
- Review of reports (project progress and financial)
- Review of other relevant materials & publications, such as webpage, newspaper clippings, newsletters etc.
- Formulation of measurable indicators to assess the impacts, outputs and outcomes of the project
- Meeting and discussion with the project management team, members of project advisory committee and partnering organisations
- Debriefing of main findings and recommendations with project management team at CUTS CART

2.1 Schedule of Evaluation

To cover the stated activities, considered significant from evaluation point, the schedule included:

- a. Introductory meeting with George Cheriyan and discussions on project at CART office
- b. Review of project documents/ publications
- c. Presentation on Project Activities by the project team
- d. Meetings with Project Advisory Group Member(s) & Media Representative

- e. Review of Financial Progress Report (Visit to Finance Section and Meeting with G C Jain (Assistant Director, Finance) and team
- f. Interaction and meeting with project district partners mainly on impacts/outcomes
- g. De-briefing meeting with Project Team

The following chapter on findings presents the analysis of the activities and finding as per the major activities of the evaluation.

CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS AND OBSERVATION

This chapter presents the finding on the basis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected during the process of evaluation. The source of data collection has been discussed with George Cheriyan, discussions with the project implementation team, documents review, meeting with the State Project Advisory and Resource Group, representatives of media covering the projects at different points of time, field visit and discussions with the various stakeholders and district level officials, and staff in the finance department of CUTS to understand the financial administration and if there were any critical issues regarding the financial administration.

DAY ONE: 19th December, 2012

3. Discussion with Director, CUTS and Head CUTS CART, George Cheriyan

The Consultant held discussion with the Director on the following points:

- i. The origin and development of the project
- ii. Governance structure of the project
- iii. The rationale for selection of districts
- iv. The rationale of selection of district partners

The following paragraphs present the findings as per the issues stated above.

3.1 The Origin and Development of the Project

The Consultant was briefed about the origin of the GRANIRCA project. It was initially conceived to be an inter-state project, and later was considered for a project to be implemented at the level of the State of Rajasthan, the proposal for which was submitted in June 2006. However, on the advice of the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India, this three-year project was launched on a pilot basis in the 12 districts with funding support from Consumer Welfare Fund for the period of January 2010 till December 2012. The Consultant suggested that though CUTS CART as an organisation was capable of handling such projects at up scaled levels, the Pilot Testing of the Concept did provide them with an opportunity to test the capabilities of the partner organisations and also complete the ground work and after the completion of the Pilot phase, the organisation could take up the State level project, where the 12 districts of the first phase could play a significant role in providing leadership to the project.

In the present shape of the project, GRANIRCA is of three year duration, covering 3327 *gram panchayats* in 88 blocks in 12 districts.

3.2 Governance Structure of the Project

The Consultant appreciated the fact that there was a well-defined governance structure that guided the implementation of the project in an unhindered manner. The financial support is being provided by the Consumer Welfare Fund under the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, GoI. For overall implementation and coordination at the State level, CUTS CART is the State Coordination Unit, with guidance from the Project Advisory and Resources Group (PARG) and Department of Consumer Affairs, Food and Civil Supplies, Government of Rajasthan, providing vision for the implementation at the macro level. The implementation team comprises Deepak Saxena, Arjun Kant Jha, Amarjeet Singh, Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Abhimanyu Singh, and Jai Shree under the guidance of George Cheriyan. The 12 partners, as envisaged in the Project are the backbones of the project, who have to implement the project at the District level.

3.3 The Rationale for Selection of Districts

The Consultant was informed that the 12 districts selected for the pilot phase represented all the divisions of Rajasthan. CUTS had a presence in these districts previously also and these were a judicious combination of the small and big districts. Another important consideration was that was the availability of NGO partner and whether they are active.

3.4 The Rationale of Selection of District Partners

The district partners, who were selected for the implementation of the pilot phase, shared a common concern for the cause of consumer protection, and that was the first and most important rationale for their selection. Secondly, their prior experience with the consumer activism and involvement with the cause was other rationale. Last but not the least, their prior work experience with CUTS on the consumer or governance or some other related issues was another significant rationale for the partners. However, merely being true to these rationales did not qualify for an organisation to partner with CUTS CART. They were subjected to the need-analysis and all those actually were found suitable in the need analysis, finally partnered in implementation of the project. This aspect of partner selection was found to be apt by the evaluator.

3.5 Review of Project Documents/Publications and Related Outreach Material (Printed and Electronic Form)

- 3.5.1 As a part of the project activity, there is a dedicated website www.cuts-international.org/cart/GRANIRCA/. There are several other documents published on periodic basis. Two newsletters (one e-newsletter and other in the print form) – Consumer Dialogue and Consumer in Action are being published regularly and have made significant contribution in fulfilling the objectives of consumer awareness among general masses. Both the newsletters have been published as per the schedule and it was observed that several important inputs, in terms of case studies or news items, came from the partners, and on the other hand several significant information that were published in these newsletter was being used in constructive and practical approach by the partners.
- 3.5.2 There have been number of Briefing Papers that have been published and contributed as a part of the project.
- 3.5.3 In addition to these periodicals, research reports are also being published, which is an annual publication. First such report that was published in 2010 was on the Status of Consumer Protection in Rajasthan. This publication was found to be extremely informative about the gaps in “is and ought to be” in the structure and functions of the consumer protection. One important development as an impact of the Report was that all the positions in the District Fora and State Consumer Protection Cell has recently been filled up, and it has led to speedy delivery of the judgments.
- 3.5.4 Similarly, the research activities conducted during 2011 and 2012 on ‘Status of Consumers in India’ and ‘Plight of Electricity Consumers in Rajasthan’ have also been brought out in limelight especially by media and were worth appreciated. All the three reports have been uploaded on to GRANIRCA webpage.
- 3.5.5 Occasional publications also include the bilingual Training Manual on the Consumer Protection (*Printed in English 3000 copies and Hindi 5000 copies*) majorly to be used by the partner organisations as well as training participants. It is again a very informative document and provided step-by- step information on the implementation of COPRA, 1986. The Manual also contains a brief history of the evolution of the consumerism and consumer movement.
- 3.5.6 There are several other publications such as posters, IEC material, Brochures, Activity Reports and Progress Reports, some wall magazines (not part of the project), used very innovatively in GRANIRCA. In fact, it was heartening to see the ideas taken from the handouts were taken to develop into full posters by partners.
- 3.5.7 The Advocacy Document is being brought out on specific areas of consumer awareness in the 2nd and the 3rd year. Hence, one can state that the synergy of the Consumer Right Activism in CUTS is facilitating all the projects being implemented by them. However, one would suggest that as far as possible these materials, especially reports of the study should also be available in local

language. The Consultant has been informed that the Training Manual is already being translated in Hindi, and the future Research Reports will be published in local language.

3.6 Overview of Project Activities

The discussions consisted of the activities conducted so far and their results, impact and measurable indicators. In between the presentation, the consultant raised few queries, which were responded adequately by the team.

- 3.6.1 The information on publications and documents related to project were provided to him. The consultant appreciated the fact that the website on the GRANIRCA was designed well and that it was simple and user friendly.
- 3.6.2 The highlights of the discussions were Public Interface Meetings (PIMs), level of enhanced awareness through the activities like PIMs, District Level Training Workshops (DLTWs) etc., and the increased number of consumer-related complaints, system of CHIAS and the number of consumers who have been motivated to take the complaints to consumer fora and level of improvement in service delivery system which came as a result of GRANIRCA activities etc.
- 3.6.3 In addition to these, discussions with the team were also held on issues related to district partners' role, participation of district stakeholders, measurable indicators, partners' reporting process, research methodology etc., along with the outcome of project activities and their connection with the sanctioned project.
- 3.6.4 The findings could be explained in terms of the observable qualitative indicators and quantifiable measurable indicators. As regards the former, the consultant feels that it is slow process that the qualitative changes would be evident immediately, however changes in the perspective of the people about consumer rights from *Chalta Hai* to *Hamara Hakk Hai* is a big transition.
- 3.6.5 In terms of the quantifiable indicators, the indicative figures about the increase in the number of cases disbursed or the number of cases being filed every month or number of people those who are attending the various activities such as training session at different locations, etc. are critical indicators. For example, in Kota, the number of cases has gone up from 550 to 1100. Similar was the situation in most of the districts. During this project they have organised following Activities:
 - 3 Field Research Activities
 - 100 Public Interfaces and Outreach Meetings
 - 36 District Level Training Workshops
 - 3 State Feedback Roundtables
 - 12 Districts Level Media Sensitisation Workshops
 - 02 State level Media Consultations
 - Continuous – Advocacy on Consumer Issues emerged out of Field Research

- Celebration – National Consumer Day & World Consumer Rights Day
- Publication – Reports, Briefing Papers and Newsletters
- Documentation – Quarterly Reports, Annual Progress Reports, Activities Reports etc.
- Wider Outreach – Dedicated Project Website

3.7 Capacity Building and Awareness Programmes

S. N.	Districts	PIMs	DLMWs	DLTWs
1.	Chittorgarh	(10) 560	34	187
2.	Tonk	(8) 481	40	163
3.	Kota	(8) 655	60	262
4.	Bundi	(8) 483	31	148
5.	Alwar	(10) 499	45	176
6.	Banswara	(8) 475	40	150
7.	Jodhpur	(8) 496	40	147
8.	Jalore	(8) 479	40	177
9.	Churu	(8) 415	30	136
10.	Sikar	(8) 485	30	151
11.	Dholpur	(8) 520	31	210
12.	Dausa	(8) 454	45	167
Total		(100) 6002	(12) 466	(36) 2074

3.8 Programmes at Jaipur

3.8.1 *Project Launch*

Participants = 80

3.8.2 *State Level Feedback Round Table*

In 2010, Participants-52

In 2011, Participants-57

In 2012, Participants-93

Total: 202

3.8.3 *State/District Level Media Consultation*

In 2010, Participants (State level)-51

In 2011, Participants (District level)-466

In 2012, Participants (State level)-68

Total: 585

3.9 Outreach: Publications

- 3.9.1 18 Bi-Monthly E- Newsletters (Consumer Dialogue)
- 3.9.2 12 Quarterly Newsletters (Consumer in Action) 14000 copies printed
- 3.9.3 8 Briefing Papers (8000 copies printed)
- 3.9.4 3 Research Documents (2000 copies printed)
- 3.9.5 2 Advocacy Documents (1500 copies printed)
- 3.9.6 Project Brochures
- 3.9.7 Training Manual (*Printed in English* (3000 copies) *and Hindi* 5000 copies)
- 3.9.8 Activity Reports of each event
- 3.9.9 Annual Progress Reports and Quarterly Progress Reports
- 3.9.10 800 Posters (4 type X 200 each)
- 3.9.11 12000 Stickers (6 type x 2000 each)
- 3.9.12 Handouts in Hindi

3.10 Briefing Papers

- 3.10.1 Access to Redressal Mechanism in Electricity Services in Rajasthan: *A Boon or Bane*
- 3.10.2 Access to Medicines: *Challenges and the Way Forward*
- 3.10.3 Insurance Services: *Challenges and Opportunities before Consumers*
- 3.10.4 Remittances: Travails of the Migrants
- 3.10.5 Medical Services & Consumer Protection Act
- 3.10.6 Consumer Participation in Standardisation Process
- 3.10.7 Consumer Protection in the Financial Sector: *Challenges and the Way Forward*
- 3.10.8 Advertising: *Challenges and Future Prospects*

3.11 Newsletters

Publications of Consumer Dialogue e-newsletters and Consumer in Action consisted of news related to consumer issues, related matters, project updates etc.

3.12 Annual Progress Reports

Publications of Annual Reports detailing project updates, total activities done etc. during the financial reporting year.

3.13 Additional Activities

- Training of Trainers (July 27-28, 2010)
- Partners Orientation every year

- Participation and representation in government and other organization's meeting/workshops etc.
- Complaint's Handling, Information and Advisory Services in all 12 districts

3.14 Highlights/Outcomes of the Project

- The District Consumer Protection Councils (DCPCs) were constituted in all the 33 district of Rajasthan in the year 2010 by the state government.
- Good representation of various link departments and all project activities.
- Increased and more informed reporting of consumer issues by media.
- State government establishment of 2 more District Fora at Jaipur and one more in Jodhpur district.
- Process for filing up the vacant position at district fora began. In some districts, persons with required legal experience were appointed as presidents at district forums instead of long practice of appointing only retired district judges.
- CUTS re-nomination in CCPC.
- Build capacity of 12 partners CSO to take on consumer issues in their respective districts.
- Constitution of district level PDS vigilance committees in all 33 districts.
- Establishment of State Consumer Helpline 1800-180-60-30.
- Initiated establishment of CHIAS at 12 project districts.
- Formed network core group at project districts to sustain project objectives after the project tenure.

3.15 Key Advocacy Issues Emerged

- Redressal period as enshrined in the Act need to be strictly maintained.
- Vacancies of both members and presidents should be filled on routine course.
- Better infrastructure for the district consumer forums.
- A separate Consumer Directorate. Activation of State CWF.
- Well-equipped product testing laboratories should be established at district level.
- District Fora and State Commission proceedings should be made online.
- Lawyer's presence should be discouraged in consumer fora, if not restricted.
- Better to appoint persons with required legal experience as President instead of retired judges.

- Members should be appointed without political influences Constitution of State Consumer Protection Council.
- DCPCs should be made functional.
- Need better coordination among departments working on consumer protection.
- Lack of staff in some departments like legal metrology, drug control, food inspection etc.
- There should be separate department for legal metrology, instead of putting it under Industrial Department.
- The schemes of consumer clubs, giving awards to consumer activists and financial assistance to consumer organisations are not carried out in true spirit.

As regards the Teams' representation in the external Networking and Advocacy efforts, it was reported that most of the team members have participated in most of the conferences, seminars, or advocacy meetings at the national and international levels. All these richness that have emerged are being utilised in the implementation of GRANIRCA.

3.16 Luncheon Meeting with Project Advisory and Resource Group Members

3.16.1 I met Vimal Jain, Senior Correspondent in *Rajasthan Patrika* and P N Bhandari, retd IAS and Electricity Expert and discussed the project outcomes/impacts so far. Both are members of the Project Advisory and Resource Group (PARG) and CUTS

3.16.2 CART's Advisory Committee actively participated in some project activities. It has been found that PARG extended support and vision for the implementation of the project.

3.17 Review of Financial Progress Report

3.17.1 A meeting with the Finance Section of CUTS was inevitable in the course of Evaluation. Hence a meeting with the Assistant Director, Finance and Administration was held to understand their perspective on the Financial Management of the Project.

3.17.2 It was found that as such there were no major problems faced in the financial management of the project as was in accordance with the processes laid down by the CWF financial management system. However, it was reported that sometimes, the

demand from the documentation gets repeated with every sanction, which leads to repetition in the documentation process.

3.17.3 It was also reported that Ministry sometimes asks for furnishing the financial details at the last hour, which gets cumbersome. Though, not a major concern, still this aspect of streamlining the financial reporting needs to be looked into.

DAY TWO: 20th December, 2012

3.18 GRANIRCA State Level Feedback Roundtable Meeting

3.18.1 Participation as Speaker and Observer

There was a good participation from all stakeholders including government, non-government, representatives from all 33 districts of Rajasthan, judiciary, legislative and media. I was also there as one of the key speaker and found that the programme was able to fulfill and serve the purpose for which it was organised as it had reasonably a good attendance and the overall discussions and speeches were up to the mark and on the track.

3.19 Interaction and Meeting with Project District Partners mainly on Outcomes/Impacts from the Project

3.19.1 On December 20, 2012, interaction and meeting with 12 project district partners mainly on the impacts/outcome of this project was held. Even other district representatives also attended the meeting. The meeting started with the introductory remarks by George Cheriyan Director, CUTS CART in which he provided a brief overview of the GRANIRCA project. Then evaluator asked district partners to share their views regarding the impact that the project has brought in their respective districts, problems faced by them during the project implementation, some successful case stories and suggestions for future. The details have been summarised below:

1. **CUTS Centre for Human Development (CUTS CHD), Chittorgarh:**
Madan Giri Goswami of CHD said that since the inception of CHD, they were dealing with consumer complaints in 11 blocks of Chittorgarh. Earlier, there were just two-three complaints in a quarter but after the implementation of the project, people have become aware towards their rights and now they are coming with more than 25 complaints in a quarter. They have formed a small consumer activists group, which is working voluntarily in their own respective block. CHD Staff is having proper liasoning with the District Office and District Supply

Officer is regularly attending consumer awareness workshops and programmes and is providing help to the people to fight against injustice.

The only problem he faced was the negative attitude of the Electricity Department during the initial period of the project. But when they were invited to the workshop, their attitude gradually changed and now they are willing to help CHD in every possible way and solving the case of aggrieved consumers.

2. **Native Institute of Desert Awareness and Knowledge Society (NIDAN), Jodhpur: Tejveer Choudhary of NIDAN** expressed his satisfaction after partnering with CUTS in this project. He said that the organisation was conducting consumer awareness programmes since many years and also celebrating World Consumer Rights Day (March 24) and National Consumer Rights Day (December 15) every year to generate awareness among consumers towards their rights. He also mentioned that after association with CUTS the organisation has established a proper relationship with the administration and the villagers have got a chance to interact with the President and Members of District Consumer Forum and make complaints towards their problems during PIMs and DLTWs – one of the activities in the Project.

The only problem he faced was the gap between the District Consumer Forum and the organisation to make them understand the problems of the people, but now the staff of forums are attending workshops and appreciating the work done by NIDAAN.

3. **K B Social Welfare Society, Dausa: Kamlesh Kumar Bohra** said that the organisation is working in five blocks of Dausa district and more than 150 people were trained and are working as activists in their respective blocks and villages. He personally receives more than four complaints per month and tries to solve them. The organisation has also started a Complaint Cell which receives more than 15 complaints per month. He had also deployed one person in each of the five blocks to attend and resolve the complaint of the complainant of the blocks.
4. **Richmond Kala Sahitya and Shikshan Society, Bundi: Vikas Panchal** one of the core group member said that they are making people aware through puppet show in the regional language. People are becoming more aware and fighting for their rights.
5. **Samajik Vikas Samiti, Dholpur: Rakesh Kumar Parmar** said that the awareness level of the people has increased and they have become aware of their rights. He had also been awarded by the district administration for his work done for the rights of consumers. The only problem which he faced till now is lack of support from the President of the District Consumer Forum.

6. **SANKALP Sansthan, Jalore: Govind Ram Taylor** said that the organisation is working in all seven blocks of Jalore district and mentioned that people actively participated in the PIMs and DLTWs and officials have also become sensitive towards the problems faced by the common people and trying to resolve issues and providing relief to the aggrieved consumers. They are fighting for their rights and it is the continuous effort of the people that the Public Distribution Shop (PDS) have started mentioning the price of products in shops providing relief to the common people.
7. **MMM Sikshan Evam Jan Seva Sansthan, Tonk: Shanti Nama** said that during the project period PIMs were conducted at the district, block and tehsil level and people are becoming aware and now they are fighting for their rights. They received more than 10 complaints per month. Through knowledge dissemination workshop more than 2500 people are made aware.
8. **Vagad Vikas Sansthan, Banswara: Poonam Gupta** said that the organisation is working in eight blocks of the district with more focus on rural areas. People are becoming more aware through street play and puppet show in regional language.
9. **Jila Upbhokta Jagaran Samiti, Sikar: J D Saini** said that awareness level programme is being conducted at village and district level during National Consumers Day and World Consumer Rights Day in various schools and colleges to make the students aware of their rights and duties. Various government officers participated in the programme and imparted knowledge to youth. Apart from this many hoardings, posters and banners are being placed at different public places like bus station and railway station to disseminate information to the common people and make them aware of their rights. Now people are becoming aware and fighting for their rights. Due to the efforts of the organisation and recognising the work done by organisation government has deputed two members of the organisation in district forum as a member.
10. **Oxford Shikshan Prashikshan Vikas Sansthan, Kota: Anwar Ahmed Khan** informed that the organisation is working in seven blocks of the district and imparting knowledge to the common people. Sharing his experience he said that despite people being educated they do not possess knowledge about COPRA. During the three-year project, the organisation imparted knowledge to the people through different training programmes and activities.
11. **Shubham Mahila Prashikshan Sansthan, Alwar: Kishan Snehi** of the organisation said that people of Alwar were not aware of consumer rights, so they were cheated by the sellers. But, after the activities and workshops they became aware and now they are fighting for their rights and injustice done to

them. The organisation represents at various platforms for consumer protection. The President of District Consumer Forum cooperates in every possible way and pay attention to any grievance register by consumers.

12. Manav Pragati Sansthan, Churu: Santosh Sharma of the organisation said that various training programmes were being conducted at district and block levels to equip the people with their rights and fight for justice.

3.20 Overall Observation and Findings

3.20.1 There are a set of expected outcomes as stated in the project document which are as follows:

- *Empowerment:* People in 12 districts will be empowered as assertive consumers to uphold their rights and fight for justice.
- *Questioning Society:* 12 civil society organisations (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’s interests in 12 districts, which will ultimately create an enabling environment towards protecting the interest of the state.
- *Good Governance:* The programme will contribute towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (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.

3.20.2 The following could summarise the **Major Outcome/Impact** of the project pertaining to the envisaged outcomes:

- The project has been able to build capacities of 12 CSOs who are now capable of playing the role of a watchdog in respective districts.
- There is an empowered consumer which is assertive to uphold their rights and fights. This has become a possibility due to the District level Training Workshops

and Public Interface Meetings. There have been a total of 4358 direct beneficiaries as against the target of 2360.

- Positive steps have been taken by the State Government and all the vacant positions have been filled in the State Commission as well as the District Forum. Additionally, the DCPC has also been constituted in all the districts of the state.
- As per the suggestion of the project, the State Department has started monthly meeting with the VCOs, and the department has also recommended the name of CUTS for CCPC.
- The project has helped increasing grievance redressal through CHIAS at the district and state levels (three year's complaints chart can be put as supporting). Increase in number of complaints in District Fora (with substantial proof of reports being received by Arjun Kant Jha)

Advocacy issues put in the Advocacy Documents, if implemented religiously, and then a drastic change will be seen.

3.20.3 Problems Encountered

The Consultant, through the discussion with the Director, the Implementation Team and the CSOs encountered following problems:

- There is a lack of budget in certain heads such as DLTWs, PIMs and the honorarium to be paid to district partners. The lack of budget is especially critical as in most of the cases, the number of activities have already been surpassed. The need to have more activities has been felt by CSOs, as these activities have direct qualitative as well as quantitative impacts and outcomes.
- Sometimes, there has been lack of support from some of the officials in getting required information and conducting various activities.
- It was found that there have been too many activities and as a result, the delay in the accomplishment of activities could be clearly seen. Some of the district partners have found it difficult to mobilise local officials and consumer in the initial phase of the Project; however they are confident that after sometime, they will be supported by officials.

DAY THREE: December 21, 2012

3.21 Debriefing with Project Team

On day 3rd, I met with project team for a debriefing session. During discussion evaluator made following observations:

1. State government and corporates should provide financial support for awareness programme.
2. More coordination is needed between NGOs, Consumer Protection Council, Consumer Protection Forum and Ministry of Consumer Affairs in handling consumer protection.
3. Budget in this project was not sufficient. Hence, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Government of India and Government of Rajasthan while extending similar type of projects to other districts of Rajasthan State should consider reasonable financial assistance to district partners.
4. Web page content should be more consumer-friendly in simple language and layman should get all the information from GRANIRCA web page free of cost.
5. Certificates should be given to all 12 district partners by recognising their valuable work in consumer protection.

3.22 Meeting with Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS

Pradeep S Mehta narrated how CUTS International developed at this stage. He also discussed current consumer issues in India and also at the international level. He provided research publications of CUTS which are very qualitative, resourceful for academicians, judges and policymakers. For an evaluator it was very memorable, valuable, qualitative time spending during three days with CUTS International, Jaipur.

CHAPTER 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 There are two important surveys related to consumer awareness in Rajasthan State. According to GRANIRCA project survey “Status of Consumers in Rajasthan 2011”, after 25 year of the enactment of the COPRA, 1986 in the country, 63 percent respondents of Rajasthan have not heard about the Act meant for common consumers. In rural Rajasthan, 35 percent respondents were unaware of their rights as a consumer and 26 percent knew these partially. 42 percent expressed their unawareness about their responsibilities as a consumer and only 21 percent knew these partially. Rest were totally ignorant about what all should they do as a responsible consumer. According to CUTS International, another national survey “State of the Indian Consumer 2012” done under ConsumersUp project, the major finding is that even after 25 years of COPRA, in India only 20 percent consumers know about the COPRA and who has heard about consumer rights is just 42 percent. In this survey, Rajasthan State has got 18th place on Consumer Awareness Index.
- 4.2. The evaluator also observed the same findings by looking at all documentations as well as by interacting with 12 district representatives of Rajasthan under this project.
- 4.3. Now, the project has been completed, and the impacts and the outcomes, as has been observed and recorded, indicate a successful completion of the same. However, as an external actor, the following recommendations can be put forth by the consultant. It is desired that these are implemented for the success and sustainability of the Project. These are as follows:
- 4.3.1 There is need of extending this project to other districts of Rajasthan. The present project was a pilot extended to 12 districts only, which is not even 50 percent of the total districts of the state.
- 4.3.2 For other states, while doing same projects, must include and replicate main issues and key findings aroused out from project like ConsumerUp implemented by CUTS recently and the recommendations from the document ‘The State of Indian Consumer 2012’ published during the project.

- 4.3.3 Partners need constant nurturing and encouragement. This could be done through inserting success stories column in the newsletter. For that, it is important that the period reporting format has space to write success stories, which need to be published for wider reading through e-newsletter and newsletter.
- 4.3.4 The PIMs, DLTWs and other consumer awareness workshops, which were conducted during the project period should move to remote areas of the Rajasthan as well.
- 4.3.5 Formation of forums or special benches of district forums at the block level, so that it can be approachable and accessible to the rural people, who reside very far from the district headquarters.
- 4.3.6 Some informal complaints handling mechanism should be developed at block level.
- 4.3.7 Constitution of Consumer Protection Force at *Panchayat* and Block level.
- 4.3.8 DCPC should organise one meeting in each district every year.
- 4.3.9 Ensure participation of youth in District Level Consumer Council.
- 4.3.10 Proper training to youth on consumer rights and protection.
- 4.3.11 Creating dialogues/discussions with shop owners at district/block level to make them aware of their duties.
- 4.3.12 One member of District Consumer Forum should be appointed from the NGO working actively on consumer rights.
- 4.3.13 Support should be considered to the core groups, which were formed during DLTWs to make them more active and ensure their regular and constant involvement.
- 4.3.14 Regular reading materials should be provided to make consumers more updated.
- 4.3.15 Separate activities for women to generate awareness among them since they are considered as most cheated.
- 4.3.16 State government and corporates should provide financial support for awareness programme.
- 4.3.17 More coordination is needed between NGOs, Consumer Protection Council, Consumer Protection Forum and Ministry of Consumer Affairs in handling consumer protection.
- 4.3.18 Budget in this project was not practically sufficient. Hence in Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Govt. of India and Govt. of Rajasthan while extending similar

type of projects to other districts of Rajasthan State should considering reasonable financial assistance to district partners.

4.3.19 Web page content should be more consumer friendly in simple language and layman should get all the information from GRANIRCA web page free of cost.

4.3.20 Certificates should be given to all 12 district partners by recognising their valuable work in consumer protection.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The biggest challenges before Rajasthan is the lack of awareness on consumer protection laws and making the three-tier quasi-judicial consumer grievance redress forums accessible and workable for rural consumers and extending it below the district level. And 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 A proper competition policy need to be in place, so that there is strict regulatory mechanism and lesser instances of consumers being cheated. The projects are created, implemented and an impact is felt. 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 setting up *Good Governance* so that a contribution can be made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the state level can be accomplished.
- 5.4 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 through out during the three year's period have the potential of being the resource persons in the up-scaled phase of the project.
- 5.5 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.