

Registration no TRAI/CO/NGO/17/2014-CA dated March 3, 2014. Later renewed for two more years vide letter no. 321-1/2015-CA/172 dated renewal of registration on July 21, 2020 with effect from March 31, 2020. (Up to December 31, 2021). CUTS has applied for renewal for another term through application vide letter no. C.11/9763 dated December 22, 2021.

### **1. CUTS Intervention in Telecom Sector:**

- Serving as 'Consumer Advocacy Group' with TRAI since 2001 (Ref: TRAI/CAG/17/2014-CA)
- CUTS have been a member in the *Committee for Utilization of Telecommunication Consumers Education and Protection Fund* (CUTCEF) of TRAI during 2011-12.
- Have been instrumental in organizing many Telecom Education Workshops with the assistance of TRAI in between the period 2010 to 2012 under the financial support of CUTS-CEF.
- Have been part of consultations/meetings organised by TRAI and several open houses organised by telecom service providers.
- Served/serving as member appellate authority with various service providers like BSNL, Aircel, MTS, Tata Docomo. Airtel and Vodafone Idea Limited.

#### **1.1 Past Studies by CUTS**

- Provided comments on New Broadcasting and Cable Services Framework on December 26, 2018.
- The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019 was introduced in Lok Sabha on December 11, 2019. Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) Prepared a Bill Blow-Up of the same. It is accessible at <https://bit.ly/3aPaps8>
- Status of e-Commerce in India (SECI)  
More details at: <https://cuts-ccier.org/seci/>
- Understanding Consumers' Perspective on Encryption  
<https://cuts-ccier.org/understanding-consumers-perspective-on-encryption/>
- Data Privacy and User Welfare in India: User Perception Analysis  
<https://cuts-ccier.org/cdpp/>
- Project Launch Meeting "Consumer Broadband Labels: For Greater Transparency & Informed Consumers  
<https://cuts-ccier.org/project-launch-meeting-consumer-broadband-labels-for-greater-transparency-informed-consumers/>

### **2. CUTS Advocacy for Fixing Phone Rights of Telecom Consumers is Based on:**

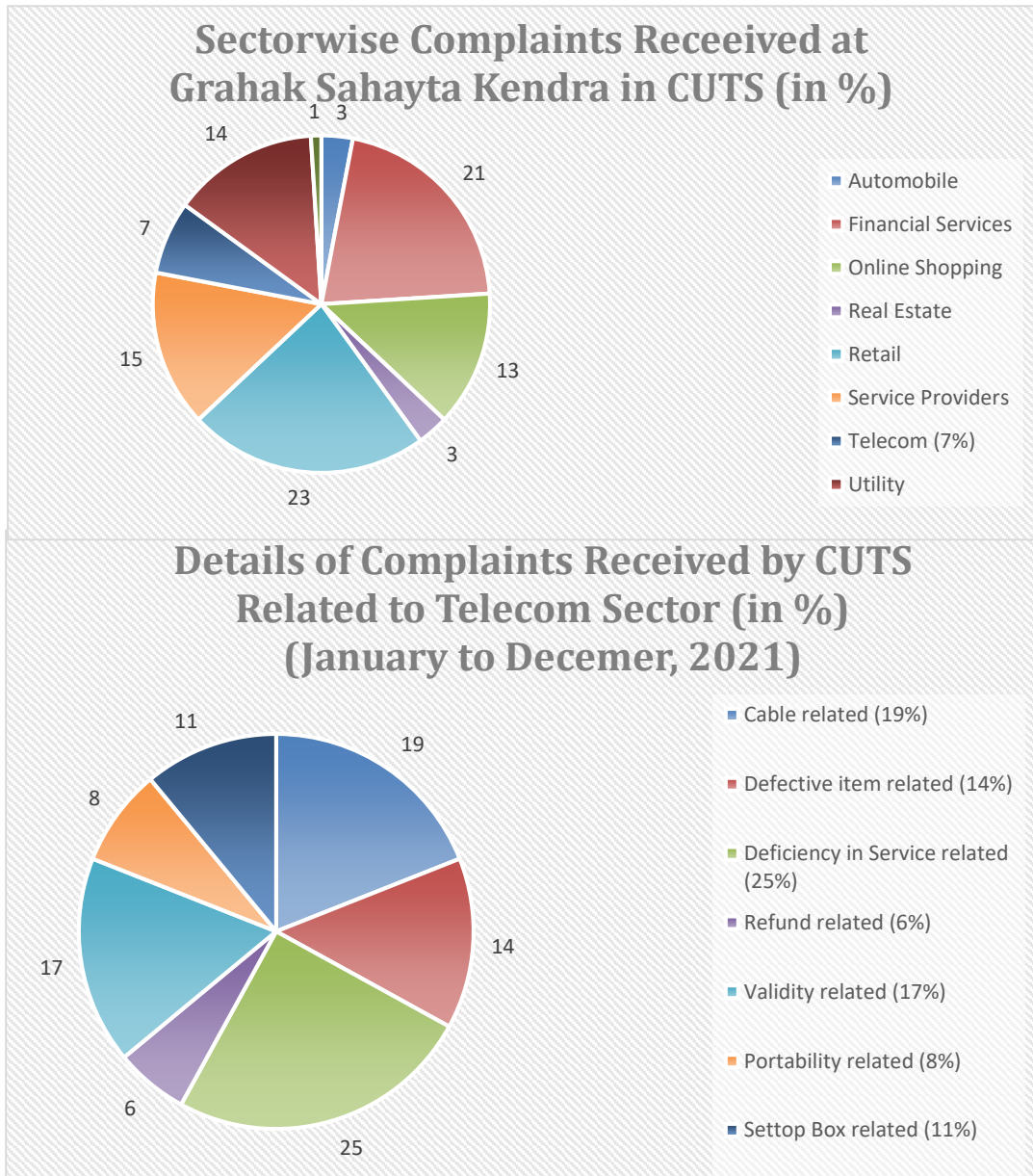
- Fair contracts explained in clear, complete and accessible language.
- Consumers to receive the service they have been promised.
- Fair and transparent billing.
- Consumers to have power over their own information.
- Phone companies to listen and respond to consumer complaints.

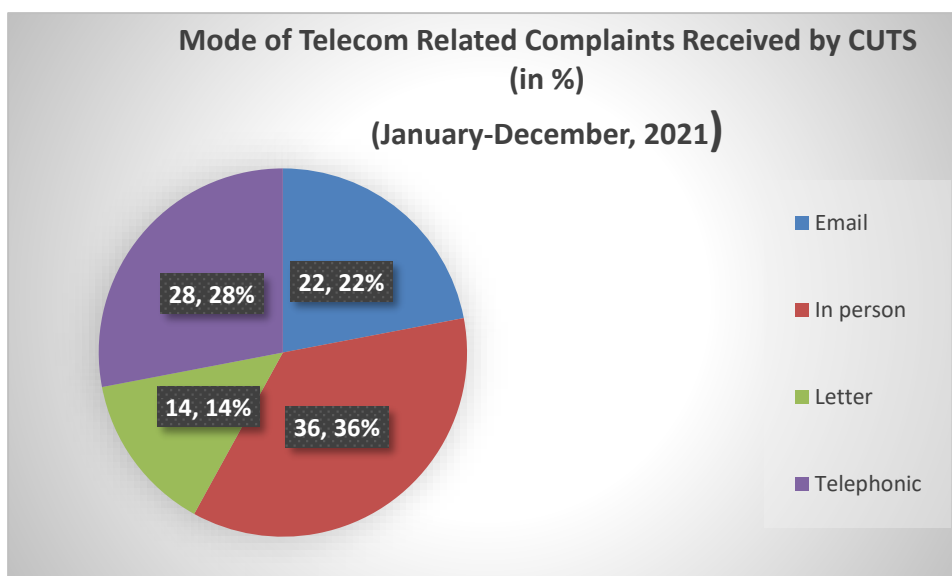
### **3. Telecom Complaints Handled by CUTS during the Reporting Period:**

Apart from participating in various consumer awareness programmes in the telecom sector, it has been continuously providing its assistance to consumers in handling consumer complaints. During the reporting period of one year i.e. January, 2020- November, 2020, complaint handling was done under the name of Consumer Support Centre. Consumer Support Centre is providing information & handling consumer complaints against all the

sellers and service providers. The complaints on telecom issues specifically were mainly related to:

- Service complaints
- Billing/metering complaints
- New connection activation
- Termination of service related complaints
- The details of complaints and advisories as shown in the below charts:





#### 4. Other Activities on Telecom Issues during the Reporting Period

- There has been active participation of CUTS in various consumer awareness programmes organized by TRAI during last one year. Since January, 2020 to November, 2020, CUTS has participated in several online Customer Outreach Programmes organized by TRAI in different parts of Rajasthan on various occasions.
- Apart from participation in Customer Outreach Programmes organized by TRAI, CUTS has been regularly involved with consumer awareness activities organized by various Telecom Service Providers (TSPs).

#### 5. Representation by CUTS at Open Houses/TRAI Outreach Programmes and Other Workshops during the Reporting Period

- Amit Babu, Programme Associate, CUTS attended online COP organised by TRAI on January 12, 2021 to create awareness among Telecom Consumers and Stakeholders for Gujarat Service Area and also webinar on Data Privacy, Safety and Security organized by TRAI, Bhopal on January 23, 2021.
- Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director & Amit Babu, Programme Associate, CUTS attended the online event “CSC Bridging the Digital Divide in Rural Areas” on March 4, 2021 conducted by TRAI, Jaipur.
- CUTS Team attended online Interaction with CAGs on June 17, 2021 organized by TRAI, Jaipur.
- Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS along with Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Programme Officer, CUTS & Amit Babu, Programme Associate, CUTS attended the Online Interaction with CAGs on July 6, 2021 organized by TRAI, Jaipur.
- Amit Babu, Programme Associate, CUTS / Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Programme Officer, CUTS attended an Online Consumer Outreach Program ‘CSC Bridging the Digital Divide in Rural Areas’ on August 5, 2021 organised by TRAI, Bhopal.
- Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS, Amit Babu, Programme Associate, CUTS, Pratibha Jain, Programme Associate, CUTS along with Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Programme Officer, CUTS attended an Online Consumer Outreach Program of Gujarat on August 13, 2021 organized by TRAI Regional Office, Jaipur.
- Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS attended a BSNL Open House organized by CGMT Rajasthan on August 24, 2021.

- Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS and Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Programme Officer, CUTS attended an Online Consumer Outreach Program of Punjab on September 29, 2021 organized by TRAI, Jaipur.
- Pratibha Jain, Programme Associate, CUTS attended TRAI RO Jaipur Online COP for Punjab Service Area on September 29, 2021 organized by TRAI, Jaipur.
- Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director along with Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Programme Officer, CUTS attended an Online Consumer Outreach Program of Madhya Pradesh on September 30, 2021 organized by TRAI, Bhopal.
- Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS attended a virtual meeting on 'Strategy for 5G and 5Gi for Department of Telecom on October 22, 2021 organised by CMAI Association of India.
- Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS attended an online COP organized by organized by TRAI, Jaipur on October 27, 2021.
- Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS attended e-Consumer Education Workshop (e-CEW) on October 28, 2021 organised by BSNL, Jaipur.
- Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS & Amit Babu, Programme Associate, CUTS attended a special lecture on 'AI (Artificial Intelligence) and ML (Machine Learning): An Introduction' by Prof. Dr. Priyadarshi Patni, Director, Faculty of Computer Science, L M College of Science & Technology, Jodhpur as part of COP session on October 29, 2021 organised by TRAI, Jaipur.
- Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS attended a webinar on 'Cloud Computing- Demystified' organized by organized by TRAI, Jaipur on November 18, 2021.

## 6. Role as a Member in Appellate Authorities

CUTS has been receiving appeals from Vodafone-Idea and Airtel on monthly and quarterly basis from the two operators, which after getting it verified from the customers directly by our team are approved, otherwise, are sent back to operators for further action on these. Hit badly by pandemic, in year 2020, CUTS has received only four appeals, all from Airtel, which have been approved.

## 7. Issues Emerged from Open Houses/Workshops:

- Customer Care executives must be versed with the appeal process under the complaint handling process.
- Nuisance of call drop needs to be treated.
- Customer care should be made more friendly and accessible.
- Value added services, unsolicited calls/SMSs, tariffs, mobile number portability, DND, quality of service standards are few irretentive issues among consumers.
- Deduction/charges for VAS without consent or proper explanation.
- Proper billing of internet data charges with improved network services.
- Confusion regarding telecom dispute jurisdiction by consumer fora.
- More events like open houses should be conducted at grassroots to make consumer aware by service providers/regulator.

## 8. GSK Alerts

CUTS publishes and circulate e-newsletter by the name GSK Alert, which is a compilation of successful cases solved by **Grahak Sahayta Kendra (GSK)** over the period of one year. In the year 2021, four issues of GSK Alert were released and circulated. The relevant link is:

<https://cuts-cart.org/consumer-care-centre-grahak-sahayta-kendra/>

## 9. Some Successful Cases Solved

- Madhu Sudan Upadhyay, resident of Jaliya-II, Panchayat Samiti Masuda, Ajmer lodged his complaint by letter that he had purchased a mobile of Samsung company from Giriraj Communications, Beawar Road, Vijay Nagar, Ajmer. After two months, the mobile had started creating a problem and as such was not functioning properly. Upadhyay contacted with the above dealer, but to no redressal as the dealer did not cooperate him. Then after a lot of harassment, the aggrieved consumer lodged his complaint with GSK, CUTS, where the concern person in GSK talked directly with the company's manager, who after a little time resolved the complaint to the satisfaction of aggrieved consumer.
- Ramavatar Mali, resident of Ghat ki Guni, Agra Road, Jaipur lodged his complaint over phone against Airtel DTH that he had purchased monthly prepaid plan of Rs. 399/-. But, only after 20 days, he started receiving message that the prepaid plan of Rs. 399/- has been expired. He was surprised that how could the plan of 28 days get expired suddenly in less than ten days. He contacted over phone on helpline number of the company, but to no satisfactory response, then after a lot of harassment, the aggrieved consumer was compelled to come to GSK, where the GSK counsellor took up the matter and talked over phone with concerned officer with an introduction of GSK. The concerned officer committed that it had happened due to mistake and later the plan for 28 days was restored.
- Anand Rao Kalla lodged his complaint by email against BSNL regarding delay in doing a portability of his number to another telecom company despite after 15 days of request. He contacted with the concerned officer in this regard, but only assurance was given by the company and to no respite. Later, the aggrieved consumer came to GSK, where the counsellor talked over the phone with concerned person of the office of BSNL. Later, the problem of portability got solved within next two working days.