

## About CART

Established in 1983 as a small voluntary group of concerned citizens, Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) expanded its activities and CUTS CART was set up in 1996 as a programme centre to pursue the cause of common consumers, initially being undertaken by CUTS as the mandate.

The programmes of the Centre are primarily aimed at generating awareness, creating a more responsible society and encouraging changes at the policy level by advocating with the government machinery and sensitising it to the issues of concern of the common man. The Centre has spearheaded several campaigns and pioneered consumer empowerment.

## INSIDE

- Projects and Programmes
- Representations
- Visits
- CART in Media



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Also at Delhi, Calcutta and Chittorgarh (India); Lusaka (Zambia); Nairobi (Kenya); Accra (Ghana); Hanoi (Vietnam); Geneva (Switzerland); and Washington DC (USA).

## World Consumer Rights Day, 2019

The theme of World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) for the year 2019 is 'Trusted Smart Products'. Smart technology is a growing global phenomenon which will fundamentally change the nature of many consumer products and services. Understanding these kind of emerging digital issues means anticipate challenges and advocate for consumers wherever we are.

WCRD is an opportunity to highlight what consumers want and need from a connected world and put them at the heart of the development of these digital products and services. 90 percent of consumers are concerned about privacy breach in the form of leaking their personal data while using smart devices. 96 percent of consumers are using smart products; it has the

highest usage in comparison to other smart products. 81 percent consumers believe that smart products used by them are affordable, whereas only six percent have applied for a loan to buy them.

75 percent of consumers hesitate in sharing their personal data on smart phones and only 51 percent read terms and conditions before allowing smart device to access personal data. Despite all concerns amongst consumers, 87 percent of them are ready to adopt more smart products in



their daily life and believe that these are more useful and comfortable in comparison to ordinary ones. These were the findings of the survey conducted by CUTS on the eve of WCRD which is observed on March 15 all over the world. CUTS organised a half-day event to commemorate this day at CUTS Conference Hall, Jaipur on the theme of 'Trusted Smart Products'.

Bhavana Sharma, Adviser, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) stated that regulators need to see that smart products must be affordable and designed in such a manner that they can protect the privacy of consumers. Further, she focussed on the concept of privacy by design and also said that regulators need to work more towards the transparency in future.

Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS in his opening address laid stress on e-commerce and protection of consumer rights in relation to the usage of smart phones and other gadgets.

George Cherian, Director, CUTS showed his concern towards the rights of consumers and issues faced, while using smart products that are affordability, data and privacy security and transparency. He further added that currently there are 23.1 billion connected devices installed globally and the figure is expected to be tripled by 2025.

Abhishek Khandal, Assistant Manager, Vodafone-Idea Ltd. urged consumers to be prepared and smart, while using these smart products and allowing access to their personal data as there are more chances of leakage of information by that means.

Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS moderated the whole session. Representatives from organisations working on consumer rights, service providers from various e-platforms, telecom service providers, legal experts on consumer rights participated.

## Dismantle Fertiliser Subsidy to Promote Organic Farming in India

**T**he need of hour is to get back to the Indian traditional organic farming in the interest of the coming generations" said L N Kumawat, Additional Director, Department of Agriculture, Government of Rajasthan in the State Level Stakeholder's Consultation Meeting' organised under the project entitled, 'Promoting Organic Consumption in Rajasthan (Phase II) at Jaipur on March 01, 2019.

"There is a need to dismantle the existing chemical fertiliser subsidy structure that supports the indiscriminate use of fertilisers and pesticides as agricultural inputs, to promote organic farming in the country", said George Cherian, Director, CUTS International, Jaipur while delivering the opening address.

As of now India accounts for only 2.59 percent (1.5 million hectares) of the total organic cultivation of 57.8 million hectares. Fertiliser subsidies are presently the second highest subsidy provided by the Government of India, after food subsidy. The fertiliser subsidy is 2.64 lakh crore in the budget for 2019-20, presented in the Parliament on February 01, 2019. Such subsidies can be diverted to promote organic farming and provide farmers with organic inputs, such as organic manure, pesticides, establishment of organic supply chains and storage facilities.

As per the present trend, India needs 45 million tonnes of fertiliser by 2025 to achieve the target of 300 million tonnes of food grain production. The 100 percent organic state of Sikkim is a typical example. By decreasing its subsidy on chemical fertilisers by 10 percent every year, the State of Sikkim banned chemical fertiliser completely in 2014.

In addition, the excessive use of pesticides is having a deteriorating effect on the health of human and wildlife. Hence, a Pesticide Development and Regulation Authority also need to be created to regulate the manufacturing, import and sale of pesticides in the country.

Another key speaker V S Yadav, Director, Rajasthan Agriculture Research Institute stated that sufficient inputs will be available if manure is used effectively and efficiently in the farming process. He further said that organic techniques should be used to get back the fertility of land with high production.

During the technical session, S R Singh, Deputy Director, National Institute of Agriculture Marketing; AK Gupta, Dean S.K.N College of Agri-business Management Jobner; and Sandeep Bhargava, CEO, Onecert International Pvt. Ltd provided their suggestions on the challenges and future prospects of organic farming in Rajasthan.

Deepak Saxena, Deputy Director, CUTS International moderated this session. Two schools were awarded as 'Best Organic Gardens'. Various officials from the Department of Agriculture and Agricultural Research Institute, Durgapura, along with civil society organisations and non-governmental organisation on organic farming participated.



## Global Road Safety Partnership

**G**eorge Cherian and Satyapal Singh attended the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) Partners meeting at New Delhi on February 25-27, 2019. Singh delivered a presentation on the progress of the Road Safety Project from September 2018-February 2019 also attended the panel on suggesting national and state level strategies.

Cherian participated in discussions and shared his views. CUTS was part of the Working Group on 'National Road Safety Bill', to be presented to the new government. Based on discussions, CUTS work plan was also revised for the present phase.

Cherian also had one-to-one meetings with Taifur Rahman, GRSP; Mena-El-Turky, Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI), Washington DC; and Nalin Sinha, GHAI, New Delhi about the implementation of present phase of activities (ending on September 30, 2019) and utilisation of funds, and also about the new concept note submitted to commence the new phase of activities from October 01, 2019.

## Exposure Visit to Earth University

Rajdeep Pareek along with ProOrganic district partners visited Earth University at Dehradun on March 25-26, 2019. The team visited Navdhanya Biodiversity Farm where they have grown 221 varieties of paddy. The team interacted with J P Khali, Farm



Manager; Vinod Bhatt, Agronomist; and Rawat, Plant Breeder. They saw community seed bank, where seeds of biodiversity of mountain ecosystem were preserved.

On March 26, 2019, the team visited one community seed bank at Bhatwadi village in Jaunpur district of Uttrakhand facilitated by Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra.

## Road Safety Evening Chaupal

Madhu Sudan Sharma and Satyapal Singh participated and assisted CHD team to organise Road Safety Evening *Chaupal* at Eral Village in Chittorgarh block on March 26, 2019.

The *Chaupal* was well attended by local villagers of Eral and nearby villages. More than 250 villagers participated along with district level officials. Jagdish Prasad Chawariya, Assistant Director, Social Justice & Empowerment Department; Rishikesh Meena, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Chittorgarh; Traffic Police representatives; V S Tanwar and Eral Senior Secondary School Principal also attended the *Chaupal*.

Puppet show, songs, plays, comics and satire on road safety issues were presented by local theatre artists.



## Good Samaritan Guidelines to Raise Awareness on Road Safety

CUTS International organised a seminar on the implementation of the Good Samaritan Guidelines in collaboration with the Jaipur Traffic Police and Eternal Hospital under the 30<sup>th</sup> Road Safety Week held during February 04-10, 2019.

Traffic DCP Pooja Awana emphasised the usefulness and need of the basic life support and good samaritans in the Eternal Auditorium and called for its training at ground level with the help of Eternal Hospital and consumer organisations.



Manju Sharma, Co-chairperson and MD of Eternal Hospital stressed on the need for providing road safety information to the people in villages with the help of street plays so that awareness is raised which will lead to transformation in the behaviour of public.

Dr Sushil Tapariya, Director Neurosurgeon, urged parents to teach children to be healthy, in the same way they should be trained for traffic rules. He also suggested linking the licence to Aadhaar card so that whenever traffic rules are broken, the penalty should be deducted from bank directly.

Prerna Arora Singh, People's Trust provided detailed information on the rights of the Good Samaritan. She said that the bystanders will not be liable for any civil and criminal liability.

Deepak Saxena, Deputy Director, CUTS International,

emphasised on evolution of the Good Samaritans Guidelines. He said that the decision has been given by the Supreme Court in the Paramanand Katara case and Save Life Foundation case which mentions about the injured persons in road accidents and role of Good Samaritans and their rights.

A poster of Good Samaritans was also unveiled on the occasion. Prior to the conclusion of this seminar, Eternal Hospital provided basic life support technique training which is required as primary treatment of the victim.

## Expert Group Discussion on Road Safety

A high-level road safety expert group discussion was organised by CUTS at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala on February 14, 2019; and at Jaipur on March 25, 2019 respectively. The discussion aimed to identify gaps in the legislative and institutional framework of road safety and progress of implementation of guidelines of the Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety.

Madhu Sudan Sharma attended the meeting in Kerala. Experts from various departments attended the meeting. B G, Sreedevi, Chief Scientist, National Transportation Planning and Research Centre, Kerala delivered a presentation. Nidhi Singh, Deputy Transport Commissioner and Harish Chandra Meena, Ex-MP and MLA along with other experts participated



in the meeting at Jaipur. Project Consultant Ashwini Bagga delivered a technical presentation on 'Road Safety Scenario in Rajasthan'.

## REPRESENTATION IN MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS ETC.

- Amar Deep Singh, Dhramendra Chaturvedi, Aakansha Choudhary, Satyapal Singh and Kunwar Dheer Singh participated in a rally and seminar organised by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India under *Swasth Bharat Yatra* at Jaipur on January 02, 2019.
- Amar Deep Singh attended 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual India Think Tank Forum jointly organised by Observer Research Foundation and Think Tank and Civil Society Programme, University of Pennsylvania at New Delhi on January 07, 2019.
- Amar Deep Singh participated in a conference on 'Solid Waste Management: Challenges and Opportunity' organised by PHD Chamber of Commerce, Rajasthan at Jaipur on January 18, 2019.
- Deepak Saxena attended a Stakeholder's Consultation Meeting on 'Universal Salt Iodisation in India' organised by Nutritional International at Health and Family Training Centre at Jaipur on January 31, 2019.
- Madhu Sudan Sharma participated in the seminar entitled 'Emerging Trends in Safety on Roads' organised by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers, Delhi Traffic Police and Ministry of Road, Transport & Highways, Government of India during the Road Safety Week.
- George Cherian attended the inaugural session of a Consultation on the 'Citizen Charter Process in India' organised jointly by CARE India and Partnership for Transparency Fund India, for visiting officials from the Egyptian Government and CARE Egypt on February 25, 2019.

- Aakansha Choudhary attended 'National Conclave on Food' organised by Centre for Science and Environment at New Delhi on March 15, 2019.
- Rajdeep Pareek attended the Fifth Lecture of Krishi Gyandep Lecture Series on 'Linking Farmer Producer Organisations to the Market' at Jaipur, March 18, 2019.
- Amar Deep Singh attended a consultation meeting at Save the Children office on synergistic relationship between the government and voluntary sector on March 18, 2019.

## Visits/Meetings

- George Cherian and Amar Deep Singh met Anil Gupta, IAS, Managing Director, Rajasthan Renewable Energy Corporation on January 30, 2019.
- George Cherian and Amar Deep Singh visited Directorate of Local Bodies Department and met Pawan Arora, Director on January 31, 2019.
- George Cherian and Amar Deep Singh along with Seema Joshi met Shravan Kumar (IAS), Director, Department of Science and Technology on February 13, 2019.
- Ayesha Ahmed, Programme and Financial Compliance Officer and Nelly Ahmed, Associate Director, International Grants Programme, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids visited CUTS to review Food Labelling Regulation project activities and achievements on February 22, 2019.



## CART IN MEDIA