

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.

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Restoration of Ecosystem is Fundamental to Achieving the SDGs

“Restoration of the ecosystem is fundamental to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), mainly those on climate change, poverty eradication, food security, water and biodiversity conservation. The ecosystem restoration should be a collective responsibility of all, that will largely contribute to SDGs. Therefore, ecosystem restoration should not only be the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Environment, but coordinated actions of stakeholders are also required,” said Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS, on the occasion of World Environment Day on June 05, 2021.

Mehta, Sara Nilsson, Programme Manager-Sustainable Consumption, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation; Bethan Laughlin, Sustainable Consumption Lead, Consumers International; K Anand, Co-Founder, Junglescapes Charitable Trust; Aman Singh, Founder, Krishi Avam Parishitiki Vikas Sansthan discussed solutions for restoring the ecosystem.



Sara Nilsson spoke from a global perspective on ecosystem restoration. While paying homage to Sunderlal Bahuguna, a noted environmentalist and Chipko movement leader, she narrated a brief interaction with him. Nilsson acknowledged that indigenous and local communities play essential roles in managing biodiversity and landscapes.

Bethan Laughlin highlighted the findings of a report of the World Economic Forum that says almost US\$44tn of economic value generation, which is over half the world's total GDP, is potentially at risk as a result of the dependence of business on nature and its services. Besides, the scale of biodiversity to be reclaimed is highly staggering. Hence, there is a need to restore nearly 1 billion hectares of degraded land – an area larger than China.

K Anand spoke about the deteriorating environment scenario in India, where almost 40 to 50 percent of forests are only in good shape. Water bodies and coastal areas are heavily polluted and quarrying is happening widely. Restoration should be focused on the rainforest, as it helps conserve biodiversity and ecosystem services.



Speaking about restoration activities happening at Rajasthan from a grassroots' level perspective, Aman Singh's speech was centred on the need to conserve and protect 'Orans'. Orans are sacred spaces rich in biodiversity and usually include a water body. The need to support and encourage such sustainable activities by communities is very much critical.

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS, while speaking about the importance of the theme for India, highlighted the findings of the study *The Biennial Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2020* that ranks India poorly in the global rankings at 168th position out of 180 countries with only Afghanistan ranking below it in South Asia. India faces several severe environmental health risks, including poor air quality. This inherently low score by India underlines the need for more sustainable efforts within the country to address concerns relating to air and water quality, climate change and biodiversity. Amar Deep Singh summarised the discussions.

More than 170 participants representing 23 states and 11 countries, primarily experts working on environmental and sustainable development issues, agriculture sector, etc. attended the webinar.

Ensuring Road Safety on Streets through Speed Management in India



CUTS International organised a webinar on ‘Ensuring Road Safety on the Streets through Speed Management in India’ as part of observing the 6th UN Global Road Safety Week during May 17-23, 2021. UN Global Road Safety Week is celebrated every two years.

According to Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) Report, 2019, road accident kills almost 1.51 lakh people annually in India. Over-speeding is a significant cause of road accidents accounting for 71 percent of crashes, 67.3 percent of deaths and 72.4 percent of injuries.

Cheriyian stated that the theme of this year’s week is ‘Streets for Life,’ which is based on the Stockholm Declaration of 2020, advocating for 30 km/h speed, where people and vehicles mix. Low-speed streets are vital in achieving Vision Zero, which aims to prevent a single death in the road transportation system. Reducing vehicle speed can prevent crashes and reduce the impact. An average 1 km increase in speed can result in an increase of 3 percent in crashes.

Nalin Sinha, India Coordinator, Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA) said that the government and road enforcement agencies should consider reducing the speed limit for motor vehicles on highways and in urban areas, which are very high. Looking at the country’s current fatality and injury rate, there is a need to draw lessons from those countries that reduced speed limits and succeeded in bringing down road fatalities.

Gaurav H. Gupta, Deputy Secretary, MoRTH, Government of India, highlighted various initiatives and programmes on road safety. MoRTH is working on a school curriculum to teach safer behaviour on roads to children. The Safer Roads resource aims to promote healthy, safer lifestyles in young children by fostering positive health and safety attitudes. Using new

technology can prevent and reduce road-related accidents and improve road safety.

Bhargab Maitra, Professor, IIT Kharagpur, spoke about the Speed Facility Development in India. He underlined the importance of traffic accessibility functions to ensure road safety on roads. He shed light on various speed management engineering tools and methods. Finally, he stressed on the need to build the capacity of enforcement officials and policymakers on evidence-based speed management in India.

T Elangovan, Executive Director, Kerala Road Safety Authority, Government of Kerala, spoke about speed control and management-related measures taken by the Government of Kerala. He spoke about the positive outcome of Safe Kerala Corridors which are now five in number and more to be scaled up soon. He also shed light on various engineering methods being enforced in Kerala, such as constructing rumble strips, bumps, school zone treatments, putting up proper road markings and signages, etc.

Veerendra Rathore, District Transport Officer, Bhilwara, Rajasthan, shared his innovative initiatives on speed calming enforced in his jurisdiction of Bhilwara district in Rajasthan.

Evidence and policy reform from several countries suggest that road crash injury and death can be prevented or reduced significantly with good legislation backed by effective enforcement and awareness programmes on the ground. Therefore, all stakeholders must come together and work in a collaborative and well-coordinated manner to save precious human lives.

More than 70 participants from diverse backgrounds, such as government, enforcement officials, media, road safety experts and civil society organisations from 10 states of India, attended the webinar.



REPRESENTATIONS

- Amar Deep Singh attended Mohan Sinha Mehta Memorial Lecture on April 19, 2021.
- Cheriyan, Madhu Sudan Sharma, Satyapal Singh and Simi TB attended a webinar on 'Overview of technical issues related to Front-of-Package Labels' organised by the Tobacco-Free Kids Action Fund on April 19, 2021.
- Simi TB attended a national webinar on '28th Anniversary of 73rd Constitutional Amendment – The Path Ahead' organised by the Kerala Institute of Local Administration on April 24, 2021.
- Simi TB and Amit Babu attended a webinar on 'Stakeholder engagement and partnerships during and beyond COVID-19' organised by the United Nations Economic and Social Council 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator on May 03, 2021.
- Simi TB attended the 15th Asia Pacific Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production on 'Facilitating Transition to Sustainable Lifestyles' on May 11, 2021.
- Simi TB and Satyapal Singh attended a webinar on 'Road Safety Challenges in India and Preparation of an Action Plan' organised by the International Road Federation – India Chapter on May 18, 2021.
- Cheriyan, Amar Deep Singh and Simi TB attended CI Global Connect Webinar on Sustainable Consumption on May 19, 2021.
- Amar Deep Singh and Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended International Biodiversity Day organised by Rajasthan State Biodiversity Board on May 22, 2021.
- Madhu Sudan Sharma, Simi TB, Satyapal Singh and Amit Babu attended a webinar on 'Discussion on prescribing and implementing of 30kmph speed limit on the Indian Streets' organised by All India Federation of Motor Vehicles Department on May 22, 2021.
- Cheriyan, Deepak Saxena, Madhu Sudan Sharma, Simi TB and Satyapal Singh attended a webinar organised by AIIMS, Rishikesh on May 27, 2021.
- Simi TB, Amar Deep Singh and Amit Babu attended a PHD Chamber of Commerce Webinar on Plastic Waste Management Rules-2016 - Extended Producers Responsibility on May 28, 2021.
- Amar Deep Singh participated as a speaker at World No Tobacco Day webinar organised by Gayatri Parivar & Credent TV on May 31, 2021.
- Deepak Saxena attended a webinar on 'Regional Dialogue on Consumer Protection and Health in the Eurasian Region' organised by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) on June 03, 2021.
- Deepak Saxena and Amit Babu attended a webinar on 'World Anti-Counterfeiting Day-Consumer Protection in the COVID Age' organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), India, on June 08, 2021.
- Deepak Saxena attended a webinar on 'Consumer Protection Act, 2019' jointly organised by the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi and Consumers' Protection Association (CPA), Agartala, on June 12, 2021.
- Rajdeep Pareek attended a webinar on 'Inspiring Experiences from Innovative Farmers of India' organised by SKN Agricultural University, Jobner, on June 15, 2021.
- Rajdeep Pareek attended webinar on 'Conservation of Native Seeds' organised by Goyal Grameen Vikas Sansthan, Kota, on June 18, 2021.
- Cheriyan, Deepak Saxena and Simi TB attended a webinar on the Future of 'Strong Nutrition Profile Modelling (NPM)' for Healthy Food System in India to prevent NCD Burden, organised by Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI), Nutrition Advocacy in Public Interest (NAPi) Paediatric and Adolescent Nutrition Society (PAN) -IAP Nutrition Chapter, and Epidemiology Foundation of India (EFI) on June 04, 2021.
- Simi TB attended a UNFSS Independent Dialogue, 'Healthy cities, healthy children – a dialogue on lessons from Dutch cities' systems approaches to prevent childhood obesity globally', organised by o June 17, 2021.
- Simi TB and Pratibha Jain attended a National Webinar on addressing diabetes mellitus through Front of Package Food Labelling (FOPL) in India organised by AIIMS, Jodhpur & AIIMS Rishikesh on June 28, 2021. Amit Babu, Dharmendra Chaturvedi and Pratibha Jain attended webinar on 'Web seminar: EMF Awareness Webinar by Rajasthan LSA on June 29, 2021.
- Madhu Sudan Sharma, Simi TB and Satyapal Singh attended and participated in four plenary sessions and group work on June 02, 09, 23, 30, 2021, respectively, under an e-course on food systems organised by the Netherlands Food Partnership and supported by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Front-of-package labelling: Why India should opt for warning labels

Policy Circle, June 29, 2021

By George Cheriyan and Simi TB

Front-of-package labelling: High blood pressure, high sugar levels and obesity are the top risk factors for mortality in India. The prevalence of overweight and obesity is growing so faster than the world average that it is projected it will reach 30.5 percent and 9.5 percent among men, and 27.4 percent and 13.9 percent among women by 2040. Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are now responsible for more than 65 percent of all deaths in India.

<https://cuts-cart.org/front-of-package-labelling-why-india-should-opt-for-warning-labels/>

Bringing Back the Focus on Good Governance in Rajasthan

Ismarika 2021

By George Cheriyan

Since independence, India has undertaken many institutional reforms that have significantly changed its governance architectures and put in place better governance. Most of the states too have similar institutional structures and practices in terms of administrative structures and delivering services in general and governance in particular to the citizens. Still, in spite of such commonalities, there have been variations in the progress seen in different states.

<https://cuts-cart.org/pdf/bringing-back-the-focus-on-good-governance-in-rajasthan-ismarika-2021.pdf>

World Food Safety Day 2021: Ensuring Safe Food for a Healthy Tomorrow is Everyone's Business

Policy Circle, June 07, 2021

By George Cheriyan and Simi TB

The World Food Safety Day is observed every year on June 7 to draw global attention to the contamination of food and water. This year's theme for the Day is 'Safe food today for a healthy tomorrow', which focuses on producing and consuming safe food. Having safe food gives immediate, long-term benefits to people, the planet, and the economy. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this theme is more relevant. While it is a fact that no food or dietary supplements can prevent or cure COVID-19 infection, safe and healthy diet helps build one's immunity and fight the virus.

<https://cuts-cart.org/world-food-safety-day-2021-ensuring-safe-food-for-a-healthy-tomorrow-is-everyones-business/>

World Environment Day: Concerted Effort Crucial for Restoring Ecosystem in South Asia

South Asia Monitor, June 04, 2021

By George Cheriyan and Simi TB

June 5 marks World Environment Day, a day to encourage awareness and action for environment protection. This year's theme 'Ecosystem Restoration' focuses on resetting our relation with nature and reflects the importance of protecting and restoring the planet's ecosystems and the species that inhabit the. Pakistan, for the first time, will host the World Environment Day on June 5 and showcase the steps it has taken to deal with the issue of climate change. It will also mark the formal launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030. The theme becomes more relevant when the world is grappling with the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic.

<https://cuts-cart.org/world-environment-day-concerted-effort-crucial-for-restoring-ecosystem-in-south-asia/>

Streets for Life: Global Call to Reduce Speed

Matters India, May 19, 2021

By George Cheriyan and Simi TB

UN Global Road Safety Week (UNGRSW) is a biennial global road safety campaign hosted by WHO. It brings together individuals, governments, NGOs, corporations, and other organizations from around the world to raise awareness of road safety and make changes that will reduce the number of road deaths. The theme for the 6th UNGRSW was Streets for Life #Love30 calling for 30 km/h default speed limits where people and vehicles mix. 2021-30 also mark the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030, with the ambitious target of preventing at least 50 percent of road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030.

<https://cuts-cart.org/streets-for-life-global-call-to-reduce-speed/>

Green Steps to Heal Earth Amid the Virus

Deccan Herald, May 06, 2021

By George Cheriyan and Simi TB

Earth Day, celebrated every year on April 22, saw more than one billion people participate in various activities around the world to draw attention to environmental degradation and the need for immediate action to tackle issues including loss of biodiversity, increasing pollution, etc. The theme this year is 'Restore Our Earth', and its focus is on natural processes, emerging green technologies and innovative thinking that can restore the world's ecosystems.

<https://cuts-cart.org/green-steps-to-heal-earth-amid-the-virus/>