

## 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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## Unravelling the Challenges of Sustainable Consumption and Production

**H**uman action is responsible for the degradation of the environment; specifically, commercial activities are the leading cause of environmental degradation. The population and the economy are growing, but it is also affecting our ecosystem. Any development in society should be balanced with our ecosystem." These are some of the thoughts reflected by Ajitabh Sharma, Chairman & Managing Director, Jaipur City Transport Services Limited, in a state-level consultation meeting organised by CUTS International at Jaipur on March 29, 2023.

Vijay Sharma, Regional Officer of Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board, said that there is a need to work for sustainability and, as a regulator, to ensure sustainability.



Vikram Raghav, State Technical Consultant SDG, Department of Panchayati Raj, spoke about the Sustainable Development Goals and how they emerged from Millennium Development Goals. India developed some policies and frameworks to implement these SDGs. He spoke about the three pillars of sustainable development, i.e. social, environmental and economic.

Himani Tiwari, State Nodal Person, Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), shed light on SBM initiatives undertaken by their DLB department and recruitment of environmental engineers by the DLB to preserve nature.

Soumana Dutta, Professor (Retd) of the University of Rajasthan, mentioned that illegal mining affects our nature and environmental imbalance is occurring. She said that small microorganisms could help make toxic waste into non-toxic useable material.

Amar Deep Singh, Senior Programme Officer, CUTS, mentioned the study mainly looked at SDG 12 from a consumer perspective based on the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection.

Initially, Amrat Singh, Director, CUTS, welcomed the participants and delivered opening remarks. More than 50 participants attended the meeting, including representatives of various government departments, organisations working on sustainable consumption and consumer protection, civil societies, resident associations and others from different parts of Rajasthan.

## Embracing Cluster Approach for Enhanced Organic Farming Outcomes

Before embarking on the decisive stage of a project, it is important to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the activities carried out in the previous stage. This discussion enables us to identify the most efficient route to achieve our targets optimally.

The State Level Stakeholder Consultation was held at Jaipur on March 14, 2023. Rajdeep Pareek, Programme Officer, CUTS, presented the activities accomplished in the year. He said four-gram panchayats were selected from each district in two blocks. He showcased different activities, such as awareness campaigns, organic gardens in schools, and kitchen garden training. Green action week, and community-managed seed cells, organic fairs at the block level were implemented in the project districts and received good responses from rural and urban consumers and producers.



Balraj Singh, Vice-chancellor of SKN Agricultural University, shed light on the recent developments in organic farming and appreciated the efforts made by CUTS. He also mentioned the increasing population requirement and our implementation plan in India. He advised adopting a cluster approach for better results in organic farming.

Deepika Saini, Programme Officer, Rajasthan Organic Certification Agency, spoke about the government's certification process of organic products. Laxman Singh Latoria Padma Shree Awardee, who was also the meeting's chief guest, showcased how they started their work on water conservation in the last 20 years and now their village is self-dependent on water requirements.

A total of 65 participants comprising district partners and their farmers, all stakeholders, like government officials, Agriculture University, Agriculture Research University, Agriculture Science Centre, NGOs, CSOs and media participated.

## Consumers Need to Change Behaviour and Consumption Patterns

To sensitise local consumers and stakeholders towards sustainable lifestyle through an advocacy tool to streamline existing policies of the government and push for more dedicated efforts to support SCP from the consumer perspective, the first Stakeholders Sensitisation Programme was organised at Jodhpur under ProScop SCP Project on September 29, 2022, followed by the second at Kota District on November 18, 2022. The third programme in the series was organised at Bharatpur on December 01, 2022. The fourth in the series was organised at Bhilwara on January 24, 2023, followed by the fifth at Chittorgarh on January 25, 2023, the sixth at Rajgarh, Churu on February 17, 2023, and the last at Jaipur on February 24, 2023.

The stakeholders in all these included representatives from CSOs, NGOs, government officials from municipal corporations, electricity departments, pollution control boards and public representatives and media.



## Great Need for Clean Energy: Commemoration of World Consumer Rights Day

CUTS organised an event to commemorate WCRD on March 14, 2023. Its main objective is to create global awareness about consumer rights, protection, and empowerment.

In the welcome address, Deepak Saxena, Associate Director, CUTS, said that understanding the seller and consumer relationship concept has existed since ancient times, as mentioned in Kautilya's Arthashastra. But the famous speech of John F Kennedy on March 15 paved the way to start the modern consumer movement.

He stated that Consumer International is an apex organisation of the contemporary consumer movement and decides the yearly theme. This year's 'World Consumer Rights Day', 2023, the theme is 'Empowering Consumers Through Clean Energy Transition'.



Akash Sharma, Policy Analyst, CUTS, highlighted the importance of clean energy to the participants and said that there is a great need for clean energy in today's time. Day by day and the consumption of energy is increasing in every sector. Our environment is getting polluted by various sources of energy production. Also, climate change is happening.

Sharma also said that most economies today are facing a deepening global energy crisis, which has an untold impact on vulnerable consumers. Global energy prices have increased by 50 percent by the end of 2022, which is expected to remain high in 2023.

With rising energy prices, consumers everywhere radically change their lifestyles to meet essential needs. In a recent insight survey among Consumer International members, more than 80 percent reported that consumers adjust their budgets to pay for their energy bills.

## Improving City Governance through Enhancing Knowledge of Urban Local Bodies

The third training workshop on urban governance for ULB officials was held in Bharatpur, Rajasthan on January 19, 2023. The workshop aimed to enhance knowledge and capacity building on important topics such as solid waste management, urban public transportation, water supply, and financial instruments like municipal bonds. Its purpose was to foster knowledge and effective functioning of ULBs in selected cities within the state.

Abhijeet Kumar, Mayor of Municipal Corporation, Bharatpur, was the chief guest and delivered the inaugural speech. Yashashri Kommareddy, an expert from Hyderabad, delivered the sessions on SWM, sustainable transportation and community participation. Kamal Deep Sharma, State Nodal Officer, 15th Finance Commission, had a session on Municipal Finance. A total of 30 officials from ULBs of the Bharatpur division participated.

Similarly, the fourth training programme for municipal officials was organised at Ajmer on March 17, 2023, to sensitise the officials on municipal finance, solid waste management, sustainable transportation and community participation. Kamaldeep Sharma, State Nodal Person, 15th Finance Commission, said urban governance is a critical area of concern for the 15th Finance Commission, as the rapid urbanisation of India has brought new challenges related to urban development and management.



Himani Tiwari, City Managers' Association of Rajasthan, Department of Local Self Government, Government of Rajasthan, explained relevant government schemes and programmes on urban governance.

As a lead resource person, D Sudhakar Rao, Expert Urban Management, Hyderabad, delivered the main four topics, i.e. municipal finance, solid waste management, sustainable transportation and community participation in the workshop. A total of 36 officials from ULBs who came under the Ajmer division participated in the workshop. Certificates of participation have been awarded to all participants.

# Celebrating National Road Safety Week

The CUTS team actively participated in road safety week, primarily focusing on activities in Rajasthan. However, CUTS state partners in Kerala and Karnataka also took part in their respective state-level events. In Rajasthan, the team joined the state's inaugural function on January 11, 2023.



On the same day, the State Training Institute was inaugurated. CUTS, in collaboration with the CHD team, Banswara, and CUTS Pratapgarh teams, organised Stakeholder Consultations in Pratapgarh on January 16, 2023, and in Banswara on January 17, 2023. The Pratapgarh consultation took place at a government college and involved the participation of college students, faculty members, District transport officials, PWD, and health and police officials. CP Joshi, Member of Parliament, Chittorgarh-Pratapgarh, also attended the meeting.

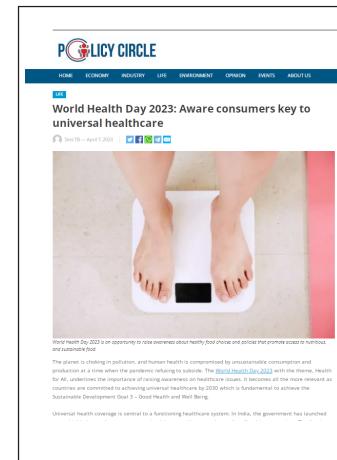
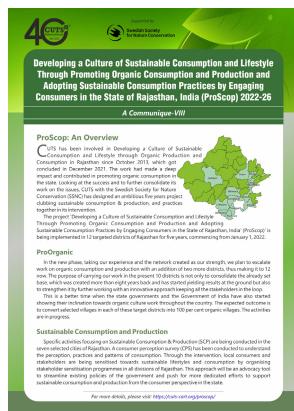
CUTS conducted a consultation at Vidya Bhawan College in Banswara, where the district valedictory function for the road safety week was integrated with the CUTS event. This allowed the participation of district transport and other officials, who were awarded district-level certificates for their commendable initiatives during the road safety week. In Jaipur, at the state level, CUTS organised street plays and an interactive session with school children to raise awareness about road safety.

## PUBLICATIONS

The article was prepared as requested by Policy Circle and can be viewed at:

<https://www.policycircle.org/life/front-of-pack-nutrition-labelling-india/>

<https://www.policycircle.org/life/world-health-day-2023/>



## A Communiqué VIII

An annual newsletter with updates on project 'ProScop'

<https://cuts-cart.org/pdf/communique-8.pdf>

- Simi TB attended the Consumers International Leadership Dialogue: Digital Fairness for Future Generations on January 10, 2023.
- George Cherian participated in a seminar as a panellist on 'The Evolution of FOP labelling and their (Un)necessary Role – A Global Perspective' hosted by COMPETERE, Italy on January 10, 2023.
- Rajdeep Pareek along with Cherian participated in a National Workshop & Exhibition on 'Organic Urban farming' organised by Kanoria PG College, Jaipur, in collaboration with the International Society of Life Sciences & University of Rajasthan on January 27, 2023.
- A discussion with Sheila Senfuma Nakanyike, Head of Programme of Fair Digital Finance Accelerator, Consumers International was organised on February 20, 2023. Cherian, Deepak Saxena, and Satyapal Singh were also part of the discussions.
- Madhu Sudan Sharma participated in a meeting of NGOs working on road safety in Rajasthan organised by the Road Safety Cell, Transport and Road Safety Department, Government of Rajasthan, on February 16, 2023.
- Simi TB attended an online meeting on 'The Consumer Journey on the Road to Clean Energy', organised by Consumers International, on March 13, 2023. She also attended a round table on 'Building Resilience in a Changing Climate: Strategies, Solutions, and Collaborations' organised by the C20 Working Group on Sustainable and Resilient Communities: Climate, Environment and Net Zero on March 15, 2023.
- Simi TB attended a webinar on 'Grassroots Solutions for Energy Access: How Can We Leverage the Power of Consumers' organised by Consumers International on March 16, 2023.

### Indian Road Congress (IRC) Delegation in Rajasthan

A team of 3 Engineers are Life Members of the Indian Road Congress, Kerala Chapter, Engineer Reghu Kumar, Engineer Hari Ramakrishnan and Engineer Chandrababu visited CUTS and interacted with the road safety team. The team was on an India trip for a 'Study on Roads and Social Life in Indian Climatic Zones.' Sunil Kumar Bathida, Executive Engineer from Road Safety Cell, also participated. The visiting team shared their road safety-related experiences with the team, which were interesting and educative.

- Deepak Saxena, Satyapal Singh and Cherian participated in an invitation from the Department of Home Science, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, for the 'International Conference on Future of Food: Food Safety, Sustainability, Diversity and Industry' on March 03-04, 2023.
- Cherian participated in a CAC meeting organised by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India at Goa on March 09-10, 2023.
- Cherian participated in a webinar on 'Countering Ultra-Processed Foods in the Asia-Pacific and Worldwide,' as a key speaker from India hosted by Deakin University on March 28, 2023.

