

# Consumer Dialogue

Volume XI, Issue 1, January-April, 2020

E-newsletter

## Celebrating World Consumer Rights Day

This year's World Consumer Rights Day was observed on March 13, 2020, in Jaipur clubbed with the 'State-level Stakeholder Consultation' as part of the ongoing project 'ProOrganic II'. The theme of the World Consumer Rights Day was 'The Sustainable Consumer'. This theme was relevant ever before. The observation of the day also was an occasion to discuss the need for sustainable consumption globally, as well as highlighting the important role that consumers play in this regard.

Our economic productivity on a global level is being resulted in the rapid depletion of existing and readily available natural resources. What is needed is a realisation within every consumer that we cannot continue to grow as a species and enjoy a high quality of life without changing the lifestyle and the way we do things. The event commenced with an address by George Cheriyan on the theme



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'The Sustainable Consumer.' He stated the importance, history, and purpose of WCRD and clubbing it with the theme status and growing relevance and scope of sustainable consumption worldwide.

He said that as individuals, or consumers, we have enormous power, in the purchase choices we make and how we use and dispose of those purchases, but also in our ability to influence the whole system, from production and manufacturing to packaging and disposal by demanding more from supply chains and calling for more sustainable products and services. The sustainable products have the infrastructure behind them to increase their life and usefulness, which not only helps us as individuals but makes sustainability the easier option for other consumers.

Cheriyan stated that sustainable consumption should start from home and he provided five tips, usage of cloth bag for purchases to address the plastic menace, practicing reduced energy consumption at home by switching off lights and using LED bulbs, sustainable mobility by avoiding private vehicles and opting for public transport, carpooling, etc., consumption of organic and healthy food and reduced consumption of clothing.

He concluded by saying that countries across the globe should identify age-old sustainable practices within their community and promote those more vigorously. The Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations envisage that by 2030 countries should substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, and reuse. Existing sustainable practices, therefore, should be encouraged and successful community models are replicated in other parts so that it would become easier for growing cities to manage their resources sustainably – wasting less and sharing more.

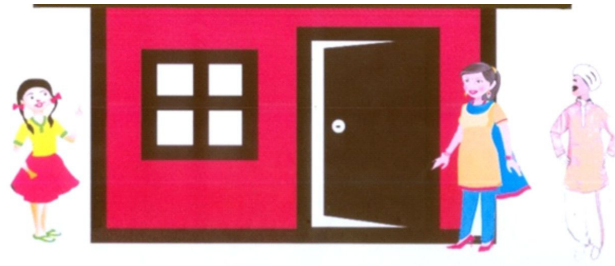
The key speakers in the meeting were A K Gupta, Director, Research, SKN Agriculture University, Jobner, Jaipur; R K Yadvendra, Joint Director, Department of Agriculture, and Gajendra Sharma, Research Officer, Department of Agriculture both from Government of Rajasthan.

Rajdeep Pareek made a presentation on last year's activities with some very key achievements as part of project outcome over the last one year. The welcome and introduction were made by Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS. The event was attended by around 72 participants covering all partners of ten project districts and a progressive farmer, local non-governmental organisation (NGO), civil society organisation (CSO) representatives, and the media.

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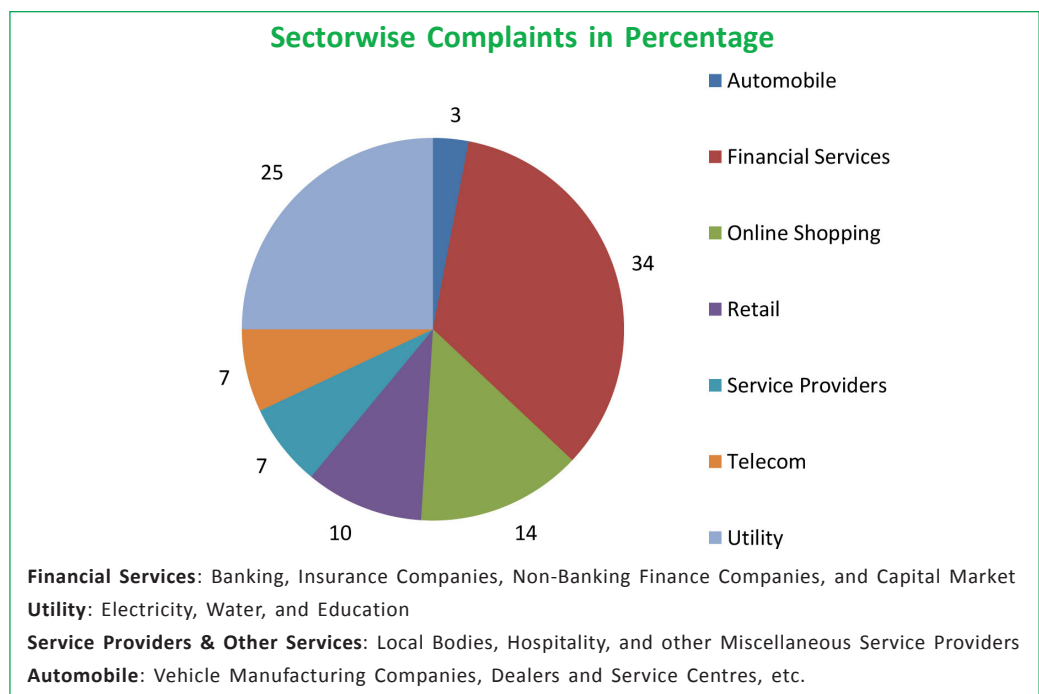
## Grahak Sahayta Kendra, Jaipur

Grahak Sahayta Kendra (GSK) provides services, such as advice on consumer protection related issues, addresses complaints, and publishes books, pamphlets, magazines, and other relevant materials on consumer-related issues. Besides, GSK centre also handles consumer complaints through counselling and conciliation for quick and easy redress.

**GSK details can be accessed at:**

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

During the period of January-April 2020, the status of complaints and advisories received at GSK is as shown in the below graph:



## Implementers Taught Lessons on New Motor Vehicle Act, 2019

Under the project, two capacity-building workshops were organised at Kerala on January 13 & 17, 2020 respectively. A Capacity Building Workshop for the enforcement official on 'Key Provisions of MVA 2019 to Six key risk factors' was organised by CUTS in partnership Centre for Environment and Development (CED) and Kerala Road Safety Authority (KRSA) in Kannur, Kerala. Chief Minister of Kerala Pinarayi Vijayan declared the launch of the Road Safety Week on January 13, 2020, at Kannur. Shankar Reddy, IPS, Road Safety Commission delivered the inaugural address. Cheriyan delivered the opening remarks.



The second workshop was held at Thiruvananthapuram on January 17, 2020, in which Satyapal Singh participated and provided a brief overview of the project. In both the workshops, a maximum number of enforcement officials participated. B Sreelekha, IPS, Transport Commissioner inaugurated the workshop.

The third and final capacity building workshop in Kerala was held in Kochi on February 25, 2020. Madhu Sudan Sharma and Simi TB from CUTS attended the workshop.

## India Can Very Much be a \$5tn Economy by 2025

'India becoming a US\$5tn economy by 2025, though a tough ask, is very much doable' said Amitabh Kant, CEO of NITI Aayog, while speaking on the topic "Mainstreaming Innovation Towards \$5 Trillion Economy" as part of Science-Innovation Lecture Series 2020, organised jointly by the Department of Science & Technology, Government of Rajasthan and CUTS International at Jaipur on January 25, 2020.

(APN News, January 27, 2020)

<https://bit.ly/37zOJOP>

## IMPORTANT JUDGEMENTS/ DECISIONS



## Generating Consumer Demand for 'Trans Fat-Free' Vegetable Oils

Each year, approximately 540,000 deaths can be attributed to the intake of industrially-produced trans-fatty acids, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). High trans fat intake increases the risk of death from any cause by 34 percent, coronary heart disease deaths by 28 percent, and coronary heart disease by 21 percent respectively.



(The Asian Age, March 05, 2020)

<https://snip.ly/2tuf2l>

## No extension beyond 45 days in filing response

The Supreme Court held that the period for filing opposite party's version in consumer cases cannot be extended beyond the period of 45 days prescribed under the Consumer Protection Act.

(Livewall News Network, March 04, 2020)

<https://snip.ly/madboi>



## Promoting Consumption with Minimal Impact on Environment

World Consumer Rights Day 2020 was observed on 15 March, with the theme 'The Sustainable Consumer'. This theme was relevant ever before. The campaign discussed the need for sustainable consumption globally, as well as highlighted the important role that consumer rights and protection can play.



(Newsmobile.in, March 16, 2020)

<http://snip.ly/tso18c>

## CM's Economic Transformation Advisory Council Formed

Chief Minister's Economic Transformation Advisory Council has been formed post directions from the State Government of Rajasthan. Chief Minister of Rajasthan Ashok Gehlot is the Chairman of the Council, whereas, Arvind Mayaram has been appointed as the Vice-Chairman and Govind Sharma as an advisor member.

(eGov News, March 11, 2020)

<https://bit.ly/33dyR30>

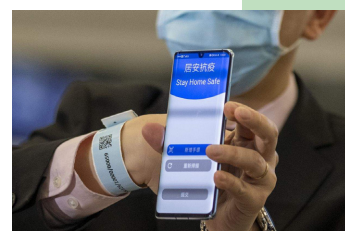


## Privacy rights may become the next victim of killer pandemic

Digital surveillance and smartphone technology may prove helpful in containing the coronavirus pandemic - but some activists fear this could mean lasting harm to privacy and digital rights.

(The Economic Times, March 29, 2020)

<https://snip.ly/ksl72m>







## Differently Abled Women on a Mask Mission

Masks are in short supply, but the crisis is acute once you move away from big cities. There is an urgency to produce more at a rapid clip and the clock is ticking for 26-year-old Sweta Garu in Dagla ka Kheda village of Chittorgarh.

(*The Times of India*, April 02, 2020)

<https://snip.ly/crte17>



## Artificial Intelligence: Implication for Consumers

As technological advancement is taking over our lives, Artificial Intelligence (AI) comes as a new force in the field, aimed at making our tasks simpler and making us more efficient. However, along with increased utility, AI also presents challenges and risks for consumers. To this end, CUTS International has published this discussion paper.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/dp-artificial-intelligence-implications-for-consumers.pdf>



## Enable E-commerce to Disable COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted and impacted the daily lives of citizens in an unprecedented manner. Governments continue to endeavour hard for protecting lives by imposing lockdowns, testing, segregation, and treatment.

(*The Economic Times*, April 14, 2020)

<https://bit.ly/2ycDAGy>

## What the Pandemic Means for Large-Scale Indian Solar Power Projects Still in the Pipeline

While the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has offered some relief, the pandemic has exposed structural issues that cannot so easily be smoothed over by a relief package. India has vowed to become a global leader in the solar energy space.



(*The Wire*, April 14, 2020)

<https://bit.ly/34A81Ti>

## COVID-19 lockdown and the nationwide consumer woes

Both the Central and State Consumer Affairs departments need to enhance monitoring, and inspection visits to the markets and ensure the supply of essential commodities at real prices across the country to prevent black marketing, hoarding, and price inflation of essential commodities.

(*The Edition*, April 25, 2020)

<https://snip.ly/yswg11>

## Integrate Local Kirana Stores in E-Commerce Supply Chain

The Government of India has been keen to integrate the local Kirana stores within the e-commerce ecosystem. Talks on it had been ongoing between the Ministry of Commerce, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), and e-commerce service providers.

(*The Economic Times*, April 26, 2020)

<https://bit.ly/2ycCT0I>

### Enforcement is to Save Lives on Roads and Not to Raise the Revenue

**T**he usage of intelligent technologies for enforcement will bring down fatalities drastically in India', said PK Sarkar, Former Director, Asian Institute of Transport Development, New Delhi and Former HOD, (Transport Planning), School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi.

He was delivering the keynote address in the Capacity Building workshop organised by CUTS International. He also shed light on the global good practices of the Intelligent Transport system in five key risk factors. He described in detail about engineering aspects of Safe Road Infrastructure.

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International in his opening address opined that the objective of enforcement should be saving lives on the roads and not raising the revenue for the government. He further mentioned that 13 lakhs people have died during the last decade and 467,044 lakhs in 2018 where Rajasthan in the 6th rank is witnessing the highest rate of accidental deaths. He further mentioned accidents occur due to various risk factors, among them the leading risk factor is over speeding with 64.4 percentage of death caused in accidents. He also spoke about the need for fixing the accountability on authorities liable for bad road designing, layout, and maintenance.

Nidhi Singh, Deputy Transport Commissioner, Road Safety, in her special address said that there is a need for all stakeholders to put collective efforts to make the roads safe for all. She provided an



overview of road accidents and the scenario of road safety of Rajasthan and spoke about new initiatives taken to improve road safety.

The Capacity Building Workshop entitled, 'Effective enforcement of key risk factors and key Provisions of MV Act, 2019' was organised in partnership with the Department of Transport, Government of Rajasthan on February 05, under the 31<sup>st</sup> Road Safety Week observed in Rajasthan from February 04-10, 2020. More than 50 participants from the Transport Department, Medical and Health Department, Traffic Department actively participated in the workshop and shared their views and experiences.

Other speakers included Girdhar Goyal, Principal Specialist (Surgery) Additional Nodal Officer Trauma Center, SMS Hospital, Jaipur, who addressed the gathering regarding the Effective Trauma care and Good Samaritan Guidelines issued by the Supreme Court, and Ashwini Bagga, Consultant Road



Safety Cell, Transport Department, Jaipur spoke about the Traffic Control Devices. Another capacity building was organised in Ajmer on February 06, 2020.

George Cheriyan along with Satyapal Singh and Aradhana Gupta attended the valedictory function of the RSW in Rajasthan on February 10, 2020, and received a Memento of Appreciation from the Transport Minister



## Awareness Drive for Bank Depositors

In a run up to educate bank customers, the campaign under the round three of phase II ended with the remaining programmes held during the period of January and February, 2020. The programme, which had started in 2016 has been continuously and steadily progressing with an overwhelming response in every nook and corner of the state. During the period, the seventh workshop was organised at Pratapgarh on January 10, 2020, with around 65 participants and M P Kothari, ex-Regional Director, RBI as the key resource person. Similarly, the eighth, ninth, and the tenth DEAP were organised on February 07, 17 and 27, 2020 at Kurgaon; Hindaun City and Mahaveer Ji all in Karouli district respectively.

In DEAP at Kurgaon in Karouli district, 60 participants and three bankers, Bank of Baroda (BoB), Punjab National Bank (PNB) and Lead District Manager (LDM) of BoB attended. Similarly, in Hindaun City with nearly 65 participants, and five bankers from Bank of India; State Bank of India; Union Bank of India, BoB, and PNB attended.

At all places, various bank officials, Lead Development Managers and Financial Literacy Coordinators attended and trained the participants on various banking issues.



## E-Waste Bins Becoming Popular

As consumption patterns have changed drastically in recent years resulting in unsustainable lifestyles. Mass consumption is also due to innovations, technology, open markets etc. While this trend continues, there is a sizable population that is unable to meet even its basic needs, like access to food, clothing, shelter. Increased consumption is also resulting in generation of more waste, which is harmful to the environment. While sustainable consumption is all about the 'use of services and related products which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, by minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials, that also insist on minimum emissions of waste and pollutants'. It is important for consumers to recognize their rights to a healthy environment and behave responsibly.



This year's GAW campaign in Jaipur was mainly focused on collection & disposal of Ewaste, as common man doesn't know about how to dispose of E-waste or take it to recycle centers. In India, Rajasthan comes as 6th largest E-waste generator. Also, only 0.036 million tonnes of India's 2 million tonnes E-waste was treated and 95% of India's

Ewaste is recycled in the informal sector in a crude manner. E-waste contains toxic components such as lead, mercury and cadmium, which could lead to severe issues such as; birth defects, kidney failure, cancer, and it could even harm the skeletal system.

Looking at the seriousness of the issue, CUTS in collaboration with Etco E-Waste Recycler Pvt. Ltd. (An authorised recycler and dismantler for E-waste by State pollution control board, Rajasthan) has undertaken an awareness campaign and installed six E-waste collection bins at different localities of Jaipur, which can be used to deposit electronic as well as electrical waste items, which are of no use and worth for effective disposal of them. A launch of E-waste Bin was held on October 11, 2019 at the CUTS office in Jaipur, which was attended by staff from all the Jaipur centres of CUTS. One E-waste bin was inaugurated by the Mayor of Jaipur, during Stakeholders' Consultation held at Jaipur.

## Commemorating Earth Day

A webinar was organised on April 22, 2020, to celebrate Earth Day by using Skype platform. The theme of this year's earth day was climate change. It was a good webinar in terms of a variety of speakers and participants. Positive feedback received from participants as they felt the discussion very useful.

Sara Nilsson, Programme Manager, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation; Naomi Scott-Mearns, Sustainable Consumption Manager, Consumers International, London; Rashid S. Kaukab, Executive Director, CUTS International, Geneva; Clement Onyango, Director, CUTS International, Nairobi, Kenya were four speakers and George Cheriyan moderated the webinar. There were more than 32 participants in the webinar.





## ProOrganic Efforts Started Showing Results

**P**roOrganic II project is continuously gaining strength through its varied activities at the grassroot level. One of the important activity 'Village Level Awareness Campaigns' has set successful examples. The objective of organising these awareness camps is to bring forward the whole movement down the line through these camps and to make consumers and farmers aware of organic products and to influence their buying/farming habits.

Besides, Farmer's Training and Exposure Visits; Organic Clubs and Gardens; Community Seed Cell Management; Organic Fairs; Green Action Week in Rajasthan and in India and Stakeholder's Consultation have been other activities, which were successfully accomplished by March, 2020 targeting various groups like school children and media apart from common consumers and farmers as the main target. There have been different modes, which were applied during all these meetings in order to create awareness and educate farmers and consumers, e.g. organising street plays, fixing and displaying posters, distributing handouts, showing videos on the importance of organic farming on TV screens, etc., and other local and traditional ways like *chaupal baithaks* (village meeting) or any other cultural modes like puppet shows, etc.



## Glimpses of some more ACTIVITIES



## REPRESENTATION/ VISITS



- Amit Babu attended a Pre-Budget Workshop conducted by Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) at Jaipur on January 10, 2020.
- George Cheriyan attended the National Consumer Convention organised by Consumer Coordination Council (CCC) at Lucknow, on January 11, 2020.
- Aradhana Gupta attended the Consumer Outreach Programme organised by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India at Nawalgarh, Jhunjhunu on January 23, 2020.
- Amar Deep Singh attended the National Consultation on Urban Governance organised by Praja Foundation at New Delhi on January 22-23, 2020.
- Madhu Sudan Sharma and Satyapal Singh participated in the Road Safety Planning meeting organised by the Department in the chairmanship of Road Safety Commissioner on February 03, 2020.
- Deepak along with Aradhana attended a FICCI Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy (CASCADE) Seminar on 'Containing Counterfeiting and Smuggling: A Step towards Prosperous Nation Building' at Jaipur on February 13, 2020.
- A talk on 'Apni Baat-Sabke Saath' was organised at CUTS Conference Hall on February 28, 2020, which was moderated by Arun Maira, Ex-President, CUTS and attended by participants from various fields.
- Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended the Regional Workshop on Capacity Building of Consumer Advocacy Groups (CAGs) at Bikaner organised by TRAI, New Delhi office on March 06, 2020.
- Amar Deep attended a conference call from SSNC on March 12, 2020. Sara, Alex and Sho were on the call to discuss the Green Action Week India 2020 campaign.
- Aaradhna Gupta attended two back-to-back meetings at New Delhi organised by the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India, and Bureau of Indian Standards at New Delhi on March 12 and 13, 2020 respectively. The main objective was to involve consumer organisations in the market surveillance of the products to fill the gap in the regulations of the sub-standard products available in the market.
- Aradhana Gupta and Deepak Saxena attended a similar meeting organised by BIS, Jaipur office on March 16, 2020, to commemorate WCRD, 2020 as well and to discuss probable engagements with consumer organisations in the BIS activities at the state level.
- Amit Babu attended Webinar on 'Sustainable Consumer' organised by the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India on March 18, 2020.
- Amit Babu attended a Webinar on 'Sustainable Consumption and Production' at the heart of the climate fight organised by the One Planet Network Consumer Information Programme on March 31, 2020.
- Deepak Saxena and Amar Deep Singh attended a webinar organised by SSNC and CI on Green Action Week on April 15, 2020. It was attended by organisations from different countries who participated in thebGAW campaign including few organisations from India.
- George Cheriyan attended the Consumers International Global Member Connect Series\_Call on Sustainable Consumption on April 20, 2020. Nils Heuer, Associate Programme Officer, UNEP, Suzi Price, Head of Communications, CI and Naomi Scott-Mearns, Sustainable Consumption Manager, CI spoke in the meeting as per the agenda.
- George Cheriyan, Deepak Saxena and Aradhana Gupta attended a webinar organised by Consumer International on 'Successful Campaign on Consumer Protection Act in Zimbabwe' on April 30, 2020. The main presenter was Rosemary Siyachitema of the Consumer Council of Zimbabwe (CCZ), who portrayed their successful ten-year campaign to pass the country's first Consumer Protection Act.

### Internship at CART

- **Nareshwar Singh Shaktawat** of Jindal Global Law School, Sonapat, Haryana from December 09, 2019-January 09, 2020.

### Upcoming Events

- Commemoration of World Environment Day on June 5, 2020
- 50 Awareness Meetings on Hygiene, Physical Distancing and Safe Food Practices in 11 districts of Rajasthan in July 2020
- ProOrganic II activities as per the work plan
- Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation project activities as per the work plan
- SDG-12 project activities as per the work plan
- ROSA project activities as per the work plan
- RESOLVE project activities as per the work plan



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