

# Consumer Dialogue

Volume XIV, Issue 1, January-April, 2023

E-newsletter

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

The third training workshop for Urban Local Bodies (ULB) officials on urban governance was held in Bharatpur, Rajasthan on January 19, 2023. The workshop aimed to promote knowledge and capacity building on key topics such as solid waste management, urban public transportation, water supply, and financial instruments like municipal bonds within ULBs in Rajasthan. The objective was to enhance the understanding of urban governance in selected cities within the state and improve the effectiveness of ULB functioning in these areas.

Abhijeet Kumar, Mayor of Municipal Corporation, Bharatpur, was the chief guest and delivered the inaugural address. Yashashri Kommareddy, an expert from Hyderabad, delivered the sessions on SWM, sustainable urban local bodies transportation and community participation. Kamal Deep Sharma, State Nodal Officer, 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission, delivered 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, 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission, said urban governance is a critical area of concern for the 15<sup>th</sup> 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 (CMAR), Department of Local Self Government, Government of Rajasthan, explained the 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. Certificates of participation have been awarded to all participants.

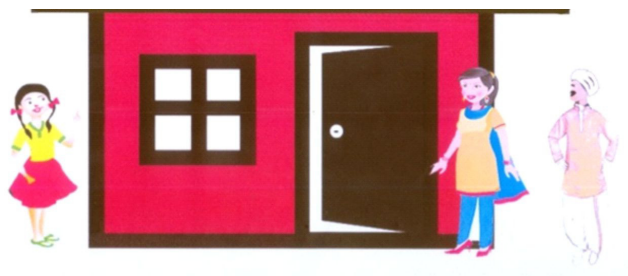


### INSIDE

- ACTIVITIES
- IMPORTANT NEWS/ARTICLES
- REPRESENTATION/ VISITS
- UPCOMING ACTIVITIES
- SOCIAL NETWORK



CUTS CART



## Grahak Sahayta Kendra, Jaipur

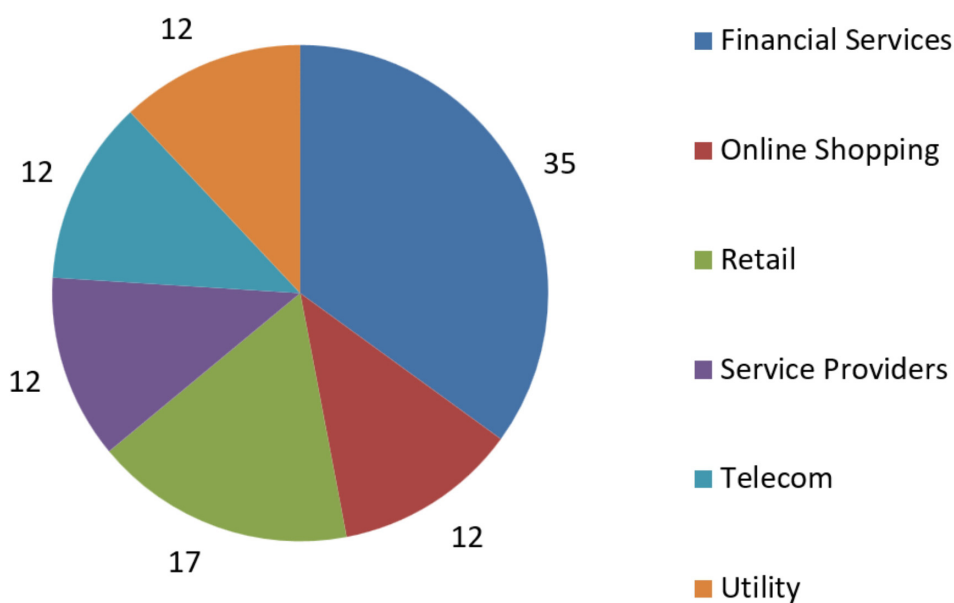
Grahak Sahayta Kendra (GSK) provides services, such as advice on consumer protection-related issues, addresses complaints, and publishes books, pamphlets, magazines, and other relevant materials on consumer-related matters. Besides, the GSK centre also handles consumer complaints through counselling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

GSK details can be accessed at:

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

During January-April 2023, the status of complaints and advisories received at GSK are shown in the below graph below:

Sectorwise Complaints in Percentage



**Financial Services:** Banking, Insurance Companies, Non-Banking Finance Companies, and Capital Market

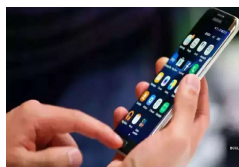
**Utility:** Electricity, Water, and Education

**Service Providers & Other Services:** Local Bodies, Hospitality, and other Miscellaneous Service Providers

**Automobile:** Vehicle Manufacturing Companies, Dealers and Service Centres, etc.

## Should TRAI Mandate Caller ID?

*Financial Express, January 17, 2023 • By Pradeep S Mehta*



While the proposal to display caller names despite not having the caller's contact information is well-intentioned, the potential positive and negative impacts on consumers need to be thoroughly examined. In 2022, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) issued a consultation paper proposing the mandatory display of the caller's name on the recipient's device, even if the name is not stored in the latter's contact list. The idea is to empower consumers to make informed decisions while receiving calls and reduce harassment and harm from unsolicited, spam, bot, and fraudulent callers.

<https://bit.ly/3XkHCDk>



## Calling Name Presentation in Telecommunication Networks

The TRAI invited comments and counter comments on a Consultation Paper on the Introduction of Calling Name Presentation in Telecommunication Networks. To examine the potential effects on the consumers, CUTS undertook a study and engaged with various consumer groups across the country. It made recommendations, including conducting a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA), addressing issues with mandatorily displaying consumers' names, considering the integrity of names provided in KYC information self-declared by the consumers, and obtaining effective and informed consent of consumers, among others.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/comments-on-the-trai-cnaf-consultation-paper.pdf>

## IT Rules Changes Need a Careful Relook

*Financial Express, January 24, 2023 • By Pradeep S Mehta and Neelanjana Sharma*

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) recently released draft amendments to the IT Rules 2021 to regulate online gaming. The draft amendments rightly adopt a novel co-regulatory approach. It is critical to ensure that this approach works in the favour of all stakeholders. To this end, the draft amendments warrant scrupulous evaluation from a consumer perspective.

<https://bit.ly/3XPALBR>



## Social Media Outreach for Customer Support Can Get You Scammed

*MediaNama, February 06, 2023*



January 11, 2023, was a disappointing day for Danish Khan. A call meant to resolve his minor complaint with Paytm turned into a difficult conversation with a scammer who stole all his Paytm balance. Relaying the entire incident to MediaNama, the digital marketing executive expressed he was unsure what was worse – that he lost his money to a scammer or still doesn't know how to contact Paytm customer care.

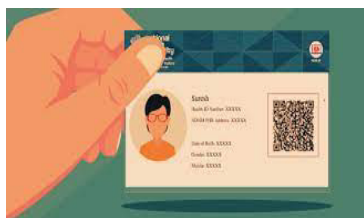
<https://bit.ly/3JMNdhZ>

## Strengthening Investor Grievance Redressal Mechanism

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) invited comments on its [Consultation Paper](#) on Strengthening Investor Grievance Redressal Mechanisms in the Indian Securities Market by harnessing Online Dispute Resolution mechanisms.



## Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission: Making Healthcare Accessible, the Digital Way



Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the role of the scientific community in developing ways of dealing with emerging diseases and the need for encouraging research in developing new vaccines while addressing the 108th Indian Science Congress (ISC) held at Nagpur via video conferencing.

<https://cuts-cart.org/pdf/onw-5-january-2023.pdf>





## Component Manufacturing Another Step in Moving Towards Aatmanirbharta

“Working on the vision of reducing import dependency through indigenous production, the Government of India focuses on producing high-value pharmaceuticals and high-end medical devices. Manufacturing of components of high-end medical devices in the country will be another big step in moving towards Aatmanirbharta,” Dr Mansukh Mandaviya said while appreciating the efforts of the applicants selected under the scheme.

<https://cuts-cart.org/pdf/onw-6-february-2023.pdf>

## World Health Day 2023: Aware Consumers Key to Universal Healthcare

*Policy Circle, April 07, 2023 • By Simi TB*



The planet is choking in pollution, and human health is compromised by unsustainable consumption and production at a time when the pandemic is refusing to subside. The World Health Day 2023 theme, Health for All, underlines the importance of raising awareness on healthcare issues. It becomes all the more relevant as countries are committed to achieving universal healthcare by 2030, which is fundamental to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3 – Good Health and Well-Being.

<http://bit.ly/3zNkx20>

## Ministry of Ayush and Tourism to Promote Medical Value Travel

The Ministry of Ayush signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), the Ministry of Tourism, to work together for the promotion of Medical Value Travel in Ayurveda and other traditional systems of medicine, informed the Minister of Ayush, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal in a written reply in Rajya Sabha.

<https://cuts-cart.org/pdf/onw-7-march-2023.pdf>

## Importance of Consumer Protection in the G-20 Agenda

*Modern Ghana, April 17, 2023 • By Pradeep S Mehta*



‘One Earth, One Family, One Future’ is an excellent mantra that could pave the way for global welfare. Still, the agenda misses the critical component for achieving global welfare - consumer welfare. Consumers are the *raison d’être* of all economic activity. With increased and improved consumer protection, it is easier to see how the G-20 agenda can be achieved in toto. This missing link has to be addressed.

<https://bit.ly/3n0OAR3>

## Consumers Cannot Be the Collateral in OTT Tussle

*The Economic Times, April 25, 2023 • By Pradeep S Mehta and Shiksha Srivastava*

Lately, the Over-the-Top audio-visual entertainment has become the day’s flavour, with huge choices before consumers can watch movies and serials anytime. A debate is ongoing between telecom (internet) service providers (TSPs) and the OTT service providers on the regulation of OTT services. However, in this debate, the *raison d’être* of the system, consumers, needs to be included.

<https://bit.ly/40z2Eiw>



## Commemoration of 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, organized 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. Shri CP Joshi, Member of Parliament, Chittorgarh-Pratapgarh, also attended the meeting.

The CUTS team 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, the CUTS team organised street plays and an interactive session with schoolchildren to raise awareness about road safety.

## Celebrating 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. Sharma 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.



Glimpses of  
some more  
ACTIVITIES





## Unravelling the Challenges of Sustainable Consumption and Production

Human 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 (JCTSL), 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 we all 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.

## 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.





# 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, 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.

Professor Balraj Singh, Vice-chancellor of SKN Agricultural University, shed light on the recent developments in organic farming and appreciated the efforts made by CUTS in the last years. 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 (ROCA), 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 the stakeholders like government officials, Agriculture University, Agriculture Research University, Agriculture Science Centre, NGOs, CSOs and media participated.

## Glimpses of some more ACTIVITIES



- Simi TB attended the Consumers International Leadership Dialogue: Digital Fairness for future generations on January 10, 2023.
- George Cheriyan 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.
- Cheriyan and Rajdeep Pareek 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 (ISLS) & University of Rajasthan on January 27, 2023.
- A discussion with Sheila Senfuma Nakanyike, Head of Programme of Fair Digital Finance Accelerator (FDFA), Consumers International) was organised, who visited CUTS on February 20, 2023. Cheriyan, 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 Road Safety Cell, Transport and Road Safety Department, GoR 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 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.
- Cheriyan participated in an 'International Conference on Future of Food: Food Safety, Sustainability, Diversity and Industry' organised by the Department of Home Science, University of Rajasthan at Jaipur on March 03-04, 2023. He made a presentation on 'Food Safety in India: Labelling and Display Regulations' on March 3, 2023.
- Cheriyan participated in a CAC meeting organised by FSSAI at Goa on March 09-10, 2023.
- Cheriyan, Deepak and Satyapal attended the 'International Conference on Future of Food: Food Safety, Sustainability, Diversity and Industry' on March 03-04, 2023.
- Cheriyan participated in a workshop 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.

## REPRESENTATION





## Internship at CUTS CART

Tashreen Khan and Krishna Sharma from Vivekananda Global University joined CUTS CART for an internship of three months. Their first-month work plan has been prepared and handed over to them.

## Upcoming Events/ Project Activities

- CUTS-SSNC-ProScope Activities, 2023-24 (April, 2023-September, 2023)
- CUTS-GRSP-ROSA Activities (Phase IV)
- CUTS-GHAI-Consumer-Friendly FoPL in India (Phase II)
- CUTS-VOAC-DVARA
- CUTS- Australian High Commission -Improving City Governance Through Enhancing Knowledge of Urban Local Bodies in Rajasthan
- CUTS TRAI CAP Programmes

## Visit

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

A 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.

- Sanjay Pandey, Consultant, GHAI, visited CUTS on March 13, 2023, and had a detailed discussion with the CUTS team regarding the progress of the FoPL project. He also provided some suggestions on future activities that need to be undertaken to take advocacy forward.

## CART at Social Network

- CART is managing FB pages, one each for MyCity, Insight into the Indian States (I3S), ProOb, ProOrganic & CoPSA (Community of Practice on Social Accountability), GSK and three dedicated web portals for (ProOb), COPSA and I3S.
- CART has a Twitter account with link: <https://twitter.com/CUTSCART> and Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/cutsintcart>
- Besides, CART is also responsible for moderating three google e-groups:

### CUTSConsumersUp:

Consumer Empowerment in India to take consumer protection issues forward.

### CUTSGovForum:

Discuss news and views on Governance issues and challenges in India.

### CUTSRoadSafety:

Discuss and disseminate relevant issues on road safety.



### CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CART)

D-217, Bhaskar Marg, Bani Park, Jaipur 302 016, India, Ph: 91.141.5133259, 2282821, Fx: 91.141.4015395

Email: [cart@cuts.org](mailto:cart@cuts.org), Web: [www.cuts-international.org/cart](http://www.cuts-international.org/cart)

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