

Consumer Dialogue

Volume XIV, Issue 3, September-December, 2023

E-newsletter

Recognising FoPL as a Fundamental Consumer Right

A State Level Consultation on “Significance of FoPL in Addressing NCDs” organised by CUTS with local support from Ram Krishna Shikshan Sansthan was held at Kota, Rajasthan on October 12, 2023. The event aimed to raise awareness about Front-of-Pack Labelling (FoPL) and its role in combating Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) among diverse stakeholders.



Yudhishter Chansi, Secretary, Ram Krishna Shikshan Sanstha, Kota welcomed the guest speakers and the participants providing a brief overview of the programme. Deepak Saxena, Associate Director, CUTS highlighted that FoPL

empowers consumers to make informed purchasing decisions by swiftly identifying unhealthy ingredients, emphasising its cost-effectiveness.

Dr Jagdish Soni, Chief Medical Health Officer, Kota, in his keynote address, acknowledged the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India's (FSSAI) decision to implement Voluntary Health Star Labelling from mid-2023 and welcomed any discussion in the interest of public health. Dr Ratna Jain, Gynaecologist and Former Mayor, stressed FoPL as a consumer right, urging regulators to recognise and implement an effective labelling system tailored to Indian consumers.

Dr Sanjay Pandey, National Consultant at Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA), presented the 'Status of NCDs in India and Rajasthan and the role of FoPL.' Other speakers included Dr R.C. Sahni, Deputy Superintendent (Retd.), MBS Hospital, Kota; Yashwant Sharma, Director, Vibrant Academy; Yagyadutt Hada, Retd. Director, Medical and Health; Gunjan Sanadya, Home Scientist, Food Processing and Value Addition Unit, Kota; Ashok Maheshwari, General Secretary, Vyapar Mahasangh, Kota; Pankaj Sharma, Chairman, State Consumer Counselling Centre Kota; and Hari Vallabh Meghwal, State President, Journalist Association of Rajasthan, Jaipur.

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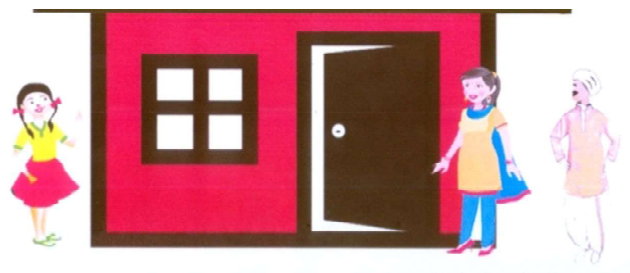
CUTS CART

Pradeep Mehta Receives Business World Social Impact Award 2023

Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General of CUTS International, a global NGO focused on public policy research and advocacy, was honoured with the prestigious Business World Social Impact Award 2023. The ceremony, held on September 6, 2023, in New Delhi, welcomed Mr. Mehta into BW Power's list of Social Impact Leaders and Change Makers for his exceptional contributions to society.

“Receiving this award is a great honour,” Mehta expressed, thanking BW Businessworld and the jury for recognising CUTS' 40 years of remarkable work. He highlighted CUTS' role in nurturing over 200 change-makers, empowering them to catalyse positive change worldwide.





Grahak Sahayta Kendra, Jaipur

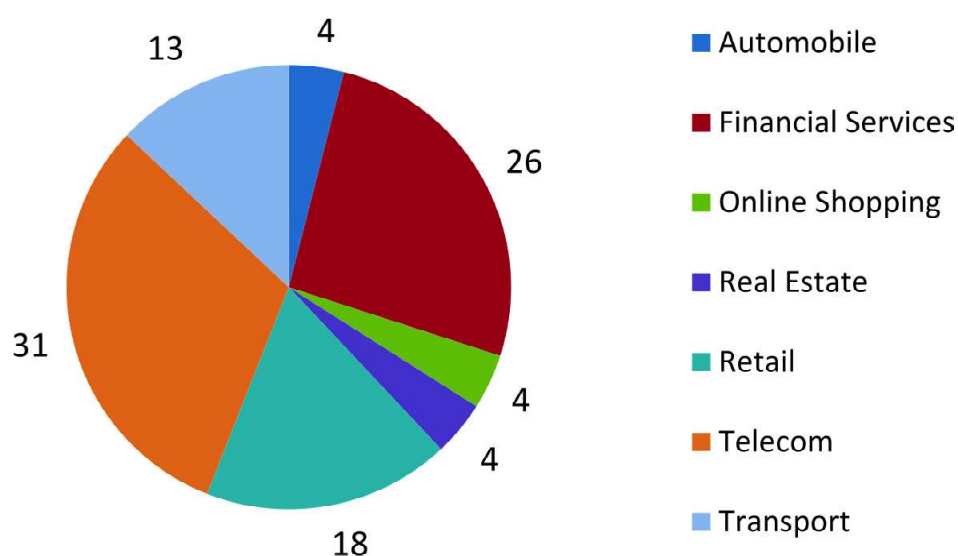
Grahak Sahayta Kendra (GSK) provides services, such as advice on consumer protection-related issues, addresses complaints, and publishes books, pamphlets, magazines, and other relevant materials on consumer-related matters. Besides, the GSK centre also handles consumer complaints through counselling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

GSK details can be accessed at:

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

During Sept.-Dec., 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.

African Union Joins G20, Boosting PM Modi's Global South Agenda



The African Union (AU) officially joins the G20 at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, marking a significant win for his Global South agenda. During his summit address, Modi also pledged support to Morocco following a devastating earthquake. India's pivotal role in Morocco's AU reintegration in 2015 underscores its commitment to African unity.

Mehta lauds the AU's inclusion, emphasising its potential to strengthen multilateralism and the vision of a robust Global South. He highlights Africa's projected economic growth, fuelled by initiatives like the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement.

<https://tinyurl.com/2kp6xfdb>

IMPORTANT
NEWS/
ARTICLES



CUTS Responds to TRAI Consultation on Mobile Number Portability Regulations

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) invited comments on a Consultation Paper on the Draft Telecommunication Mobile Number Portability (MNP) (Ninth Amendment) Regulations, 2023. CUTS expresses its gratitude to TRAI and has submitted its comments on the proposed amendments. Following significant concerns have been raised and some suggestions have been put forward:

1. The proposed amendment suggests adding a new criterion that would require a ten-day waiting period before generating a UPC after a SIM replacement to prevent fraudulent porting and swapping. Additionally, if a request for porting is made before the ten-day period ends, it would be rejected. This could cause inconvenience for consumers and burden them further, especially if they urgently need to port their number.
2. TRAI should provide compelling evidence demonstrating how the proposed ten-day time limit of generating the UPC after the SIM replacement will effectively deter SIM swapping fraud. Conducting a cost-benefit analysis is crucial to assess its effectiveness in preventing fraud compared to any potential challenges it may impose on consumers.
3. Electronically transferring consumer data from the Donor Operator to the Recipient Operator should happen in compliance with the fundamental right to privacy of citizens, after securing the consumer's consent. Clearly outlining the timing of the transfer and setting accountability parameters will bolster transparency and streamline the entire process.
4. Mobile Number Operators (MNOs) should implement robust security measures and proactively develop methods to distinguish between genuine consumer requests and those from fraudsters. For instance, this can be achieved by employing Artificial Intelligence (AI) driven fraud detection systems.
5. In addition, to simplify the MNP process, several suggestions can be implemented, such as introducing a Single-Step Online Process for porting, increasing the validity of UPC, reducing the porting time, eliminating or reducing the porting charges, allowing the transfer of benefits from the donor operator to the recipient operator, leveraging the benefits of cutting-edge technologies like AI, blockchain, and eSim, and increasing consumer awareness.

<http://tinyurl.com/3xk8vn2v>



State-Level Road Safety Policy Advocacy Consultations

CUTS, in collaboration with the Public Affairs Foundation (PAF), conducted a day-long state-level Stakeholders Consultation on Road Safety Policy Advocacy in Karnataka, Bengaluru on November 23, 2023. The primary goal was to advocate for effective policies and guidelines related to speed management, two-wheeler safety, and protecting vulnerable road users in the state.

The inaugural session of the event featured key figures, such as Yogesh A.M (IAS), Transport Commissioner; J Ghanendra Kumar, Additional Transport Commissioner; J Purushottam, Additional Commissioner and Member Secretary of Karnataka Road Safety Authority; and HD Manjunatha, RTO, Bengaluru.

Technical sessions included insights from experts like Anita B. Haddannavar (IPS); Pradeep BS, Professor from National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences Hospital (NIMHANS); Srinivas Alavalli, Chetan Sodaye from World Resources Institute; Pratiksha Surpuriya from the Global Design of Cities Initiative (GDCl); Satya Shankaran (Bicycle Mayor); and Indira (General Secretary, Bengaluru Nav Nirman Party). The event, coordinated by Annapoorna and Sheeba Das from PAF, saw participation from NGOs, media, and academic institutions, with 55 participants. Madhu Sudan Sharma of CUTS delivered a detailed presentation during the inaugural session.



The consultation aimed to address critical road safety issues and advocate for impactful policies in Karnataka. Subsequently, a Regional Level Stakeholder Consultation was conducted by the Centre for Environment and Development in Thrissur, Kerala on December 08, 2023. The consultation witnessed the top officials of road safety of the district. The discussion was focused on effective speed management, two-wheeler safety and better implementation of key risk factors related to provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 2019 in the district.

World Day of Remembrance, 2023

CUTS commemorated the World Day of Remembrance (WDoR) in Rajasthan and Kerala on November 19, 2023. The theme of this year's WDoR, 2023 was 'Remember. Support. Act.' Several media creatives focussing on various key risk factors, road safety issues especially #over speeding, #two-wheeler safety #child safety #NRSB #speed management guidelines #two-wheeler safety guidelines etc. were developed. In Kerala, road safety awareness programmes with youths, college management, nursing staff and students, print and electronic media reach and several activities were conducted.



Exploring Sustainable Consumption: Insights from Community Consultations

Two community-level stakeholder consultations were organised by local partners Rajesh Malakar and BR Sharma in their respective areas. BR Sharma organised a consultation at Karni Palace Road on November 03, 2023, which was attended by more than 50 women participants. Amar Deep Singh attended the consultation.

Rajesh Malakar organised a community-level consultation at the Jagannath Puri area on November 06, 2023, which was attended by 30 women participants. Rajdeep Pareek and Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended the workshop. Artist Srajan Mishra also attended both consultations to gain insights into community sustainable consumption.



Envisioning a Sustainable Future

CUTS organised a Sustainable Consumption Envisioning Workshop during Green Action Week in Jaipur on November 09, 2023. The workshop, attended by 25 residents from the targeted community, including BR Sharma and Rajesh Malakar, aimed to gather ideas from community members and formulate a vision for a sustainable future. The participants were divided into two groups for collaborative work, facilitated by Amar Deep Singh, who guided them in generating ideas and envisioning a sustainable future.



World Heart Day 2023

CUTS commemorated 'World Heart Day 2023' on 'Use Heart to Beat Cardiovascular Diseases' on September 29, 2023, with school children, teachers and senior citizens at Jaipur in association with Hardev Shikshan Evam Jan Kalyan Sansthan. Dr Amit Patodia, a general physician, was the subject expert.



Glimpses of
some more
ACTIVITIES





- Simi TB attended webinar to release of WHO report on Hypertension – ‘The Race Against a Silent Killer’ organised by WHO, Bloomberg Philanthropies and Resolve to Save Lives on September 19, 2023.
- Madhu Sudan Sharma participated in a webinar on ‘Suposhan Bharat Abhiyaan’ organised by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Department, Government of India dated September 20, 2023.
- Simi attended the Key Role of Consumer in Materiovigilance Programme of India organised by the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India on September 22, 2023.
- Amrat Singh, Deepak Saxena, and Simi TB attended a webinar for the launch of the Report–The Junk Push & The National Consultation for Effective Policy Response organised by Nutrition Advocacy in Public Interest-India (NAPI) and Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) on September 22, 2023.
- Simi TB attended “Let’s Fix Our Food” (LFOF) 8th E-dialogue series organised by NIN on “Double Duty Actions to Promote Healthy Food Environment for Adolescents” on September 29 2023.
- Simi TB attended a meeting on “Ultra-Processed Products Webinar: Latest Evidence and Policy Implications with Professor Carlos Monteiro” organised by the University of Sao Paulo, and Global Health Advocacy Incubator on October 05, 2023.
She also attended a meeting conducted by Cochin International Airport, represented by its officers, for CIAL’s apron expansion and associated Terminal 3 works.
- Madhu Sudan Sharma attended the GRSP India Partners Annual Strategic Meeting in Chennai from October 11-13, 2023.
- Simi TB attended a webinar on “Protecting children from the harmful impact of food marketing: Unpacking the evidence to guide policies to prevent harmful impacts of marketing” organised by WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia on October 11, 2023.
- Amardeep Singh attended an online launch of the national report “Empowerment of Women Elected Representatives” organised by Praja Foundation on October 27, 2023.
He also attended a webinar on ‘Capacity Development for Financing a Sustainable Urban Future for All’ organised by the IIHS Capacity Development Forum (CDF) on October 31, 2023. Ravikant Joshi, an Urban Financial Management Expert was the main speaker and spoke on the sustainable finance of Urban Local Bodies and the need for capacity building.
- Simi TB attended Intermediating Sustainable Consumption and Production - Presentation by Allison Marie Loconto organised by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on November 01, 2023.
- Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended the Consumer Outreach Programme organised by TRAI, Jaipur on November 04, 2023.
- Simi TB attended a Zoom meeting with CADE representatives to discuss the G20 Consumer Summit to be held in Brazil in 2024 on November 08, 2023.
- Madhu Sudan Sharma participated in an online road safety workshop organised by Tremmers Private Limited based in the UK on November 09, 2023.
He also visited the office of the Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety on November 16, 2023, and met with Sanjay Mittal, Secretary of the Committee. He provided factsheets detailing the recently published road accident data for Rajasthan, Kerala, and Karnataka.



- Amrat Singh along with Amar Deep Singh, GC Jain, Veena Vidhyadharan, Gauhar Mahmood, Madan Giri, and Gayatri Mod attended an online meeting with the HCL tech grant team on November 16, 2023.
- Amrat Singh, Amardeep Singh along with Gauhar, and Madan Giri visited various CSR/ Foundations based in Chittorgarh on November 22, 2023, to explore possible collaboration and support. They met with Vijay Singh, CSR in charge of Aditya Birla Foundation; Mahaveer Singh, CSR Head, Wonder Cement and Sudhir Kumar, CSR Manager, Nuvoco Vistas.
- Madhu Sudan Sharma participated in the Asia Regional Road Safety Conference organised jointly by The Asian Development Bank, the Asia-Pacific Road Safety Observatory (APRSO), the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) and the International Road Assessment Programme (iRap) at ADB headquarters in Manila, Philippines on December 05-07, 2023.
- Simi TB attended the Airport User Consultative Committee Meeting organised by Cochin International Airport Limited at Nedumbassery on December 08, 2023.
- Amar Deep Singh and Simi TB attended the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) Expert Group Online Meeting on 'Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in South Asia through Inclusive Transport' on December 13, 2023.
- Simi TB attended an online workshop on Simplifying Sustainability for MSMEs: The What and Why of Sustainability organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry on December 14, 2023.
- Madhu Sudan Sharma attended the release of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Status Report of Road Safety, 2023 on December 13, 2023.
- Amar Deep Singh attended state state-level workshop on Biomedical Waste Management organised by WHO, Department of Health & Family Welfare and Toxics Link at Jaipur on December 18, 2023.
- Madhu Sudan Sharma met Kishore Kumar, Joint Secretary, Planning, Education Department, Government of India on December 20, 2023.
- Amar Deep Singh, Amrat Singh, Deepak Saxena and Simi TB attended a Zoom meeting with officials of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) on the Child-Friendly City Initiative on December 20, 2023.
- On December 21, 2023, a virtual meeting took place involving Sabrina Gander, Senior Officer of Advocacy and Grants, Nalin Sinha, India Coordinator for GHAI, and participants including Amrat, Rajdeep, Deepak, Gauhar, and Madhu Sudan from CUTS.
- Madhu Sudan attended a meeting organised by RTO, Jaipur with NGOs to discuss MoRTH's report on Road Accidents, 2021 and Global Status of Road Safety Report, 2023 on December 28, 2023.



Meetings, Visit and Appointments

N M Prusty and Namrata from the HCL Grant Team visited CUTS on November 20, 2023. Amrat Singh along with Deepak Saxena, G C Jain, Amar Deep Singh, Gauhar Mehmood and Rajdeep Pareek attended the meeting with the team at the CUTS conference hall. During the meeting project proposal, the organisation's profile, achievements and governance structure were reviewed.

On November 21, 2023, the HCL team visited CUTS CHD for evaluation of the fieldwork. A field visit was organised at Bassi *Gram Panchayat*, where they interacted with self-help group (SHG) members, and reviewed various accounts and organisational documents of the SHG. They also visited the Gadiya Lohar community.

Upcoming Events/ Project Activities

- CUTS-GRSP-ROSA Activities (Phase IV)
- CUTS-GHAI-Consumer-Friendly FoPL in India (Phase III)
- CUTS-RBI DEAF Programme Phase IV
- CUTS TRAI CAP Programmes

Internship at CUTS CART

Tashreen Khan and Krishna Sharma from Vivekananda Global University for a month and Kashika Gupta from Symbiosis School of Liberal Arts for a month completed an internship with CUTS CART at different times in 2023.

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.



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