

Trusted Smart Products

World Consumer Rights Day – 2019

Event Report

March 15, 2019, Jaipur



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Background and Overview

World Consumer Rights Day is observed on March 15 all over the world. The day has been chosen since it was on March 1962 when the then President of the United States of America John F Kennedy made the historical speech to the US congress upholding Consumer Rights. The international consumer movement now marks March 15 every year to raise global awareness about consumer rights. In an organised way, the World Consumer Rights Day first took place on March 15, 1983 and has now become an annual event for solidarity within the international consumer movement along with creating awareness about consumer rights.

Theme 2019 –Trusted Smart Products

‘Trusted Smart Products’, the buzzword of today’s world, was considered the epicentre for observing World Consumer Rights Day this year. ‘Trusted Smart Products’, the theme of WCRD – 2018, makes it more scenario-oriented and matching with the requirements of today’s consumer. Smart products are connected to the internet and receive, collect and send data. Globally, there are currently 23.1 billion smart products in the world, outnumbering people three to one. From smart phones to wearable fitness trackers, to voice-activated assistants and smart TVs, many of the products we use are increasingly becoming connected by default. Networks of smart products can also be known as the Internet of Things (IoT).

As more people come online across the world and our connection to the internet becomes better and faster, smart products will become more of a day-to-day reality for consumers everywhere, marking a major change in the way many consumers interact with products and services. The emergence of smart technology brings many opportunities for consumers; access to new services, more responsive products, greater convenience and choice. There are, however, some significant causes for concern: lack of security, privacy and meaningful choice over how we use them, as well as a lack of clarity about who is responsible when things go wrong.

Taking into consideration the importance of the theme and the occasion, Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS International) organised an event on March 15, 2019 to observe WCRD in Jaipur.

Proceedings

Welcome Address

Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS International, welcomed the chief guest, key speakers and all the participants and gave a brief background and talked about the importance of World Consumer Rights Day. Along with it, he introduced the theme for the day, that is, Trusted Smart Products and explained the importance of the theme in the current scenario. He moderated the whole event.



Introductory Address on the Theme

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International, while delivering the introductory address on the theme explained the importance of the day as the World Consumer Rights Day is observed on March 15 all over the world. The day has been chosen since it was on March 1962 when the then President of the United States of America John F Kennedy made the historical speech to the US congress upholding Consumer Rights. “Trusted Smart Products” – the theme of the World Consumer Rights Day this year brings India so much in the centre of the world. Firstly, India is one of the fastest growing markets worldwide and, secondly, like most of the developing nations, in India also these smart products like smart phone, televisions, watches, fitness trackers, etc., have penetrated deep into the consumers’ psyche.

“Globally, there are currently 23.1 billion connected smart products outnumbering people three to one. Similarly, global consumer spending on smart products for the home is forecast to nearly double in all regions between 2017 and 2022,” he further said. In particular, the global adoption of smartphones has increased rapidly over the past three years. There are around 4 billion smartphone connections worldwide, nearly double the figure three years ago.

“Over the past decade, consumer uptake of smart products has steadily increased and forecasts show this is going to continue. It is predicted that by 2025, 72 percent of

internet users will be accessing the internet exclusively via mobile. Smart products are increasingly important tools that help to empower consumers”, he added.

Cheriyen further pointed out the emergence of smart technology brings many opportunities for consumers; access to new service, more responsive products, greater convenience and choice. There are however some significant causes of concern: lack of security, privacy and meaningful choice over how we use them, as well as lack of clarity about who is responsible when things go wrong.

There are also issues around lack of access, with millions of people globally locked out of this new technology by overly high data charges.



Opening Address

Pradeep Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS International, in his opening address, focused on e-commerce and protection of the rights of consumers in relation to the usage of smart phones and other gadgets. He further stated that India is a unique country where the consumer day is observed twice in a year, on March 15 as 'World Consumer Rights Day' and on December 24 as 'National Consumers Day' despite the fact that the state of Indian consumer is not as satisfactory as expected. He also shared his life experiences and said that during his journey of consumer movement, the Government always remained supportive.

Mehta further shared with participants that CUTS International has come a long way since it started as consumer protection organisation in 1983. By now, it has graduated to a consumer welfare organisation. It is usual to see foreign and international groups working in international arena, but an Indian organisation like CUTS coming ahead and

making difference with its notable work is a matter of pride for all of us. Today, CUTS International has six overseas centres aspiring to advocate consumer rights.



Findings of the Survey on 'Trusted Smart Products'

Radhika Khandelwal, Programme Associate of CUTS International, presented the findings of the survey on 'Trusted Smart Products'. The survey was conducted by CUTS International in the wake of this year's theme of 'Trusted Smart Products'. Following are the highlights of the few important findings of the survey presented:

- Out of the total respondents, 74 percent were males and 26 percent were females.
- Out of the total respondents 14 percent were below 25 years of age, 25 percent fall between 26 to 35 years, 33 percent were aged between 36 to 45 years and 29 percent were above 45 years.
- Out of these respondents, 54 percent were postgraduates, whereas 29 percent of respondent were professionals and majority of consumers were private employees
- 96 percent of consumers responded that they are using smart products.
- 84 percent of consumers have upgraded their daily gadgets with smart products.
- 96 percent of consumers use smart phones; it has the highest usage in comparison to other smart products.
- All the respondents are in agreement that smart products are more useful and comfortable in comparison to the ordinary products.
- 81 percent consumers' believes that smart products used by them are affordable, whereas only 6 percent of consumers have applied for loan to buy smart products.

- 84 percent of consumers find that price of smart products are justifiable against its utility.
- 75 percent of consumers hesitate in sharing their personal data on smart products.
- Only 51 percent of consumers read the terms and conditions before allowing smart device to access personal data.
- 60 percent of consumers got their smart devices interlinked with other smart products.
- 90 percent of consumers are concerned about privacy breach in the form of leaking their personal data while using smart devices.
- 37 percent consumers agree that they spare less than 2 hours whereas 19 percent of them are using smart devices for more than 4 hours.
- 65 percent of consumers think that companies of these smart products provide proper guidelines regarding its usage.
- 19 percent of consumers faced data breach in their smart products. But out of this 19 percent, only 18 percent of consumers filed complaint in consumer forums and half of them are satisfied with the consumer dispute redressal mechanism. Rest 82 percent of them have not filed complaint.
- 54 percent of consumers found change in the pattern of using smart products after facing privacy and security issues and out of that 65 percent of consumers have started taking more caution while using these products.



Abhishek Khandel, Assistant Manager-Resolution, Vodafone-Idea Limited, spoke on 'Trusted Smart Products – Consumer's Perspective.' While clarifying the role of Telecom Service Providers to the participants, he said, "In this era of technology, variation takes place on day-to-day basis. He urged the consumers to be aware and smart before allowing access to the data. As technology is a double soul which comes with both positive and negative aspects so the consumers need to act smartly while handling these latest smart products otherwise they have to be ready to face the consequences. Today, 'Mobile Phones' and other Smart products have become the backbone of the internet and it has enhanced the role of Telecom Service Providers as they have a huge responsibility towards Data Protection and Security", he added.



"We are digitally connected and wired in our daily lives. Our life is now measured by our presence in the digital space. Our life revolves around smart products and how smartly we use them", said **Bhavana Sharma**, Advisor, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India. She stated this while addressing the event as the Chief Guest on the 'Role of Telecom Regulators vis-à-vis Trusted Smart Products'. Sharing her perspective, she said, "Technology is a double soul which comes with both positive and negative approach".

Sharma further pointed out that it is a responsibility of consumers also to see what applications are they using and also to prevent Third Party Allowance while using these products as this sometimes creates threat to digital privacy and security. Today, a Telecom regulator has the obligation to maintain digital privacy and security. She further mentioned about the issues which are faced by the consumers in relation to the trusted smart products like Affordability, Safety and Security, Data Privacy and Protection, Transparency, etc. Regulators need to see that smart products must be affordable and should be designed in a way that they protect the privacy of the consumers, she further recommended. She focused on this concept of 'Privacy by Design'.



Open Discussion

After concluding the panel discussion, an open discussion between the participants and the panel experts was held. During this discussion, participants got a chance to share their views as well as to clear their doubts with the panel experts which were clarified accordingly. Susan Mathew, Siddharth and Udai Singh Mehta, Deputy Executive Director of CUTS International, Jaipur, raised their doubts related to complicated password generation system, excessive charging and security against a fraudulent transaction at OLA money, respectively.



Vote of Thanks

Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Programme Associate, CUTS International, provided a quick overview of the various issues related to the digital marketplaces discussed at the event. He expressed his gratitude on behalf of the organisation to all the eminent guests, speakers and participants for making the event a success. Besides, he also thanked them for becoming a part of CUTS initiative to safeguard the interests of the consumers in smart products and improve the scenario in India.



List of Participants

S. No.	Name	Name of the Organisation	Mob. No.
1	Kapil Sharma	B- 200, JP Colony, Vidhyadhar Nagar, Jaipur	9468680447
2	A.R. Sharma	ATMA Sanstha, Vil.- Jagmalpura, P.- Jorpura, Via- Jobner, Jaipur	9413063961
3	Saurabh Kumar	CUTS International, Jaipur	9891469886
4	Rakesh Malakar	VikasonmukhSansthan, Naraina	9001867681
5	Raj Sharma	Sakar Sansthan, 30, Suraj Nagar- E, Civil Lines, Jaipur	8352229832
6	Abhishek Khandal	Vodafone Idea Limited, Malviya Nagar, Jaipur	9828096249
7	Harish	Vodafone Idea Limited, Malviya Nagar, Jaipur	9828096272
8	Prashant Sharma	CUTS International, Jaipur	
9	Susan Mathew	CUTS International, Jaipur	
10	Badri Narayan Sharma	CUTS CART	9928373909
11	Rajdeep Pareek	CUTS CART	
12	Sidharth Narayan	CUTS International, Jaipur	9810064675
13	NidhiBakshi	CUTS International, Jaipur	9772345629
14	Tara Singh Meena	BSNL, Jaipur	9414008446
15	Bhoop Ram Sharma	HardevShikshan& Jan KalyanSansthan, Jaipur	9480062401
16	Lalit Bhardwaj	Sarojani Naidu Mahila Vikas avamKalyanSansthan, Jaipur	9829165810
17	Dr. Divyarth Dubey	Reliance JioInfocom Ltd., VKIA, Jaipur	8890969696
18	Shivani	WORLD, 1-GA-32, Jawahar Nagar, Jaipur	9829065406

S. No.	Name	Name of the Organisation	Mob. No.
19	Dr. Ram Bahadur Kulshreshtha	Manager, Rajasthan Consumer Helpline, Rajasthan, Consumer Affairs Department	9413208413
20	Udai Mehta	CUTS International, Jaipur	
21	Ujjwal Kumar	CUTS International, Jaipur	
22	Amar Deep Singh	CUTS International, Jaipur	
23	Sarita Sharma	Department of Consumer Affairs, Rajasthan	9414871179
24	Nimisha Sharma	CUTS International, Jaipur	
25	Amit Vijayavargiya	Airtel, Jaipur	9829004110
26	Radhika Khandelwal	CUTS International, Jaipur	9680293320
27	Bhavana Sharma	Advisor, TRAI	
28	Pradeep Mehta	CUTS International	
29	Bipul Chatterjee	CUTS International	
30	George Cheriyan	CUTS International	
31	Deepak Saxena	CUTS International	
32	Bhavna Sharma	TRAI	

Programme Schedule

Time	Activity	Speakers
1100-1300 hrs	Welcome	Deepak Saxena, Assistant Director, CUTS International
	Introductory Address on the theme	George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International.
	Opening Remarks	Pradeep Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS International
	Presentation on Survey Findings	Radhika Khandelwal, Programme Associate, CUTS
	Trusted Smart Products: Consumer's Perspective	Mr. Abhishekh Khandal, Assistant Manager, Resolution, Vodafone-Idea Ltd.
	Role of Telecom Regulators vis-à-vis Trusted Smart Products	Ms. Bhavana Sharma, Advisor, TRAI, Jaipur
	Discussions	Participants
	Summing Up , Vote of Thanks	Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Program Officer, CUTS-International, Jaipur