

CUTS IN ACTION

कट्स CUTS
1984 to 2003
Twenty Years of Social Change

October-December 2002

Reaching Out – Consumer ‘Unity’ in ‘Diversity’



Greetings and a Very Exciting and Productive New Year from me and every Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Muslim, Sikh, Agnostic and Atheist at CUTS.

Children are innocent, as is well known, and it doesn't really matter to them as to what religion or caste or community one is from. I witnessed a wonderful meet of children, when we organised a *Baal Sammelan* (Children's Meeting) at Chittorgarh in this quarter. The enthusiasm and expression of the children was phenomenal (see pg-2).

That was not all. I was moved by another delightful scene of a young girl at Chittorgarh. She was carrying a younger brother on her back, as her 'bounden duty', and exhorting



Look! All these children are going to school

another younger brother to join school. She was not begging, as some may wrongly interpret from the manner in which her hands are outstretched. My faith in 'Our future, Our children' (see CUTS in Action – April-June 2002) was vindicated by this scene.

Celebration of the World Rural Women's Day on October 17th was another of our grass roots activities being reported in this quarter. A conference was organised at Jaipur where the focus was on the crucial need of drinking water.

Talking to consumers, in particular rural consumers, on power sector reforms is another area where we continue to plod with the

support of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. This year, we hope to accelerate this programme, including taking it to Madhya Pradesh with the support of the Canadian government.

At the national level, we released our report on reorienting the Competition Law in India at a brainstorming meeting with our partner: NCAER. In the same period, the Parliament also adopted the new Competition Act, which will replace the old MRTP Act. I am very happy to say that we had lobbied hard on the new competition law and most of our recommendations have been accepted. The new law will be able to deal with several irregularities in our economy and help us to grow faster.

The main problem in making it effective is a resource issue, both money and people. If the government doesn't give it sufficient money, it will not be able to do what it is required to do. The other problem is to find good and young professionals to man the Competition Authority, rather than make it another roosting place for retirees.

Hectic preparations are going on for the 20th Anniversary Partnership

Conclave at New Delhi on 12-14 March. We hope it to be a memorable event, both as a platform for debates around the burning issues of poverty and their relationship with governance and the role of civil society, including looking inwards. One thing which has really encouraged me and my colleagues at CUTS is the overwhelming messages that we are receiving for the Souvenir to be published on the occasion. One, which is worthy of reproduction here is from the Vice President, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat.

Pradeep S. Mehta
Pradeep S. Mehta, Editor



Vice President
of India



"I am delighted to note that CUTS is celebrating its 20th anniversary in the year 2003. My first interaction with CUTS was back in 1984, when Shri Pradeep Mehta and Shri Tripuresh Sharma came to me with a campaign on the severe coin shortage in the country, asking legislators to sign on. This was perhaps the first campaign of its kind by the first consumer group of Rajasthan, which impressed me a lot. I signed on it, as one of the 44 legislators of Rajasthan. The campaign was successful, as I saw in the press.

CUTS is one of the very few consumer organisations in the country working from the grass root to international level. I have been seeing the organisation growing at an amazing pace.

When I was asked by the Bharatiya Janata Party in 2000, to draft the party's input for the National Agriculture Policy, I had to look around for guidance and inputs on WTO's impact on Indian agriculture. Few persons informed me that one does not have to look beyond Jaipur, when CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics and Environment can assist me. Indeed, their expert comments and inputs helped me to draft the policy paper.

I have been seeing a variety of CUTS' publications, especially the one which is in the form of a wall newspaper called "Gram Gadar". This wall paper has been helping our rural folk in a big way through its regular columns, such as on women's rights.

I congratulate Shri Pradeep Mehta and his team at CUTS for their great efforts and wish them good luck for a very bright future."

Competition Challenges

Under the 7-Up Project, which is a comparative study of the competition regimes in seven developing countries of the Commonwealth, a seminar was organised on "Competition Challenges in a Globalising Economy: Issues before India" in collaboration with the National Council of Applied Economic Research on 4 October in New Delhi.

The meeting also saw the launch of the report "Reorienting Competition Law and Policy in India". (www.cuts.org/news-cuts.htm#Globalising_Economy)

Doha Agenda

The International Working Group on the Doha Agenda (IWOGDA) Project has been taken up to conduct research on competition and investment policy at the WTO.

A brainstorming session was organised at Jaipur, India, on 8-9 November as a part of this initiative.

Another brainstorming session was organised on the provisions of Special and Differential Treatment under the various WTO agreements on 8 November at Jaipur. (www.cuts.org/news-cuts.htm#IWOGDA)

Advocacy and Fact-finding

A series of regional seminars were held under the 'Investment for Development' (IFD) Project which involves fact-finding and advocacy work on investment regimes in seven developing countries, viz., Bangladesh, India, South Africa, Hungary, Tanzania, Brazil and Zambia.

The first in the series was the Africa Regional Seminar organised in Nairobi, Kenya, in collaboration with EcoNews Africa on 18-19 October. Discussions were carried out on the findings of the research carried out in Tanzania, South Africa and Zambia.

The Asia Pacific Regional Seminar held in New Delhi on 24-26 November was the second one in this series. The participants discussed Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) trends, policies, performance and perceptions of the region.

The third in the series was the Latin America Regional Seminar in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on 4-5 December. Various domestic and regional FDI issues of the region were discussed.

Another Asia Pacific Regional seminar was organised on 26 November at New Delhi to discuss the State of Competition Policy and Law. Resource persons made presentations on the current status of competition policy in their respective countries. Robin Brown of FEMAG, Australia, emphasised the need for co-operation among civil society organisations at the regional and international levels.

EU-India Project

A meeting of the EINTAD (EU-India Network on Trade and Development) Project was held in Jaipur from 20-21 December.

This Network is implementing a joint research project (comprised of European and Indian researchers) on various issues, such as mobility of labour, textiles and clothing, anti-dumping, competition and investment, in the context of the Doha agenda. One of the objectives of the research is to feed the outputs to trade negotiators well before the next WTO Ministerial Conference, which will be held at Cancun, Mexico, during September 10-14, 2003. (www.cuts.org/news-cuts.htm#EU)

Regulating Power Network

Under the "Involvement of Consumers in Power Sector Reforms in Rajasthan"

Project, a workshop was held on 26-27 November at Jalore, Rajasthan, with the support of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), New Delhi. This was the third in the series of workshops.

The purpose of the workshop was primarily to set up and regularise the loose network of various stakeholders into *Vidyut Sudhaar Samitis* and build the capacities of the members of these *Samitis* on energy efficiency issues.

Rural Women's Day

To commemorate Rural Women's Day, a seminar entitled "*Mahila Pratinidhi Sammelan*" was organised on 17 October at Jaipur. The participants discussed the current scenario vis-à-vis the drinking water supply in the rural areas and debated the role of the members of the *Panchayat Raj* institutions in this regard.

C.P. Joshi, Minister for Policy Planning, Government of Rajasthan, while inaugurating the programme, spoke on the Government initiatives in improving the status of drinking water in rural areas of Rajasthan.

(www.cuts.org/Mahila_pratinidhi.htm)



WTO and Economic Issues

The involvement of the poor and unprivileged communities should be increased by creating a better-informed society. The role of NGOs becomes crucial in analysing the changes and acting accordingly, said Dilip Sinha, former Vice-Chancellor of Vishwa Bharti University, in a workshop on WTO and Economic Issues on 8 October at Calcutta. It was organised in association with the Department of Business Management, Calcutta University.

The workshop was followed by three similar workshops under the Project 'Grass Roots Reach Out and Networking in India on Trade and Economics (GRANITE)' held at Guwahati, Lucknow and Chandigarh.

Consumers and the Climate

Experts on climate change, civil society representatives, consumer groups, the academia and the media participated in a conference entitled "Impact of Unsustainable Production and Consumption: The Role of Consumer Groups" organised on 24 October at New Delhi on the fringes of the Conference of Parties-VIII of the Climate Change Conference.

([www.cuts.org/news-cuts.htm#Consumption and Production](http://www.cuts.org/news-cuts.htm#Consumption_and_Production))



Trade and Regional Integration In collaboration with MWENGO, Harare, Zimbabwe, and the Institute for Global Dialogue, Johannesburg, South Africa, CUTS-ARC hosted a regional workshop entitled "Interface between Trade and Regional Partnership Agreement, WTO, Cotonou, AGOA and NEPAD: Are They Conflicting or Complementary?" in Harare on 28-30 October.

The objective of the workshop was to help prepare a focused research and advocacy agenda on a synergistic approach to trade and development issues through genuine partnerships among stakeholders.

(www.cuts.org/news-cuts.htm#ARC-Regional)

Strengthening Our Future

About 150 children participated in a two-day *Baal Sammelan* organised in association with Save the Children, UK, North Central India (NCI) Office, Jaipur, at Chittorgarh on 19-20 November. The *Sammelan* was organised on the occasion of the World Day against Child Abuse on 19th November and the International Child Rights Convention Day on 20th November.

The focus of the *Sammelan* was 'Expression of your Views' and was designed to be a programme organised, managed, compered and presented by the children. The *Sammelan* also had an exhibition of children's works, which was in various forms such as posters, small poems, speeches, etc. (www.cuts.org/Bal_sammelan.doc)



Training Programmes at IRMA
 Bipul Chatterjee participated in a four-week training programme entitled "Management Appreciation Programme for Voluntary Agencies" at the Institute of Rural Management (IRMA), Anand, Gujarat. More than 20 participants from India and abroad learnt various aspects of NGO management and exchanged experiences.

According to him, "Over the last six years, at CUTS, I have been dealing with many NGO management issues. But this programme will help me in understanding them better and, thus, in taking decisions for the benefit of the organisation and its employees. The challenge, and responsibility, is to implement the learnings, along with my colleagues."

Mita Dutta participated in the Management Development Programme (MDP) organised by the same institute for 'Making Managerial Communication More Effective' on 30 December 2002-4 January 2003.

Partha Das attended an MDP on "Formulation and Appraisal of Rural Development Projects" on 30 December 2002-3 January 2003 at IRMA. The Programme focussed on Participatory Rural Appraisal, Logical Framework Approach, and Social Benefit-Cost Analysis.

India, EU and the WTO
 Pradeep S. Mehta was invited by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung of Germany to participate in a seminar on WTO for the Southern Policy Institutes held in association with the External Relations Department of the WTO on 14-16 October in Geneva.

Pranav Kumar presented a paper entitled "India, EU and Labour Standards" at the international seminar on "India, the European Union, and the WTO" held on 16-17 December in New Delhi.

The seminar was organised by the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in association with the Centre de Sciences



My acquaintance with CUTS...and beyond!
 Searching hard for material on trade liberalisation in India, I stumbled upon a briefing paper on market access, published by CUTS and posted on their website.

As my 'demands' were being increasingly met through ample 'supply' of articles on the CUTS website, the economist in me decided to explore the website further. Is this organisation one of its kind? Is it fieldwork, is it research...where's its reach.... and impact? And finally, what it all boils down to for a fresher looking for her promising 'first job'...will this organisation provide job satisfaction and good training for an ambitious economist as me? I found the answers a few months later.

I have been employed with CUTS for 50 days now. In retrospect, the overarching factor that drew me to CUTS was its centrist approach to controversial international trade issues. This was reflected prominently in a book published by CUTS, namely, "WTO and India: An Agenda for Action in the Post Doha Scenario", which I was fortunate to read before applying for the job. As I set out to discover other advantages, I found the projects extremely interesting and absorbing. Each day adds a different dimension to my thinking and no day passes without a new 'task' on my table!

What has left me truly amazed is the far-reaching networking CUTS has established within India and across borders!

I reserve my views on some of the negative aspects of CUTS, with suggestions for the future, for later.

Manleen Dugal

Humaines, the European Commission Delegation in India, Fundacao Oriente and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

Trade in Services

Mwaka Cynthia Chizoma and K.S. Sajeev represented CUTS in a national workshop on "Trade in Services for Zambia" on 7-9 October in Lusaka. The capacity-building workshop was organised by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in collaboration with the Zambian Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry.

On Environmental Issues

Arjun Dutta represented CUTS at the "Inter-regional Conference on Adaptation to Climate Change" on 18-20 October at New Delhi. The consultation provided an opportunity to learn about adaptation measures in various parts of the world.

Dipanker Dey and Ishani Naskar represented CUTS at an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) international meet entitled "Environmental Requirements and Market

Access: Addressing Developing Countries Concerns" on 27-28 November in New Delhi.

Soumi Ghosh represented CUTS in a roundtable discussion with a team from the US on "Energy, Climate and Sustainable Development: Prospects and Problems for Developing Nations" on 5 October at Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta.

Conference on Biotechnology
 K.S. Sajeev represented CUTS at the African Consumer Leaders Conference on "Biotechnology and Food Security" at Lusaka. The conference was organised by Consumers International - Regional Office for Africa in collaboration with the Zambia Consumers Association on 18-20 November.

Sajeev also participated in a national seminar on competition law and policy held in Livingstone, Zambia, on 28-29 November. The seminar was organised by the Zambia Competition Commission with the support of the UNCTAD, Geneva.

SNIPPETS

- Nitya Nanda spoke on "Emerging International Trade Regime: Challenges before Developing Countries" at the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) on their 30th National Convention at Ahmedabad on 13-15 November.
- Vinayak Pandey participated in an "International Conference on Electricity Regulation" organised in joint collaboration with the Tata Energy Research Institute, the Ministry of Power, Government of India, the United States Agency for International Development and the Department for International Development, UK, on 18-19 October at New Delhi.
- Deepak Saxena attended a conference entitled "Professionalism in Driver Training Systems" organised on 15-16 November in Goa by the Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE), a Delhi-based NGO working on Road Safety.
- Rajendra Kumar Sharma attended the "Organisational Development Workshop in Context of Civil Societies" at Haridwar on 19-21 December, organised by Save the Children, UK, North Central India Office.
- Rajan Gandhi represented CUTS at the 2002 conference of the OECD Global Forum on International Investment (GFII) at Shanghai, China, on 5-6 December. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Co-operation hosted the event. He also attended the meeting of the OECD Emerging Asia Investment Policy Initiative on 6 December.
- CUTS representatives met the Minister for Medical and Health, Government of Rajasthan, Madho Singh Diwan, and discussed the ill-effects of food adulteration. He was requested to start a technical training programme for consumer organisations.

VISITORS

10 Months in India





Working as a legal consultant/researcher with CUTS-CITEE over the past ten months has been a truly wonderful experience. Living here in Jaipur and interacting with

my colleagues has given me the opportunity to grow and develop both as a person as well as a professional. As part of the 7-Up team, I have been working not only on various issues relating to competition and regulation, but was also given the opportunity to actively participate in other areas as well.

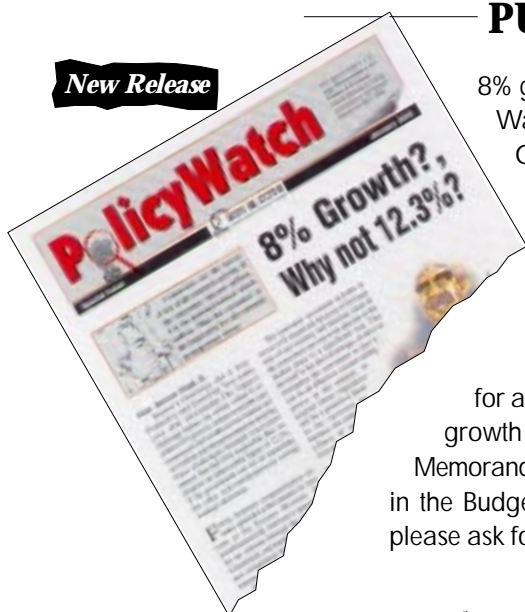
Highlights of my experience with CUTS not only included 'the retreat' that acquainted me with the colleagues and work of all the other centres; representing CUTS at seminars in India as well as meeting our 7-Up partners in Africa; and the evening dinners and drinks with colleagues and friends but also day to day joys such as riding my bicycle through Jaipur's maddening traffic!

Too much has happened in the past ten months to be put in just a few lines. I shall always cherish the time spent here in this exotic place that is so far away from home, yet feels like a home to me. The valuable lessons I have learnt here will continue to benefit me in both my career and personal life. The people and the organisation will always have a warm place in my heart and I am sure we will meet again! Tot ziens.

Ralf van de Beek, the Netherlands

Name	Comments
Siddharth, Director, Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, New Delhi	I have been following the development and growth of CUTS, especially because of my long-standing acquaintance with Mr. Pradeep S. Mehta. I was pleasantly surprised to see how big it (CUTS) has become and what a wide range of activities they have undertaken! The work relating to international trade is very relevant indeed. I do hope they will continue to associate with the Ministry of Commerce and grow from strength to strength.
 Kirit Parikh, Member, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, India	Though I have known CUTS and Pradeep Mehta for a year, this is my first visit to CUTS. It has grown into an extremely effective research and advocacy organisation. The story is inspiring for anyone who is thinking of starting an institute. How to inspire people to work with you, how to network, how to raise resources and how not to compromise on the quality of output, are things that CUTS can teach.
Andreas Julian, and Frank Hess, European Commission, Brussels	EU-India trade relations will be increased with a number of civil society perspectives, which can hopefully result from a fruitful co-operation between CUTS and the European Commission.
K. S. Money, Secretary to Government of Rajasthan in the Department of Industries, Jaipur.	I am glad that I could visit the CUTS office today. It was educative and interesting. I am sure that an organisation like CUTS can do a lot of good in preparing our people to face the challenges posed by the new economic environment as also to utilise the opportunities offered by it. I hope we will be able to take advantage of their presence in Rajasthan to prepare the state economy for the emerging economic future of international competition.
 T. N. Srinivasan, Yale University, USA	It is a pleasure to visit the office of CUTS and to learn about the many important projects in which the dedicated staff of CUTS are engaged. I wish them success in their important endeavours to make the world better and safer for consumers everywhere.

PUBLICATIONS



New Release

8% growth? Why not 12.3%. The cover story of this 12-page Policy Watch (Special Issue) raises this question in the backdrop of the Government's proposed 8% growth target for this year. Besides, it throws light on some of the very critical issues concerning the common masses, which include rise in and poor targeting of subsidies, poor governance, corruption, the need for an effective competition law, importance of information, etc.

The issue also recommends some policy measures required for addressing these critical issues. They can aid in reaching the higher growth target by cutting wastages and losses. This particular issue is a Memorandum to the Finance & Company Affairs Minister for being considered in the Budget speech for 2003-04. If you are interested in knowing more, please ask for a copy.

CUTS is celebrating its 20th Anniversary at a Partnership Conclave with the Theme: "Governance and its Relationship with Poverty Reduction" during 12-14 March, 2003 at New Delhi, India.

For more details, please see: www.cuts.org/CUTS-Anniversary.htm