

CUTS CRC Activity Report

April-June 2011

ONGOING
PROJECTS

Raising Stakeholders' Demand for Renewable Energy in India

CUTS with support of the Climate Works Foundation, US through the Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation (SSEF), New Delhi initiated a project entitled 'Demand Side Management & Renewable Energy in India: Capacity Building of CSOs' (DREC Project) for the capacity building of consumer groups in two states of India, i.e. West Bengal & Gujarat. The focus of the project would be on the capacity building measures for consumer groups so as to better prepare them to carry out need based advocacy and participate in policy and regulatory processes related to the renewable energy sector. This would help in creating demand from the consumer end, which would build up pressure for appropriate actions by relevant authorities.

As a first activity, the prevailing scenario of the energy sector in the two states was being assessed. It is expected that through this project, SSEF and CUTS would be able to acknowledge various capacity gaps existing at the consumer group levels. As a next step, a baseline consumer survey would be undertaken in both the states to derive a comprehensive and updated status of awareness among stakeholders on issues pertaining to energy efficiency & renewable energy.

Launch Meeting

The project launch meeting for West Bengal was held in June 2011, while it is planned for Gujarat in August 2011. It had participation from policymakers, subject experts, academicians, civil society organisations and media.

The meeting saw enriching discussions and deliberations on Renewable Energy and DSM with participation from the likes of S P Gon Chaudhuri, Adviser, Department of Power & NES, Government of West Bengal; Malay Kumar De, Power Secretary, Government of West Bengal; Prasad Ranjan Ray, Chairperson, WBERC; Joy Chakraborty, Assistant Director, WBREDA, representatives of Prayas Energy Group, Pune, The Energy & Resources Institute, etc.



L-R: Keya Ghosh, Natasha Bhan, Malay K De, Prititosh Ray, S. P. Gon Chaudhuri in the Inaugural session of DREC Launch meeting

25 years
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CUTS International

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Consumer Assistance Cell at Grassroots (CONASC)

CUTS CRC, with the support of West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (WBSEDCL) is working on a pilot project entitled, 'Consumer Assistance Cell (CONASC) at Grassroots'. Under the project, assistance cells will be run for electricity consumers in nine districts of West Bengal, viz., North Dinajpur, Malda, Murshidabad, Purulia, West Midnapore, Howrah, North 24 Parganas and Nadia.

The main objective of the project is to form CONASCs at the grassroots level to improve and supplement the service delivery at the grassroots, with focus on improving the grievance redressal system of the utility service provider. The assistance cells will help consumers with their queries on new and temporary connections, billing and metering, complaint redressal, etc.

Domestic and agricultural consumers in the rural and sub-urban areas constitute the principal target group for the project.

Under the project, nine CSOs are now operating the CONASC cells in their respective locality wherein they meet consumers on specific days of a week to listen to consumer complaints and guide them on how to go about a particular problem. 44 awareness building workshops and 45 capacity building workshops have already been organised in nine districts reaching out to roughly 6000 consumers.

Upcoming activity will include district level meetings involving consumers, local station managers, Regional Manager & Regional Grievance Redressal Officer wherein consumer issues collated by the CONASC cells will be tabled for discussion and solution. In addition, the grassroots CSOs will organise a number of pocket meetings for further dissemination and capacity building with electricity consumers in interior villages.

www.cuts-international.org/CRC/CONASC/index.htm



L-R: Prasant Ramakrishnan, Sumanta Biswas, Prithviraj Nath from CRC and U. Sen, RGRO, Howrah, WBSEDCL, at a Capacity building workshop in Howrah district under CONASC

Grahoker Mukho-Mukhi

Consumer Camps are being organised by the Centre in partnership with local clubs and associations in and around Kolkata. The activity being undertaken with support from Calcutta Electric Supply Company (CESC) Ltd aims to raise awareness and assist consumers with basic queries about electricity supply and services, safety issues, energy conservation, etc.; provide consumers a platform to get their grievances redressed; and function as a two-way communication platform between the consumers and the utility. In total, 50 camps are planned under this initiative. Till June 2011, 17 camps were organised reaching out to a total of 312 consumers.



Prithviraj Nath in a Club in Tollygunge, Kolkata during one of the Consumer Camps

REPRESENTATIONS



- Keya Ghosh attended the launch meeting of project titled “Assessing Consumer Behaviour on Energy Efficient Products in India” on April 12, 2011, in Delhi. The meeting was organised by CITEE. She made a presentation titled “CONBEE: An Overview of the Project”, at the meeting.
- Keya Ghosh attended the first meeting of the Working Group on Education under the National Road Safety Council in Delhi on May 3, 2011