

# CUTS CRC Activity Report

July-December 2013

ONGOING  
PROJECTS

## Enhancing Trade and Regional Economic Integration between India and Bangladesh

With support of the US Consulate, Calcutta, CRC along with CITEE undertook the study to examine the key issues which affect bilateral trade through land routes along the border between the state of West Bengal and Bangladesh and explore trade opportunities that can be realised by addressing such issues. Policy research will be undertaken to identify existing constraints and appropriate regulatory interventions that are needed.

The overall goal of the study is to frame policy proposals for improving Indo-Bangla trade through land route which will, in turn, generate welfare outcomes, such as new market opportunities for small-scale manufacturing and agrarian sectors, especially in border areas. The immediate objectives of the study is



assessment of the extent of informal trade, underlying reasons and solutions thereof as well as examination of the feasibility and potential benefits from establishing border *haats* in the western border. The study will proceed through three phases, viz. literature review, research design, planning and conduct of fieldwork, and preparation of an assessment report within the three months of duration period.

Literature review started from July 15, 2013 and pilot survey was completed in Petrapole during July 29-August 01, 2013. The study covered a literature review and field research. Through a review of the existing literature on India-Bangladesh trade, the study maps bilateral trade issues that had been identified by earlier studies. Field



work was carried out at five land customs stations (LCSs) in the western regions of the border between India and Bangladesh. This includes the Petrapole-Benapole LCS, which accounts for about 70 percent of trade between India and Bangladesh through land route.

Besides this, Mahedipur, Ghojadanga, HiliChangrabandhaand Fulbari LCSs were covered in the field study. Two border *haats* were also studied through field survey as potential models that can be replicated at more locations along the border, benefiting local stakeholders.

After completing the Phase I of this project and submitting the final report of the same, the Centre undertook Phase II of the study. The overall objective of the study is to frame policy recommendations for:

- a) signing and operationalising of the Motor Vehicle Agreement and drafting/ signing of a Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Agreement between India and Bangladesh, hence to benefit and ease the efforts of the traders; and



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- b) Replicating border *haats* along the India-Bangladesh border towards leveraging the economic and social benefits accruing out of it.

The project commenced during September 30, 2013 and will continue till October 31, 2014.

The inception meeting of the project was held on November 15-16, 2013. Delegates from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal participated in that meeting.

### **Advocacy and Networking**

A Stakeholder Consultation on 'Assessment of Bangladesh-India Trade Potentiality – Need for Cross-Border Transport Facilitation & Mutual Recognition of Standards' was organised at Kolkata on November 15-16, 2013.

The consultation was attended by participants from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal. It included sessions to discuss and deliberate on the 'need for cross-border transport facilitation and mutual recognition of standards' and 'regional connectivity in South Asia and its impact on the local economy'.



CUTS also invited Centre for Policy Dialogue (Dhaka), Bangladesh, who are undertaking a parallel initiative in Bangladesh to push the agenda from the Bangladesh side. Also since both CUTS and CPD are expected to work in collaboration on this agenda, this also helped in initiating the dialogue between two organisations.

Other key participants included representatives from the Ministry of Road, Transport & Highways, Government of India; Ministry of Commerce, Government of India; all major chambers of commerce & industries, Freight Forwarders Association of both Bangladesh & India, Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries, UN ESCAP, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (Nepal), Sustainable Development Policy Institute (Pakistan). The Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh delivered the keynote address during the opening session of the Consultation.



## **New Town Rajarhat Programme**

**K**eya Ghosh has been selected as one of the Solar City Multi-stakeholder Committee members of New Town Kolkata Development Authority (NKDA). The other members of the committee were S P Gonchudhury, Renewable Energy Expert, President of NBIRT, Advisor of Department of Power & NES; Sushobhan Bhattacharya, Director in Charge, West Bengal Renewable Energy Development Agency (WBREDA). Being a member of the Committee, CRC is helping NKDA to finalise the master plan. NKDA is willing to give some responsibilities to CUTS through a bidding process where CUTS need to participate.

Solar City cell started operating at NKDA on October 03, 2013. Two staff of CRC were deputed to run the office on a regular basis and send daily activities report to CRC.

## Business Regulation and Corporate Conduct (BRCC)

CUTS is implementing a project entitled, 'Business Regulation and Corporate Conduct' (BRCC) with support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) in India. The first phase of the project ended in December 2012 and the second phase started in April 2013. The ongoing phase will be operational till the end of 2013.

Under this project, CRC organised the interface meeting for private healthcare sector in Kolkata on December 03, 2013. The meeting commenced with the welcome address and objectives of the meeting. The meeting aimed at brainstorming on a blueprint for



a responsible healthcare sector in the state with participation from some of the most knowledgeable experts and key players in the sector.

Among the guests were Krishnengshy Ray, Director, Institute of Health & Family Welfare, Government of West Bengal; Gour Kanti Paul, Assistant Director, Drug Control, Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government

of West Bengal; R Dubey, President, Indian Medical Association; and representatives from private hospitals in Kolkata, CSOs and representatives from Sembramky Environment Management Pvt Ltd. etc.

The house thoroughly discussed and provided inputs on the existing challenges mentioned in the matrix of the blueprint. This entailed putting down action points against each of the challenges with envisaged short term and long term outcomes.

## Bureau of Indian Standards

The Centre has been organising awareness programmes on Consumer Safety, ISI marks and Hall marking in association with the Bureau of Indian Standards in West Bengal and North East India. A few such awareness programmes were conducted in West Bengal, Tripura and Assam.

There is an ongoing dialogue between CRC team and BIS officials about conducting more awareness programmes in the mentioned region.

It has been decided that four awareness programmes will be organised jointly by CRC and BIS in West Bengal in August and September 2014 respectively; two of these would be on ISI marks and certification and the rest on Water and Food standards.

Two programmes proposed under BIS were done successfully in Ranaghat and Machlandapur.

CRC also conducted two other awareness programmes in Tripura on November 20-21, 2013. The programmes were attended by industrialists and students of engineering disciplines.



## Formulation & Implementation of Low Carbon Policies in Electricity Sector

A workshop on 'Formulation & Implementation of Low Carbon Policies in Electricity Sector' was organised at Kolkata on November 09, 2013. The programme was organised in association with the World Resource Institute, Chetana Society



and People's Monitoring Group. 21 CSO representatives from West Bengal participated along with government officials from the WBREDA, West Bengal Electricity Regulatory Commission and Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation.

## Celebration of 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CUTS

CUTS International to mark its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is organising a series of lectures around the world, including India, with eminent friends on topics of interest to CUTS's work agenda.

In this series, the 13<sup>th</sup> leadership lecture was delivered by Pranab Bardhan, Professor of Economics at the University of California, Berkeley. The theme of the lecture was "Decentralisation of Governance and Public Service Delivery".

The event was chaired by Ajay Chhibber, Director General, Independent Evaluation Office, Government of India & former Assistant Secretary General, United Nations. The



other commentators were MN Roy, Former Member, Expert Committee on Leveraging Panchayati Raj and TR Raghunandan, Member, Committee on West Bengal Panchayati Raj Act.

The event commenced with a 10-minute documentary on '30 Years of Social Change' showcasing the journey of CUTS through 30 glorious years and its endeavours which was enthusiastically received by one and all.

## REPRESENTATIONS



- Gourab Sen attended a Multi Criteria Workshop on 'The Economics of Low Carbon Kolkata' at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, on October 01, 2013.
- Keya Ghosh attended an Interactive Session with Helen G. LaFave, new Consul General of the United States of America at Kolkata on October 01, 2013.
- Keya Ghosh, Gourab Sen and Prithviraj Nath attended a meeting with George N. Sibley, Minister Counsellor, Economic, Environment & Science Affairs, Embassy of the United States of America, New Delhi, at the UN Consulate, Kolkata on October 24, 2013.
- Prithviraj Nath attended 'Policy Meet on Economic and Transport Development in Border areas in Eastern South Asia' organised by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and Asian Development Bank at Shillong on December 04-05, 2013.