

CUTS CRC Activity Report

July-September 2012

ONGOING PROJECTS

Building Capacity of Consumers to Demand for Renewable Energy in India

CUTS with the support of Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation (SSEF) has implemented a project entitled “A Diagnostic Study to Build the Capacity/Awareness Among CSOs to Demand for Demand Side Management (DSM) & Renewable Energy (RE) in India – DREC Project”. The objective of the project is to increase long-term capacity/awareness of consumer groups to demand for DSM and RE initiatives especially in the context of climate change, and also to understand, document and communicate their specific needs to the relevant policy makers. The DREC project is being implemented in two states of India - West Bengal and Gujarat.

During the period, CUTS in collaboration with West Bengal Electricity Regulatory Commission (WBERC) organised a Roundtable discussion on ‘Evolving Consumer-friendly Policies to Enhance Access to Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency’ in West Bengal at Kolkata, on August 22, 2012 to engage policymakers and share key advocacy issues that emerged from the project. This was also to initiate a multi-stakeholder dialogue to facilitate effective implementation of the recently adopted RE policy for West Bengal, which CUTS has also been advocating, as part of the Project.



The discussion was attended by diversified group of stakeholders, such as Department of Power, West Bengal; West Bengal Renewable Energy Development Agency WBERC, Utilities, Business Houses, Media, CSOs, SSEF etc. Also, Secretary, Gujarat Electricity Regulatory Commission attended the meeting to share his experience and cross learning from Gujarat.

Several recommendations related to RE policy emerged out of the discussion, which was compiled and disseminated to the relevant departments and the Ministry by CUTS as a Memorandum to identify challenges in effective implementation of RE policy and suggest solutions to overcome the same.

CUTS CRC together with 15 district partners submitted comments and suggestions on the draft regulations titled “Cogeneration & Generation of Electricity from Renewable Sources of Energy”.

Final Consumer survey under was initiated in September 2012. Forthcoming activities under the project include submission of Final Consumer Survey Report by the end of October 2012.



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Business Regulation and Corporate Conduct

CUTS with support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in collaboration with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) India, conceptualised a project titled “Business Regulation and Corporate Conduct (BRCC)”.

The objective is to assess the policy environment with respect to its ability to facilitate ease of conducting business and promoting corporate conduct in India. The initiative aims to raise awareness thereof, to promote entrepreneurship and sustainable business development in the country. It is being implemented by undertaking research to comprehend constraints in business regulation across select states of India and in such a prevailing environment, how best to motivate corporate entities to emerge as champions of responsible business conduct. The project is being implemented in four states of India, viz. Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat and West Bengal over the period from March 2011 to December 2012. The project goal is to stimulate better business to achieve sustainable development objectives in India.

The project learning and evidence will be utilised for larger sharing, capacity building and advocacy actions at national as well as state levels. The main objective is to assess the policy environment with respect to its ability to facilitate business operations and promoting responsible corporate conduct in India with sectoral focus on Private Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals.

During July-September 2012, second and third phases of the survey involving industry collectives, associations, regulators and government departments were completed. The prescription collection was also completed during this period. Following that the State Focus Group Dialogue was organised jointly with the Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of West Bengal on September 14, 2012. Project findings from both the sectors were shared and deliberations were invited towards charting a forward looking roadmap to enhance responsible corporate behaviour in both the sectors.

The event was inaugurated by Chandrima Bhattacharya, Minister of State, Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of West Bengal and had active participation from government officials, regulators, pharmaceutical firms, hospital and pharmaceutical associations & collectives, business chambers and media. The discussions were rich and all stakeholders provided their inputs keeping in view the project findings and objectives. A report capturing the project findings, discussion and deliberations was prepared and shared with everyone following the event.

Forthcoming activities under this project include National Policy Forum, preparation and finalisation of State Level Reports, preparation of a Memorandum to be submitted to government departments & regulators and coming out with a policy brief based on the project findings from the two sectors.



ConsumersUp

CUTS with the support of Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India is undertaking an initiative over one years (November 2011 to December 2012) in 4 states of India (Tripura, Jharkhand, Chandigarh and Karnataka). The overall objective of the project is to create an enabling environment for protection and promotion of consumer interest contributing towards the national interest and to bring out thematic report on the 'State of the Indian Consumer 2012' and to enhance the knowledge of the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working on consumer issues in 4 identified states in India with the facts and information on the concerns of the common people and on new generation consumer issues, with the aim to strengthen and take the Indian consumer movement forward.

The Regional Consultation Workshop was organised in partnership with Consumer Protection Association (project partner) in Tripura on August 17, 2012. The workshop was inaugurated by Manik Dey, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food & Civil Supplies, Government of Tripura. Among the prominent speakers were Justice A B Pal, President, State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Tripura & Mizoram; Justice Pradip Kumar Sarkar Lokayukta, Tripura; Mihir Deb, Chairman, Tripura Pollution Control Board, Agartala; K K Roy, Principal, Tripura Government Law College, Agartala; and Koushik Roy, Ld. Advocate, Guwahati High Court, Agartala.

The event had participation from media, government officials, and civil society organisations from West Bengal, Tripura, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and Mizoram. CRC is developing an input paper on Right to Safety which will be presented at the National Conclave to be organised at New Delhi in October 2012.

REPRESENTATIONS



- Keya Ghosh attended an event entitled 'Energy Conclave' organised by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry at Kolkata on August 31-September 01, 2012.
- Nishi Kant Sinha attended a workshop organised by Centre for Science and Environment on 'Water Sanitation Scenario in Kolkata' and release of its recently published Seventh State of India's Environment report 'Excreta Matters' at Kolkata, September 01, 2012.
- Keya Ghosh and Arnab Ganguly attended a seminar entitled "Effective Implementation of GOs/Building Bye laws in the state of West Bengal for mandatory installation of Solar Water Heating Systems in functional buildings" at Kolkata on September 29, 2012. It was jointly organised by NBIRT, Greentech Knowledge Solutions Pvt. Ltd. and WBREDA and supported by Ministry of New & Renewable Energy Sources (MNNRE) under one of their ongoing project entitled "UNDP/GEF Solar Water Heating Project".
- Keya Ghosh attended a meeting entitled "Building network of organisations working on Standards and Labeling in India – a Civil Society Initiative: 2nd Meeting of Network Members" organised by the Centre for Environment Education (CEE) at New Delhi, on October 01, 2012.