

CUTS CRC Activity Report

April-June 2021

ONGOING PROJECTS

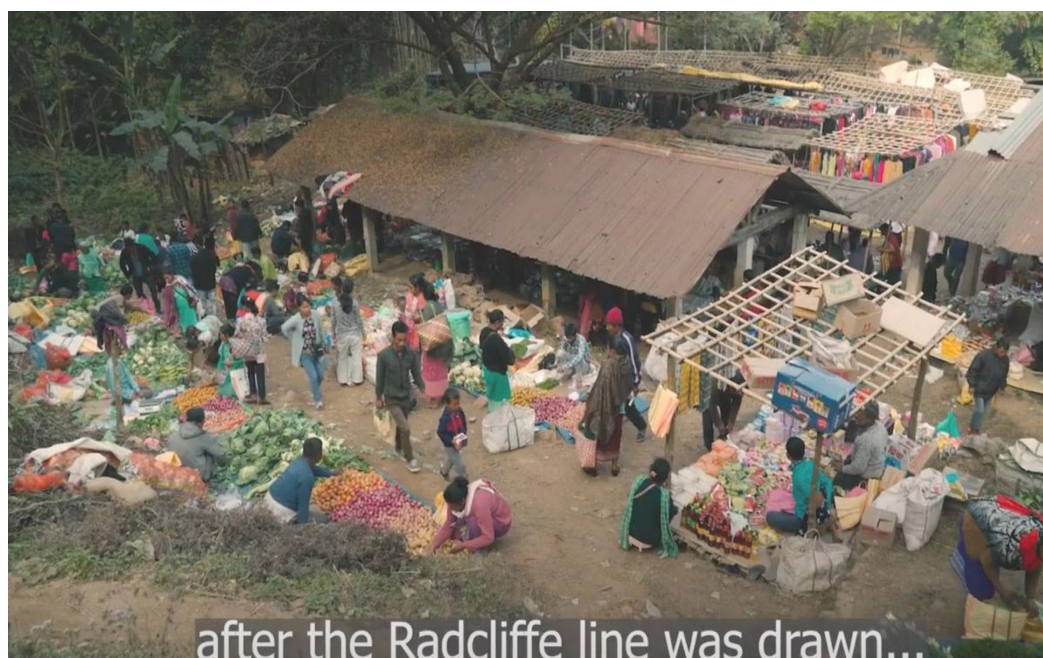


Border Haat and their Socio-economic Impact

CUTS International and its partner Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh with support from Foreign, Commonwealth and Development office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom, are implementing a project titled **“Border Haats between India and Bangladesh as a tool to reduce informal cross border trade.”** This project aims to understand the prospects of establishing border haats as a tool to reduce cross-border trade between India and Bangladesh; and analyse its impact on gender and livelihood implications.

Under this project, CUTS has prepared a video documentary to capture the impact of Border Haat on the local livelihood of people adjacent to the Indo-Bangladesh borders, the impact of COVID on different stakeholders, especially on women. The documentary has been completed and circulated within associated groups. The research report is in its pre-publication stage.

CUTS and its partner Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh, are planning to organise a Regional Policy Advocacy meeting to share the key findings from the research report. This meeting will be helpful for a better understanding of border haat proceedings, best practices, describing the current situation and other related issues.



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Understanding Technical, Economic and Political Economy Implications of Traffic Diversion from Roadways to Waterways

CUTS International, with support from The World Bank, is executing a project entitled “Understanding Technical, Economic and Political Economy Implications of Traffic Diversion from Roadways to Waterways (ROWA-1): From Petrapole - Benapole Land Border Route to Tribeni-Kolkata / Haldia Port in India to Dhaka in Bangladesh via Mongla”.

CUTS study aims at understanding whether (or, not) and how, part of the ongoing freight traffic moving along the Petrapole-Benapole and Ghojadanga-Bhomra land border could be diverted to the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT) route. This also includes identifying the routes through which the modal shift could be facilitated.

The final stakeholder consultation under the project has been organised on April 13, 2021. Key findings from the study have been shared with some of the key logistics service providers, Customs House Agents, other stakeholders, and subject experts for their valued inputs. All the project outputs have been submitted to the World Bank.

Understanding Commercial, Strategic and Political Economy Implications of Traffic Diversion from Roadways to Waterways

CUTS International, with support from The World Bank, is executing a project entitled “Understanding Commercial, Strategic and Political Economy Implications of Traffic Diversion from Roadways to Waterways: Sahibganj-Narayanganj (Bangladesh) and Sahibganj-Jogighopa (Assam)”.

The study is focusing on collecting and analysing relevant primary and secondary data to better understand the commercial, technical, strategic, economic and political economy implications of facilitating the movement of freight traffic from Sahibganj (Jharkhand-Eastern India) to Narayanganj (Bangladesh) and from Sahibganj (Jharkhand-Eastern India) to Jogighopa (Assam -Northeast India) via Dhulian (West Bengal, India) – Rajshahi (West Bangladesh), which are on the Indo-Bangla Protocol Route.

The study would highlight factors that can facilitate traffic diversion from the nearby land routes of Mahadipur-Sona Masjid, Hilli-Bangla Hilli and the Siliguri corridor. The study identified potential trade routes among BBIN countries using the India-Bangladesh Protocol Route Dhulian-Rajshahi-Dhulian, established a network with the relevant stakeholders across the region to understand possibilities of a modal shift through specific inland waterway routes connecting India-Bangladesh-Nepal-Bhutan.

It also identified practical issues and impediments to the operationalisation of the Dhulian-Rajshahi Indo-Bangladesh Protocol route.

The final stakeholder consultation under the project has been organised in the third week of April 2021 to validate the study findings and having final inputs from different experts. Project outputs have been submitted to the World Bank.



Security for E-Businesses

CUTS International, with US Consulate's support, Kolkata, is implementing the project entitled **Cyber Safe East India: Workshops on Cyber Security for E-Businesses**. The project aims to identify cyber-security needs of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) based on the understanding of their usage of digital technology; assess challenges faced by them; designing appropriate strategies to help them; capacitate them to effectively use cyber-security tools and showcase best practices so that they can safely navigate the cyberspace.

Under this project, communication has been initiated with relevant stakeholders for organising three training programmes in Ranchi, Patna and Guwahati in association with the MSMEs to build the capacity of SMEs on cyber security issues to enhance their understanding and capacitate them on cyber threats. Additionally, the workshops would equip them with newer strategies and tools to cope with ongoing cyber threats in India.

Formation and Promotion of Farmers Producer Organisation

CUTS is working on the project to provide a holistic and broad-based supportive ecosystem to form new 10,000 farmer producer organisations (FPOs) to facilitate the development of vibrant and sustainable income-oriented farming and overall socio-economic development up to five years from the year of creation and well-being of agrarian communities. Through this process, the providers want to enhance productivity through efficient, cost-effective, and sustainable resource use.

CUTS has done the scoping visits, cluster identifications, farmer's mobilisation and the final meeting with the farmer's in four blocks, including Dinhata-1 in Cooch Behar, Alipurduar-1 and 2 and in Kumargram. In Falakata block, the cluster identification process will be completed soon.

CUTS will have to submit the DPR to the Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) by the end of June 2021.



Field visit under FPO Project, North Bengal