

# CUTS CCIER ACTIVITIES REPORT



JULY-SEPTEMBER  
2023

## National Workshop on Ethical Framework for 6G



CUTS International organised a “National Workshop on Ethical Framework for 6G” on September 22, 2023, at the Constitution Club of India, New Delhi in hybrid mode. The workshop was conducted to analyse critical and emerging cyber technologies, such as 6G, which hold crucial strategic importance in the present geo-political landscape.

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) members are coordinating closely on these new and emerging cyber technologies. For instance, India and the US share the vision of ‘creating secure and trusted telecommunications, resilient supply chains, and enabling global digital inclusion’ and hence commit themselves to the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET).

This initiative deep dives into four different aspects of 6G and produces research studies on: (1) Understanding the Basics of 6G; (2) Strategic Opportunities for India and Australia from 6G; (3) Understanding Standard Making for 6G; and (4) Identifying Elements of an Ethical Framework for 6G.

Sarah Storey, Deputy High Commissioner, Australian High Commission; Rakesh Maheshwari, Distinguished Fellow, CUTS and former Senior

Director and Group Coordinator, Cyber Laws and Data Governance, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY); Jitendra Bhoi, ADG (SRI), Department of Telecommunications, Government of India; Bharat Bhatia, President, ITU-APT Foundation of India; Aruna Sharma, Distinguished Fellow CUTS and former Secretary, MeitY; Deepak Maheshwari, Senior Visiting Fellow, ICRIER; V Sridhar, Professor, IIIT Bangalore; Huzur Saran, Professor, IIT Delhi; Magnus Ewerbring, Chief Technology Officer - APAC, Ericsson; Jitendra Singh, Senior Director, Government Affairs (India & South Asia), Qualcomm; Jishnu Aravindakshan, Principal Product Architect, Tejas Networks; Vinay Srivastava, Deputy General Manager, Standards, Jio; Rajeev Shorey, Professor, IIT Delhi; Pamela Kumar, former Director General, TSDSI; Mahesh Uppal, Director, ComFirst; Vikram Tiwathia, Deputy Director General, COAI; Rekha Jain, Senior Visiting Professor, ICRIER; Balaji P, Chief Regulatory and Corporate Affairs Officer, Vodafone Idea and Rohit Prasad, Professor, MDI Gurgaon were the distinguished speakers in the workshop.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/national-workshop-on-ethical-framework-for-6g/>

# Reimagining India's Digital Public Infrastructure Globally for Attaining the SDGs

CUTS International conducted a webinar on September 17, 2023, also known as SDG Digital Day, an initiative taken by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). It seeks to prioritise data and digital technologies to stimulate increased efforts across all 17 SDG goals, ranging from poverty eradication and inequality reduction to universal access to clean water, sanitation, and affordable clean energy for all individuals globally.

Experts reflected on how the global south is plagued with a digital divide on social, cultural, and economic aspects. Along with that, they discussed how Digital Public Goods (DPGs) can be modified and duplicated to assist nations in attaining their national priorities and the SDGs. The panellists have also reflected that the Indian Digital Public Infrastructure (DPIs), such as



Aadhar (identification), Unified Payment Interface (UPI), and Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) have the potential to be exported to foreign countries.

Amar Patnaik, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha

was the keynote speaker and Lorryne Porciuncula, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Datasphere Initiative; Hanani Hlomani, Research Fellow, Research ICT Africa (RIA); Parminder Jeet Singh, Executive Director, IT for Change and Osama Manzar, Founder and Director, Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) were panellist in the session which was moderated by Navneet Sharma, Director General, CUTS Institute for Regulation & Competition (CIRC).

<https://cuts-ccier.org/reimagining-indias-digital-public-infrastructure-globally-for-attaining-the-sdgs/>

## Growth and Inequality in India

CUTS International organised a webinar on July 10, 2023, to understand the disparities in income and wealth distribution, non-economic inequality encompassed in education, healthcare, social opportunities, gender, caste, and regional discrimination.

The panellists discussed how certain well-off sections take advantage of opportunities, however, a large population in the informal economy, which absorbs a significant portion of the unskilled workforce, faces the problem of low wages, job insecurity, and minimal social protection.

Many experts have highlighted the ongoing debate between the growth-based narrative and the inequality-based narrative. The issue with solely focusing on one of these narratives is that without comprehending the relationship between

growth and inequality, simply attempting to decrease inequality or increase growth may not yield the desired results.

Himanshu, Associate Professor, Centre for

Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University; Santosh Mehrotra, Professor, Centre for Informal Sector and Labour Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University; Sonal Sharma, Coordinator- Micro Entrepreneurship,



Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA Bharat); Gautam Mody, General Secretary, New Trade Union Initiative and Prerna Seth, Fellow, JustJobs Network were the panellist in the session which was chaired and moderated by Bipul Chattopadhyay, Executive Director, CUTS International.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/growth-and-inequality-in-india/>



## Advocacy

### CUTS Comments on

## TRAI Consultation Paper on Regulatory Mechanism for Over-The-Top (OTT) Communication Services, and Selective Banning of OTT Services

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) invited comments and counter comments on a Consultation Paper on Encouraging Innovative Technologies, Services, Use Cases, and Business Models through Regulatory Sandbox in the Digital Communication Sector.

CUTS approached the proposal of introducing a regulatory sandbox framework from a consumer interest perspective. The regulatory sandbox framework should benefit investors, Indian markets and the economy at large. However, there have been instances when innovation without proper regulatory oversight has caused damage to investors and economies. New technology-intensive models and innovations must be deployed with proper regulatory oversight and risk mitigation safeguards. Consumer interest should be considered and appropriate safeguards should be built within the regulatory sandbox framework.

CUTS International and other consumer groups also submitted an open letter to TRAI which presents and highlights the concerns from a consumer's perspective.

Comments: <https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/comments-on-trai-cp-on-regulatory-mechanism-for-ott-services-and-selective-banning.pdf>

Counter Comments: <https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/counter-comments-on-trai-consultation-paper-on-regulatory-mechanism-for-ott-communication.pdf>

Open Letter: <https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/collective-representation-by-consumer-organisations-on-ott-regulation.pdf>



## Publications

### Research Report

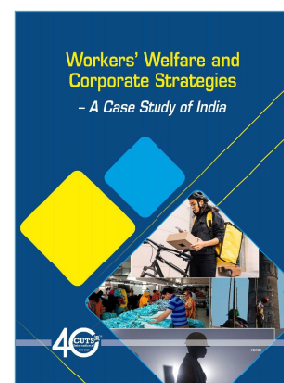
## Workers Welfare and Corporate Strategies-A Case Study of India

India is at a critical juncture in its development path, which is expected to take the country from low to upper middle-income bracket over the next couple of decades. While we are experiencing favourable demography, will it lead to good and better jobs, thus keeping income inequality at a manageable level?

As per the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the share of informal employment in India was 88.1 per cent in 2019. From this data, one may infer that India's problem is the absence of institutions required for improving working conditions and that is largely reflected in low wages.

Against this background, CUTS International conducted a study under the project, 'Exploring Alternate Models of Economic Growth, Inclusive Finance, and Workers Welfare (Phase II),' supported by the Ford Foundation. It aims to generate new knowledge regarding conditions necessary for institutionalising good and better jobs in India.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/case-study-workers-welfare-and-corporate-strategies.pdf>





## Publications

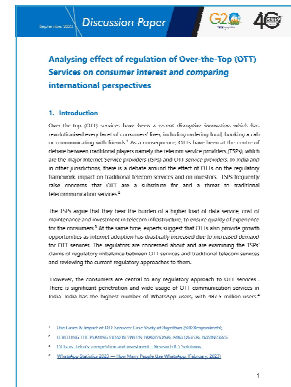
### Discussion Paper

## Analysing the effect of regulation of Over-the-Top (OTT) Services on consumer interest and comparing international perspectives

While the rise of OTT services has revolutionised various aspects of a consumer's life, a debate has also been ongoing on this regulation of OTTs and a mandatory revenue-sharing framework. Herein, a crucial missing element is the voice of the consumers and the implications over the consumer interest.

This Discussion Paper highlights several issues from a consumer perspective that may arise with the proposed regulatory framework for OTT services. Further, it analyses similar regulatory frameworks and their implications when they were considered and/or implemented in other jurisdictions.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/dp-analysing-effect-of-regulation-of-over-the-top-ott-services.pdf>



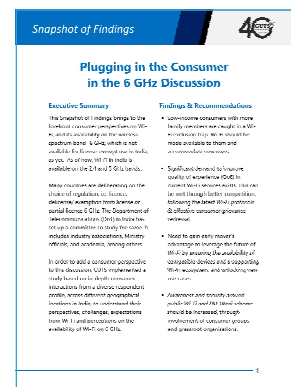
### Snapshot of Findings

## Plugging in the Consumer in the 6 GHz Discussion

CUTS International carried out a comprehensive nationwide interaction-based study for the project “Understanding Consumer Perspectives on the 6 GHz Band.” The primary goal was to gain insights into consumer perspectives, challenges, and concerns related to the present state of internet connectivity and their anticipations for upcoming Wi-Fi technologies.

This Snapshot of Findings highlights consumer viewpoints on Wi-Fi and its accessibility within the wireless spectrum band, the 6 GHz band, which is not currently available for licence-exempt use in India.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/pdf/snapshot-of-findings-understanding-consumer-perspectives-on-6ghz-band.pdf>



## Representations

- **Krishank Jugiani** participated in ‘Conversation with Prof. Toby Walsh and Prof. Mausam on Artificial Intelligence (AI)’ organised by the Australian High Commission in New Delhi on August 07, 2023.
- **Akash Sharma** participated in the workshop on “Critical Mineral needs for the net-zero Transition” organised by CSEP in New Delhi on July 12, 2023.
- **Neelanjana Sharma** was one of the speakers at the conference ‘Competition Law Enforcement and Consumer Protection in Digital Markets’, organised by the Competition Promotion and Consumer Protection Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Tashkent on July 06-08, 2023.
- **Amol Kulkarni** was one of the speakers in the ‘Responsible Finance Forum’ organised by the Centre for Financial Inclusion in Bengaluru on July 05-07, 2023.







## Advocacy through Media

### Why it's vital to consistently evaluate AI systems through a more humane approach to deal with bias

*The Economic Times, August 18, 2023*

By Anirudh Rastogi and Amol Kulkarni

AI systems could be consistently evaluated and tested against predetermined indicators for bias, and results can be made public to incentivise improvements and provide necessary information to other stakeholders engaging with such systems.

Such regulatory frameworks need not be hardcoded. A lot seems to be common between humans and AI systems, much more that we care to acknowledge, particularly during their training phase.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/why-its-vital-to-consistently-evaluate-ai-systems-through-a-more-humane-approach-to-deal-with-bias/>

### Digital Rupee: India's geopolitical game-changer in the CBDC race

*Policy Circle, August 15, 2023*

By Gayatri Ganpule

India launched the digital rupee, its retail Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), on December 01, 2022. The CBDC is a digital form of legal tender issued by the central bank, serving as a non-interest-bearing digital equivalent of physical currency.

The digital rupee, or e<sup>₹</sup>, can potentially grant India geopolitical leverage through participation in CBDC agreements, a move accelerated by factors such as disruptions in global value chains due to the Ukraine war and the China Plus One strategy. India's G20 Presidency has further underscored the need for expeditious CBDC experimentation.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/digital-rupee-dedollarisation/>

### Can Generative AI grow better jobs?

*Moneycontrol, July 27, 2023*

By Pradeep S Mehta and Navneet Sharma

It's 2023, and generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) tools are taking the world by storm. They are performing complex and sophisticated tasks that involve creativity and innovation. Such as generating text, images, music, code and even synthetic data for specific purposes.

Since, the traditional advanced analytics and machine learning algorithms, deployed during the last decade or so, effectively performed numerical tasks. An important question being asked is how Gen AI will impact jobs.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/can-generative-ai-grow-better-jobs/>

### India need not rush toward ex-ante regulation of the digital economy

*Moneycontrol, July 04, 2023*

By Pradeep S Mehta and Navneet Sharma

Due to its peculiar 'increasing returns to scale' economics, sticky market power, and inability to render timely remedy by competition authorities, the digital economy worldwide is receiving considerable attention.

While the European Union (EU) has notified the Digital Services Act (DSA) and Digital Markets Act (DMA), other jurisdictions, such as the United States (US), Australia, South Africa, the United Kingdom (UK), are contemplating additional regulation of the digital economy and big players in it. There are lessons from this for India, which need to be examined.

<https://cuts-ccier.org/india-need-not-rush-toward-ex-ante-regulation-of-digital-economy/>