

**A Pilot Project on Capacity Building on
Electricity Reforms in Bangladesh, India and Nepal
(RESA Project)**

**Synthesis Report
Grassroots Interface Meetings (GIMs)
Phase II**

Rajasthan

Submitted by:



CART

Submitted to:

**CUTS Centre for Competition,
Investment & Economic Regulation**

CUTS C-CIER



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1. Background

CUTS International with the support of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) has implemented a pilot project in Bangladesh, India (West Bengal and Rajasthan) and Nepal. CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART) has implemented the project in the State of Rajasthan.

The objective of the project was to enhance the capacity of consumers to make them understand the issues involved, take-up action oriented research and carryout advocacy with policymakers and regulatory agencies on electricity regulatory/policy issues.

1.1 Activities Concluded so far

After the launch meeting of the Project in Kolkata, March 12-13, 2008, a local inception workshop for Rajasthan was held in April 2008. In continuation of that, an initial round of perception survey was carried out in 10 selected districts of Rajasthan to determine the problems faced by various consumers, to gauge their understanding about electricity reforms and to seek their suggestions for betterment. The findings of the survey helped in identification of a number of grassroots level issues. These served as vital inputs for planning the Territorial Trainings and Grassroots Interface Meetings (GIMs).

The survey finding led to in-house preparations of two important documents namely, Territorial Base Paper and Territorial Training Manual. 02 territorial trainings were conducted in Jaipur during September 2008. 10 district-level GIMs and 38 sub-GIMs were held during November 2008-January 2009. In the outreach component of the project, the project partner apart from the territorial base paper and training manual also developed briefing papers on scenario of the state on power issue. The partners also developed vernacular handouts woven around the issues taken up for future advocacy like power theft, energy conservation and grievance redressal mechanism.

2. Grassroot Interface Meetings (GIMs)

2.1 An Introduction

The objective of GIMs was to reach out to the players at the local level, which were targeted during the baseline survey and enable them to appreciate the role that they need to play in regulatory reforms and transfer some of the key advocacy skills to them. The GIMs provided a platform to bring service providers and local consumers together to make the consumer groups aware of their role.

In the first phase meetings, information was disseminated to relevant categories of electricity consumers such as agriculture, domestic, non-domestic and industrial users at the grassroots level on the present scenario. Efforts were made to gauge

their systemic problems, needs and challenges. The possible solutions to these problems were slated to be discussed in the second phase of GIMs.

Earlier during the project planning, it was decided to conduct only five GIMs, which had the provision to cover two targeted districts in one GIM, then it was planned to have separate GIMs for each of the ten partnering organisations in their district headquarters, which gradually increased to four more interface meetings in each district in the form of sub-GIMs.

2.2 Grassroots Interface Meetings – Second Phase

2.2.1 Objective

The purpose of holding the second round of GIMs was to initiate discussions with the same target beneficiaries and provide possible remedial solutions to their problems, which they had raised during the first round of meetings. Later on the same were documented in the form of systemic issues with rules and regulations regarding each of them, laid thereof in different laws, manuals and various platforms to get them resolved. These systemic issues were discussed in the presence of public representatives, who were present in each of the programmes.

Besides this, the same sets of participants were again acquainted with the available redressal mechanism about which they were told during the first round of meetings. The other purpose being that apart from the same participants, some new participants would also join the team of beneficiaries with sound knowledge of available redressal mechanism, which they can utilise for themselves and for others.

2.2.2. Sub-GIMs

In the first phase, where apart from the GIMs, there were sub-GIMs also conducted, which were thirty eight in number and the overall objective of conducting this unplanned activity was to move further down the line and create more and more awareness among the target audiences. (*More information in Synthesis Report of GIM-I submitted earlier*).

Similarly, in the second phase also, initiatives were taken to conduct GIMs in small towns and villages. Though the number of such programmes has been reduced drastically for administrative and financial reasons, but still there have been a feeling of great success of such programmes, the voice of which has been taken by the local partners to remote areas.

(Details of sub-GIMs in Annexure 2)

2.2.3 Participation

The GIMs-II were conducted in the same ten districts identified under the project: Banswara, Bikaner, Chittorgarh, Sirohi, Jhunjhunu, Udaipur, Sawai Madhopur, Kota, Dholpur and Churu. There were the same set of participants in each meeting, who were present during the meetings of the first phase comprising various

categories of electricity consumers, viz. domestic, non-domestic, industrial and agriculture and also including local public representatives and media personnel as participants as well as resource persons. All the ten districts taken together, close to 1212 participants (795 in main GIMs and 427 participants in 11 Sub-GIMs) attended the second phase and were benefited with the knowledge they gained. (*See Annexure 1 for details of GIMs*)

2.2.4 Structure of the GIMs-II

After the registration formalities the participants were handed a kit containing vernacular handouts to facilitate informed discussions during the sessions. In the inaugural session, there was an introductory remark followed by a keynote lecture by the people's representative. Following the inaugural session, the session on systemic issues/problems as collated during the first phase was organised to discuss possible solutions and the ways to resolve the systemic problems. The third session was on grievance redressal mechanism available under Electricity Act, 2003 with issues on existing mechanism for the redressal of complaints, ways to file complaints and follow up by the consumers. The fourth session, which was the last session, also saw all the participants providing their perception on the overall benefits through the activities done in past one year. A documentary was shown, which highlighted and showcased some of the glimpses of the GIMs-I activities. (*See Annexure 3 for Agenda*)

2.2.5 Methodology

Each session began with a by a CUTS representative, followed by a session with the local resource person (mainly from utility background). Then there was an open floor. The participants expressed their views regarding ongoing reform process, present status and systemic consumer issues, their personal interventions and experiences in the form of success stories of the project and also provided valuable suggestions.

2.3 Proceedings

2.3.1 Inaugural Session

The session started with a brief overview of the project and the activities conducted so far, with emphasis on some of the major achievements. A brief outline of CUTS' involvement in power sector since 2001 was also provided. The relevance of the project in enhancing consumer participation in the reform process was also explained to the participants. Public representatives also spoke on the local scenario of power including some of the very basic and prominent problems faced by the consumers.

RESA Documentary: Powered to Grow

The proceedings of GIMs conducted in Rajasthan, India were converted into a documentary (Powered to Grow) capturing the need to bridge the gap between the process of electricity reforms and the plight of consumers at the grassroots level.

This documentary will provide an opportunity for various CSOs to learn from CUTS' experience at the grassroots. The documentary was screened for the participants and a copies of it were given to guest speakers and the officials of the utilities.

2.3.2 Session on key systemic issues and the possible solutions

This is one of the important sessions which helped in maintaining a linkage between the first and the second phase of GIMs. During the first round of GIMs, participants had raised their genuine problems related to electricity, which was well responded by the utility officials. Realising the importance of the issue and for the sake of wider dissemination, the same was documented. Systemic issues were identified and put in three related categories: policy, regulator and utility. The systemic problems and their solutions that are laid down in the rules and laws were detailed out in the exercise and shared with the participants. Finally, the future course of action to overcome the systemic issues was discussed with the relevant authorities. The same was developed as a handout in simple Hindi for better understanding of the participants. (See annexure 2 on systemic problems and their possible solutions)

2.3.3 Session on Grievance Redressal Mechanism

This session was similar to what was presented in the first phase. The objective behind repeating it was to further consolidate the understanding of the participants, who were present during the first round. Secondly, there were also the addition of new participants. During the presentation, the nature of the problems and the procedure for filing complaints were explained by putting forth different options available to the consumers. The participants were also briefed regarding classification of complaints, the redressal procedure and associated fees for registering different types of complaints. Apart from this, they were asked to actively take part in the utility sponsored *chaupal* meetings in their areas.

2.3.4 Participants perception survey and the closing session

In the closing session, participants were told about their role and responsibilities to ensure better service delivery, curb power theft, conserve energy and participation in regulatory process for protection of their interests etc. The participants were asked to provide their feedback about the meeting and mention new systemic problems prevailing in their area. They were given perception survey questionnaires and asked to share their experiences or interventions taken on the basis of learnings from the first phase of GIMs.

2.3.4.1 Perception of the local partners

A General Feedback

- In a question related to the experience of local partners in holding the GIMs and in furtherance to this, their opinion on usefulness and benefits from these; all the ten partners found the GIMs very useful and beneficial. They were of the opinion that these meetings have helped rural electricity

consumers to a great extent and enhanced their understanding on three issues, i.e. curbing the power theft, energy conservation and awareness on redressal mechanism.

- Similarly, in a question, whether the project was helpful in building individual capacity to undertake work on regulatory and consumer issues in the electricity sector, the local partners considered it extremely helpful. They also found the project helpful in building the organisational capacity.
- In another question asking whether the partners have ever participated in any consultation process organised by the governments, regulatory commissions or distribution companies after getting enriched with the project activities; partners had mixed responses. Some said that they have started participating in government sponsored activities and consultations etc. and some said that they are slowly picking up and would soon be active with power related activity organised by the government or utility or regulator. Partners expressed their views that they have been actively taking part in consultations with the local authorities, whether it is power cut or the issues like billing etc.
- In a question about the rate of success of GIMs conducted in two rounds in each district, partners opined that both the GIMs were conducted successfully with the guidance of CUTS team. These GIMs have largely benefited the consumers especially the rural consumers in creating awareness on advocacy issues.
- In a very important question on perception, partners were asked to share their personal interventions ever since the meetings started in their districts. These were related to the need or opportunity to make a complaint, stop someone from stealing electricity or get involved with the government or regulator on issues relevant to electricity sector.
- Partners have expressed their experiences, which have been documented as successful interventions under the project. Partners either themselves or through their network partners in blocks and villages have been helping electricity consumers to register their complaints as per the available grievance redressal mechanism and also curb power theft. Partners have also stated that the GIMs have benefited them and they are now getting close with government and utilities for the dialogue on power related issues. They have even come out with suggestions to organise similar meetings with CUTS CART. Few partners want these meetings to be held separately for different categories of electricity consumers.

2.3.4.2 Perception of consumers

A General Feedback

- In a question asking about their presence in both rounds of GIMs, majority of participants said that they were present during the first round of workshop and to further strengthen their understanding, they also participated in the second round of GIMs. When questioned about their liking of a particular session, most of them stated that all the three sessions, i.e. energy conservation, curbing power theft and grievance redressal

mechanism were interesting and equally important. Mostly, grievance redressal mechanism has been rated as the most knowledgeable session because as per the respondents, they were not aware of the existing redressal system of utilities. After getting acquainted with it they are now in a position to utilise the system for their own and other's grievances related to different problems of electricity. With regard to the other issues also, most of the consumers rated energy conservation issue as the need of the hour because this will help the government to manage the equation of demand vs. supply. Power theft is also important and participants said that they have now started taking initiative of helping the utilities by providing informing of power theft in their areas.

- With regard to a question seeking the views on the experience gained during the meetings and whether these were helpful in raising their awareness on the reform process in the electricity sector, etc.? The participants opined their views and elaborated that the meetings have really been very helpful and that is the reason, they have attended the second round of these meetings. The subjects taken up as the advocacy issues are very important and will further deepen their knowledge and also help raising their level of participation within the reform process. The participants also said that they have been sharing the information with other consumers through the distributed literature and by way of participating in sub-GIMs in villages and sub-towns.
- In an interesting question whether the participants have stopped anyone from stealing electricity or insisted others for energy saving or have helped anyone in filing their complaints before the authorities. Respondents came out with mixed reactions. Some seems to be really proactive and energetic and have narrated their experiences, which has been documented underneath. Some participants stated that they are still in the process of learning and getting accustomed to this environment.
- In a question about how the people who organised the community meetings helped the participants in ways to deal with issues in the electricity sector that they have been facing. Respondents replied that the lessons taught by the people who organised the meetings have helped in raising the level of awareness among the community. Now it is up to them to take these forward. Some came out with suggestions for taking the issues forward by way of organising village level meetings on a regular basis. Some even suggested taking a group of villagers or community to electricity *chaupals* being organised by utilities every Tuesday. If there is no such meeting on Tuesday, then the group of villagers would take the initiative of forming a group and meeting the local officials at regular intervals.
- In a question seeking comments as to how the participants would like to motivate others taking part in similar meetings and getting acquainted with the system, the general feeling is that these participants would themselves again like to take part in these meetings and also motivate others to take part.

2.4 Success Stories

Few of the efforts taken by local partners regarding the initiatives, i.e. taking forward the complaints of consumers before the electricity authorities or motivating people for conserving electricity or stopping them from stealing electricity have been documented in the form of success stories:

1. Satya Bhama of Rajpura village of Churu district after the sub-GIM at Taranagar in Churu was inspired and identified some of the problems regarding electricity supply in his village. The problem was basically related to fluctuation and uneven supply. For that Satya met with the Assistant Engineer of Distribution Company in Taranagar and requested him to resolve problem. Assistant Engineer praised the initiative taken by the villager because none of the villagers prior to him had reported about such power related situation in the village. Assistant Engineer noted his complaint and within ten days, the fluctuation problem and the supply timings were set right. The efforts taken by Satya had benefited the whole village.
2. Chandra Shekhar of village Dabri Choti, post office Jharsar Kandhlan in Taranagar block of Churu took up a complaint of an old lady of his village regarding excess billing. The matter was taken up with Assistant Engineer, Taranagar. He took immediate action and made correction in her bill and resolved the problem.
3. Ramji Lal and Raju of village Melusar in Sardarshahar block of Churu were motivated by a sub-GIM which they attended in their village. They gathered a group of influential people and empowered them with the ongoing power reform processes with emphasis on energy conservation, power theft and grievance redressal mechanism. They distributed the handouts, which were given to them during the GIMs. Later on the same group gathered again and discussed genuine problems of electricity in their village and submitted in the form of memorandum before the Assistant Engineer of Sardarshahar. Though in the memorandum, the small problems were rectified immediately and the assurances were given on major problems.
4. Nirmala Pareek of Jassusar Gate, Bikaner after attending GIM-I initiated a complaint of her own and also to some nearby household of her colony regarding faulty meters, which had either stopped functioning and the electricity bills were coming on the basis of an average or running very fast. Nirmala collected the details of all the meters and submitted it to the Ex. En office and after following it for three or four times, managed to get all the meters tested and replaced immediately.
5. Mahendra Nandwana of village Bhandaheda of Digod tehsil in Kota also had similar experience of taking up the matter of faulty meters and after pursuing with the authorities, had managed to get them replaced, wherever required.
6. Dilip Gehani of Vidyut Nagar in Banswara courageously complained about the electricity stealing in a nearby slum colony, where residents of that colony had taken illegal connections directly from poles. Gehani's efforts proved fruitful and the local utility officials took action against those persons immediately.

7. Kamala Panjwani of Arawali Sewa Samiti, Abu Road and also a local partner of Sirohi district had complained about faulty billing in her area. She collected all such bills from aggrieved consumers of her area and submitted with a complaint letter to Assistant Engineer's office. Nothing had happened for several days then she took up the matter to Ex En and also sent a copy to S.E, who sits in Pali. Then immediately, there was an action on that and all such bills were rectified.

8. Rajendra Meena of village Surwal in Sawai Madhopur after attending a meeting of sub-GIM in Sawai Madhopur had once complained before the *e-chaupal* organised by utility about an electricity pole, where the bulb was not put off even during the day time causing unnecessary financial burden on utility and ultimately to the consumers. He complained to the officials there that this kind of situation in his village is often seen, where streetlights are not switched off during daytime. The officials present in the meeting took up the matter seriously and immediately the orders were given for action.

9. Gangadhar Solanki, a resident of Chittorgarh and old net worker and also in the RGM-Rajasthan had complained regarding the electricity stealing in Ghandhinagar slum area, where lots of people were involved. Due to his rigorous efforts, the culprits were caught and the action was taken against them and thus managed to save a huge amount of Rs 1crore and 40 lakhs in a year.

10. Surendra Singh Tomar of village Attarsuma of Dholpur after attending the session on grievance redressal mechanism in GIM in Dholpur had complained regarding a broken pole due to which electricity in the village was interrupted. After meeting the officials several times and taking some more villagers with him, his efforts proved worth and the pole was again erected.

11. Azad Singh, a resident of Jhunjhunu after participating in a GIM conducted in Jhunjhunu reported to take the initiative of stopping his neighbour from stealing power and convinced as well as helped him to apply for and get a regular electricity connection.

2.5 Some more key systemic issues identified from the discussions

- Delay in getting new electricity connection other than agriculture.
- Information and procedures for getting new connections is not provided.
- Charging bills on average basis on stopped meters, which is other than wrong billing and delay in sending bills.
- Delay in disposal of applications of increase load and complaints.
- Power theft with the help and knowledge of utility employees and no action on them.
- Not holding '*Vidhyut Chaupals*' regularly and properly.
- Shortage of staff, where it is required more especially in the field.

2.6 Highlights

- There was good participation of consumers, people's representative, media and utility officials.
- The participants applauded the initiative and the resource material provided.
- The session on systemic issues was keenly listened and later participated by the participants very actively because these were the issues raised by maximum number of participants only in the last GIM-I.
- Some more systemic issues came out during the discussions, which are being documented in the main report.
- Good media coverage (See Annexure IV).
- Overall arrangements at all the places were fine.
- The perception survey proved useful in getting some success stories/outcomes of GIM-I.

2.7 Lowlights

- Despite orders from Discoms Chairman on our request, no utility official came in Bikaner GIM, though assistant engineer had earlier confirmed to participate.
- In some places ratio of repeated participants was low due to rain and people were busy in agricultural activities or National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) work.
- There was no participation of public representatives in some places and no participation from Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission (RERC).

Annexure 1
Details of Grassroots Interface Meetings

S.N.	District	Date	Total no of participants	Officials from Utilities	Public Representative and others
1.	Jhunjhunu	11 th June 2009	103	U. S. Tarodia, S.E & J.S. Manju, Ex. En. AVVNL	Tek Chand Sharma, Member, Consumer Forum and Juvenile Board
2.	Churu	12 th June 2009	80	O. P. Gaur, Ex. En. JdVVNL	Subhkaran Pawar, Member Panchayat Samiti
3.	Bikaner	17 th June 2009	72	None	Surendra Kumar Vyas, Chairman Wholesale Bhandar
4.	Dholpur	26 th June 2009	70	J. P. Sharma, Ex.En & A K Tiwari, A.En. JVVNL	Virendra Singh, Chairman Municipal Committee
5.	Banswara	16 th July 2009	75	A K Nagouri, S.E. & S K Malot, Ex. En. AVVNL	Mrs. Krishna Katara, Chairperson, Municipal Committee.
6.	Udaipur	17 th July 2009	76	G S Dalal, Zonal Chief Engineer & K P Verma, Ex.En. AVVNL	None
7.	Chittorgarh	18 th July 2009	67	S K Singh, A.En., Rakesh Bhanot, J.En, S N Soni, J.En, and V S Atri, A.En.	Amar Singh Kanawat, SDM Roop Singh Kaviya, DPRO
8.	Sirohi	23 rd July 2009	100	Avinash Singhvi, Ex.En (urban), Abu Road and Mr. Pholwariya A .En.	Mr. Andaram Garasia, Pradhan Panchayat Samiti
9.	Swai Madhopur	29 th July 2009	69	Harish Agrawal, S.E. & T N Samaria Ex. En. JVVNL	None
10.	Kota	30 th July 2009	83	C P Vijayvargia, S.E. & P K Mittal Ex.En, JVVNL, Kota	Mrs Kamala Meena, Zila Pramukh
	Total		795	19	9

Annexure 2
Detail of Sub-GIMs conducted under IInd Phase of RESA Project

SN	Date	Place	Participants	Resource persons
1	25/7/09	Gangrar, Chittorgarh	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mohd. Sharif, J. En. AVVNL • Thakur Sawlji, Press Reporter
2	27/7/09	Begu, Chittorgarh	65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J R Meena , J.En. AVVNL • Nana Lal Dhakar, President Kisan Union, Begu • Bhagwati Prasad, Press Reporter
3	29/7/09	Badisadri, Chittorgarh	37	Kailash Chnader Gadia, A.En. AVVNL
4	8/8/09	Bhopalsagar, Chottorgarh	25	Jamnadal, J.En. AVVNL
5	30/7/09	Ghatol, Banswara	32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P. S. Nayak, A.En. AVVNL • Nemraj Shailot (TT participant)
6	11/8/09	Bagidora, Banswara	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amit Yadav, J.En. AVVNL • Nemraj Shailot (TT participant)
7	12/8/09	Jarga, Dholpur	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rakesh Parmar (TT participant) • Udaiveer Singh (TT participant)
8	17/8/09	Dhnora, Dhopur	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rakesh Parmar (TT participant) • Udaiveer Singh (TT participant)
9	16/7/09	Lunkarnsar, Bikaner	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surjaram Seela, A.En. • Yogesh Paliwal (TT participant)
10	13/6/09	Sardarshahr, Churu	52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radheshyam, Office Assistant, JVVNL • Vikram Singh (TT participant) • Mikesh Sahran (TT participant)
11	24/6/09	Taranagr, Churu	55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ram Kishan, A.En. JVVNL • Vikram Singh (TT participant) • Mukesh Sahran (TT participant)
Total Participants			427	

Annexure 3
Systemic problems related to electricity consumers in
Rajasthan and possible solutions thereof

Problems	Relevant Provisions	Possible solutions
Utilities related		
<p>Poor quality of new electronic meters</p>	<p><u><i>NERC (Supply Code and Connected Matters) Regulation 2004</i></u></p> <p>Clause 30: Testing of Meters In case, the consumer or the licensee suspects a meter to be not functioning properly, s/he may give a notice to the other party and the accuracy of the meter shall be tested by the licensee on site or in its testing laboratory or accredited independent labs.</p> <p>Clause 31: Replacement of meter</p> <p>1. In case of a stopped/defective meter, the licensee shall inspect and replace the metering system at its cost unless it is established that the system has been tampered or damaged in any way including excess load, by the consumer, in which case the consumer shall bear the cost.</p> <p>2. In case a stopped/defective metering system is not replaced within a period of two months of its detection, a rebate of five percent on the total bill of the consumer prepared under clause 29, excluding electricity duty shall be allowed from third monthly bill in case of monthly/fortnightly billing and second bill in case of bimonthly billing after such detection till the meter is replaced.</p> <p><u>Provisions in RERC Distribution Licensee's Standards of Performance Regulations, 2003</u></p> <p>If a complaint is made by the consumer about the working of the meter and he requests for replacement, it shall be replaced within fifteen days.</p> <p><u>Protection of Consumer Rights: RERC Regulations 2003</u></p> <p>Accuracy of Meters Accuracy of meters shall be as per the 'Metering Code'. In case of dispute regarding accuracy of meter(s), consumer can give notice to the other party for testing by the licensee or any accredited laboratory.</p>	<p><i>Complaint is to be made to utility for checking or Replacement of meter</i></p> <p><i>Complaint to grievance redressal & settlement committee and then appeal to Ombudsman if the consumer is not satisfied with the decision taken by utility.</i></p> <p><i>If there is violation of concerned regulation then complaint can be made before RERC u/s 142, which can impose fine on utility.</i></p>
<p>Wrong billing and delay in sending bills</p>	<p><u><i>Provisions RERC (Supply Code and Connected Matters) Regulation 2004</i></u></p> <p>Clause 27: Reading of meter The meter shall be read each month or at such intervals as the licensee may fix with prior approval of the Commission</p> <p>Clause 29: Assessment in case of stopped, lost or stolen meter</p> <p>(1) If the meter stops working for any reason, or the meter is stolen or lost, the consumption of electricity for the period during which electricity has been consumed with stopped meter or without a meter, shall be calculated as follows:</p>	<p><i>1. Complaint is made to utility</i></p> <p><i>2. Grievance redressal cum settlement committee</i></p> <p><i>3. Appeal to ombudsman</i></p>

Problems	Relevant Provisions	Possible solutions
	<p>The licensee shall acknowledge a consumer's complaint on wrong billing or incorrect application of tariff or non-receipt of bill or inadequate time allowed to effect payment, immediately if reported in person or telephonically and within seven working days if the complaint is received by post.</p> <p>The licensee shall resolve a complaint regarding arithmetical errors or non receipt or inadequate time for payment of electricity bills due to him or served to him, same day if made in person and on the day of acknowledgement, if complaint is made by post. In other cases and also, where any additional information is required to be collected, the complaint shall be resolved within seven days of receipt</p> <p>In case the complaint of the consumer is genuine and revision of bill becomes necessary, the due date for payment of bill would be reckoned from the date of the revised bill. For purpose of calculating additional charges for delayed payment or for disconnection of supply also, the date of revised bill shall be considered.</p>	<p>4. <i>Petition u/s 142 before RERC, if there is violation of the provisions of regulations.</i></p> <p><i>The consumer should made a written request as early as possible and reference no and dated should be noted for the purpose of further communication with utility/RERC</i></p>
<p>Excessive power cuts without prior information and fluctuations</p>	<p><u>Provisions in RERC Distribution Licensee's Standards of Performance Regulations, 2003</u></p> <p>Period of Schedule Outages Period of interruption due to scheduled outage shall be specified well in advance by public notice through newspapers, local radio/TV stations etc. and as far as possible shall not exceed 10 hours on any day. The licensee shall ensure that supply is normally restored by 6 p.m.</p> <p>The licensee shall attend complaints of no voltage/interruption in Power Supply on account of any reason including blowing of HT/LT fuse at consumer premises or of distribution transformer/MCB trouble or due to loose connections/disconnection at meter, MCB or service line, and shall restore power supply, if not due to line fault or distribution and/or power transformer(s) failure, within 4 hours of receiving the complaint in all industrial, municipal and cantonment areas and in case of Military and PHED installations while within 24 hours in rural areas</p> <p>The complaint regarding low voltage arising due to inadequacy in the distribution system requiring upgradation of distribution lines, transformers or installation of capacitors shall be resolved within 180 days subject to availability of material and techno-economic viability. The complainants shall be informed in writing.</p> <p><u>Provisions in Protection of Consumer Rights: RERC Regulations 2003</u></p> <p>Clause 8: Notice of scheduled outages.</p> <p>(1) The licensee shall provide not less than 24 hours notice of a scheduled outage through newspaper, electronic media/ telephone</p>	<p>1. <i>Complaint to utility</i></p> <p>2. <i>Grievance redressal cum settlement committee</i></p> <p>3. <i>Appeal to ombudsman</i> <i>Ombudsman can adjudicate in respect of following matters:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Interruption in supply</i> b. <i>Delay in restoration</i> c. <i>Quality of supply</i> <p>4. <i>Petition u/s 142 before RERC, if there is violation of the provisions of regulations</i></p> <p>5. <i>Advocacy or social pressure</i></p>

Problems	Relevant Provisions	Possible solutions
<p>Accidents due to hanging and faulty lines</p>	<p>Provisions in Electricity Rules 1956</p> <p>Clause 77. Clearance above ground of the lowest conductor-</p> <p>(1) No conductor of an overhead line, including service lines, erected across a street shall at any part thereof be at a height of less than-</p> <p>(a) For low and medium voltage lines 5.8 meters</p> <p>(b) For high voltage lines 6.1 meters</p> <p>Clause 79. Clearances from buildings of low and medium voltage lines and service</p> <p>(1) Where a low or medium voltage, overhead line passes above or adjacent to or terminates on any building, the following minimum clearances from any accessible point, on the basis of maximum sag, shall be observed:</p> <p>(a) For any flat roof, open balcony, verandah roof and lean-to-roof-</p> <p>(i) When the line passes above the building a vertical clearance of 2.5 meters from the highest point, and</p> <p>(ii) When the line passes adjacent to the building a horizontal clearance of 1.2 meters from the nearest point,</p> <p><i>* The height and clearance of lines may be according to voltage</i></p>	<p>1. Complaint to utility</p> <p>2. Complaint to Grievance redressal cum settlement committee</p> <p>3. Appeal to ombudsman</p> <p>4. Petition u/s 142 before RERC, if there is violation of the provisions of regulations</p> <p>Note: As per law latter entrants has to bear the cost of removing existing lines and if despite information and readiness to bear cost, lines if clearance standards not followed then utility is liable for accidents due to it.</p>
<p>Delay in grievance redressal and unsatisfactory behavior of staff</p>	<p><u>RERC (Guidelines for Redressal of Grievances) Regulations, 2008</u></p> <p>Time frame disposal of grievances: Normally, the grievance will be disposed of in 30 days and in any case not exceeding 45 days from the date of its receipt registration</p> <p><u>Provisions in RERC Distribution Licensee's Standards of Performance Regulations, 2003</u></p> <p>The licensee shall register every complaint made by a consumer whether verbally or in writing in a register to be maintained for this purpose. A unique number shall be allotted to each complaint. This complaint number shall be conveyed to the consumer.</p> <p>Complaints in respect of supply of electricity, its metering, billing and payment thereof, shall be made at specified offices of the licensee. Licensee shall convey the name of office(s), its address(s) and telephone numbers where the consumer can lodge complaints, at least once with the electricity bill and also display it at the AEN's office.</p> <p>Complaints against non-registration of complaints and failure to perform within the time limits and/or to meet the performance targets, as specified in these regulations, shall be made to the concerned Executive Engineer and in case of unsatisfactory disposal of complaint to Superintending Engineer (O&M).</p> <p>In case a consumer is not satisfied with the disposal of complaint even after taking the issue at the level of Executive Engineer/ Superintending Engineer, he can approach the complaint redressal committee.</p>	<p>1. Complaint to utility</p> <p>2. Complaint to Grievance redressal cum settlement committee</p> <p>3. Appeal to ombudsman</p> <p>4. Petition u/s 142 before RERC if there is violation of the provisions of regulations</p>

Problems	Relevant Provisions	Possible solutions
	'Vidhyut Chaupals' The licensee shall ensure holding of complaint redressal meetings where entry shall be free and consumers will be able to file their complaints. These meeting shall be held in the office of Assistant Engineer on 10 th of every month and in the office of the Superintending Engineer on 20 th of the same month. Minutes of the Assistant Engineer level meeting and action taken report will be available to the Superintending Engineer at the time of meeting to be held by him on 20 th of the same month. The redressal committee shall dispose of the matter in not more than three meetings.	
No attempt to create awareness on grievance redressal mechanism and energy conservation	RERC (Guidelines for Redressal of Grievances) Regulations, 2008 Wide publicity of Forum office: Complete address and telephone number of the Complaint Center and Grievance Redressal Forum must be intimated to the consumers through electricity bills and wide publicity be given through press and media and in Sub- divisional (AEn) Offices.	1. By way of Advocacy and regular awareness related programmes 2. Petition u/s 142 before RERC if there is violation of the provisions of regulations
The contractors engaged by utilities are exploiting consumers and not giving satisfactory services	The utility is responsible to consumers for the acts of the contactors engaged by it. So the aggrieved consumers have every right to initiate action against utility.	1. By way of Advocacy and regular awareness related programmes 2. Advocacy for the regulation/guidelines for contractors and asking utilities to take action on this
Policy Related		
No effort is made to create awareness on consumer participation, reform process, and grievance redressal mechanism	Guidelines for Redressal of Grievances Regulations, 2008 (Clause 10). Wide publicity of Forum office: Complete address and telephone number of the Complaint Center and Grievance Redressal Forum must be intimated to the consumers through electricity bills and wide publicity be given through press and media and in Sub- divisional (A.En.) Offices (It is same as above under "NO attempts is made...."	1. By way of Advocacy and regular awareness related programmes
High minimum tariff ceiling for the poor		1. By way of rigorous advocacy and Representation for review of minimum tariff
Delay in agriculture connection	Standard of Performance, Clause 10.3- Agricultural Connections For agriculture connections, release of connection shall be subject to the provisions of the Annual Plan and approval of the investment by the Commission. The Annual Plan shall incorporate policy directive, if any, issued by the State Government. Time limit to release the connection under this category will be 120 days from receipt of payment of demand note or due date of demand note, whichever is later, subject to the condition that distributing system exists and connection is technically feasible. In case a new distributing system is to be laid, time shall be reckoned from the date of energising of the distributing system.	By way of rigorous advocacy and representation to change the present policy and to provide agriculture connections on demand

Annexure 4

AGENDA

Time	Sessions
10:00 – 10:30	Registration
10:30 – 11:00	Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductory remarks by CUTS representative• Special address by Local Legislator
11:00 – 11:30	Tea and Show of RESA Documentary
11:30 – 12:40	Session I: Key Systemic Issues and their possible solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key systemic issues as collated from the first phase• Possible solutions and the ways to approach CUTS Representative
12:40 – 13:30	Session II: Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GRM under Electricity Act, 2003• Existing mechanism for the redressal of complaints• Filing of complaints and follow up by the consumers• Time frame for redressal of complaints Local Distribution Company representative
13:30 – 14:00	Closing Session
14:00 – 14:30	Perception survey and feedback
14.30 onwards	Lunch

Annexure: 5

Glimpses of media coverage of GIM-2nd phase



Figure 1: Glimpses of media coverage of GIM-II