

About CUTS Milestones

- CUTS filed the first unfair trade practices (UTPs) complaint in the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission (MRTPC) in August 1984, which stopped the misleading sales of a hosiery dealer, forced matchbox manufacturers to ensure 50 sticks in a match box and exposed the double branding of cigarette manufacturers. The last action led to a change in the excise policy.
- CUTS organised a public debate in Calcutta in 1986 on the amended Commission of Enquiry Act, which curbed the right of people to know about a commission's report, wherein the Union Law Minister, Asoke Sen, defended the motion. Subsequently, in 1989, the amendment was reversed.
- CUTS is responsible for the enactment and strengthening of the dynamic Consumer Protection Act (COPRA), 1986 likes of which are not seen anywhere in the world.
- CUTS obtained an unprecedented compensation of Rs 50,000 from Otis Elevator Co. for a lift accident victim without going to court in 1987. Mentioned in the Limca Book of Records.
- In 1988, CUTS 'inaugurated' the National Commission, the Rajasthan and the West Bengal State Commissions, set up under COPRA, not by cutting ribbons, but by filing the first complaints before each of these bodies.
- By a series of litigations in the Rajasthan High Court on family planning mishaps in 1988, CUTS got the government policies of targeting changed, ensured a more humane treatment of women volunteers of sterilisation, and established an impartial enquiry system.
- A unique honour was bestowed when CUTS was the only group in the country to serve on the Central, Rajasthan and West Bengal State Consumer Protection Councils during 1987-90.
- By a class-action petition under COPRA, CUTS ensured the legal and human rights of nearly 800 poor victims of adulteration in edible oil in Calcutta in 1988-90, commonly referred to as the Behala Oil Tragedy.
- CUTS conceptualised and launched the World Poverty Day on November 01, 1990, which was adopted by the consumer movement in India in 1991. As a result of advocacy by CUTS, the UN adopted October 17 as the "International Day for the Eradication of Poverty" in 1993.

- At the Global Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) Conference on Environment & Development at Paris in December, 1991, wherein over 850 social activists from all over the world participated, CUTS got a resolution adopted that the proposed Multilateral Trade Organisation proposed to be set up under the new General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) should have proportional representation from nations on the basis of their populations. Though this did not happen when the World Trade Organisation (WTO) came into being.
- As a result of the advocacy by CUTS (and VOICE), the Indian Ecomark scheme was launched in 1991. Consequently, CUTS was nominated as a member of the Technical Committee of the Ministry of Environment on Ecolabelling in the same year.
- CUTS launched a novel contest: 'Find Garbage and Win a Prize' in Calcutta in 1988 and Jaipur in 1992 to draw attention of both the authorities and citizens on the environment and health hazards resulted in immediate action.
- CUTS study on road safety in 1990 became the basis for the National Road Safety Policy in 1993, seeking to reduce the death level from road accidents. It was nominated to the National Road Safety Council twice, and its first high level Ministerial Committee was established to formulate the National Road Safety Policy.
- CUTS succeeded in getting a toxic additive, Brominated Vegetable Oil banned for use in soft drinks in 1990, which led to widespread consumer awareness on health and safety issues.
- CUTS launched a year-long Campaign Against Auto Pollution in Calcutta by holding a "For children's sake" rally on Earth Day, 1993. On the ensuing World Environment Day, put a gas mark on Mahatma Gandhi's statue, which was published on the front pages of leading newspapers.
- CUTS published a highly acclaimed primer on GATT from the third world consumers' perspective in 1993, which led to the International Organisation of Consumer Unions (IOCU) commissioning a paper on Trade and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) from CUTS. The primer also served as a reliable information kit for several Members of Parliament (MPs) in India and NGOs the world over.
- A milestone was achieved in June 1994, when the GATT Secretariat invited the Secretary General of CUTS, Pradeep S Mehta, to present a paper on internalisation of environmental costs through ecolabelling at the first-ever public symposium. According to a letter from the GATT, it was one of the best papers presented at the symposium.

- CUTS is the most active member of the Consumers International (CI – formerly IOCU) in India. Along with CI staff, lobbied successfully at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) meeting in Geneva, in July 1995, to expand the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection, 1985 to include sustainable consumer patterns etc.
- Pursuant to an appeal in 1995 on medical negligence by CUTS, the Supreme Court of India ruled that all government employees, even if they or their families get free medical treatment, would be entitled for coverage under COPRA. The landmark judgment settled the controversy of medical negligence being covered under COPRA.
- CUTS is the only consumer NGO in India to be accredited by the United Nations Conference on Trade & Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD).
- Acknowledging CUTS contributory work in the area of trade and development, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Geneva invited CUTS in 1996 to join its newly set-up International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and its governing board.
- CUTS is one of the two NGOs who are members of the Advisory Committee on International Trade, whose meetings are chaired by the Minister for Commerce and Industry, India, and also provides regular inputs to the Government of India on trade policy issues.
- CUTS was instrumental in getting the World Consumer Rights Day falling on March 15 adopted as the National Consumers' Day by the Government of India. In the year 2000, this day was changed from March 15 to December 24, the same day, on which COPRA was assented by the President.
- CUTS, as a result of its work in the Power Sector has been nominated as a member of the Advisory Committee on Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission (RERC) in the year 2001.
- The Ecofrig campaign launched by CUTS reached a milestone when one of the largest manufacturers of refrigerators in the country launched the first Ecofrig in India in January 2001.
- In the year 2002, CUTS filed a petition in the State Human Rights Commission, Rajasthan, demanding a ban of jeeps as public transport vehicles, as many accidents were occurring due to overloading of jeeps. Pursuant to this, CUTS was incorporated in the committee constituted for periodical checks of overloaded jeeps on the national highways.

- Ratni Bai Khatik, a CUTS worker, was awarded the international prize 'Creativity of Women in the Rural Life' in the year 2002, by the Women World Summit Foundation, Geneva, Switzerland.
- CUTS Centre for Competition, Investment & Economic Regulation (CUTS C-CIER) was established in the year 2003 to give a better identity to CUTS projects on the issue of competition and regulation.
- International Network of Civil Society Organisations on Competition (INCSOC) was formed in the wake of the dissemination of the results of the 7Up project, for building a Network 2003, as a crying need was felt by several civil society organisations (CSOs) and other stakeholders of competition policy and law so that the competition regimes at the national level could be strengthened and developed where absent.
- CUTS London Resource Centre (CUTS LRC) was established in February 2003, as an international advocacy centre of CUTS. It is working towards bridging the gap between the North and the South.
- Pradeep S Mehta has been nominated on World Bank's Trade Policy Evaluation Advisory Panel on May 03, 2005. The Panel is required to advise the Operations Evaluation Department (OED) on the design, conduct and outputs of the evaluation of the Bank's lending and non-lending activities in the area of trade policy.
- Pradeep S Mehta held the Indian flag high flying high at the 4th International Competition Network (ICN) Annual Conference held in Bonn, Germany from June 05-08, 2005. He represented India in the absence of the competition authority, i.e. Competition Commission of India (CCI).
- CUTS played host to an initiative taken by five Members of Parliament (MPs) to establish a forum of Parliamentarians on economic policy issues (PARFORE) where MPs, cutting across the party lines, would be able to air their views on a periodic basis on core economic issues. This was followed up by a similar initiative in Rajasthan.
- The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) appointed Pradeep S Mehta in the Central Advisory Committee (CAC).
- CUTS initiated the inception of CUTS Institute for Regulation and Competition (CIRC) keeping in mind the need for fair knowledge, better skills and improved capacity for understanding competition laws, economic regulations and commercial aspects of diplomacy. The Institute was launched in September 2005.

- A book entitled ‘Competition Regimes in the World – A Civil Society Report’ was released in the Fifth Review Conference of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), held in Antalya, Turkey during November 14-18, 2005. The prevailing competition regimes in about 120 countries are sewed together in this unique compilation.
- Pradeep S Mehta has been invited to be a member of the Warwick Commission, which is looking into the future of the Global Trading System.
- Responsible for the design and enactment of the Indian Competition Act, 2002 and the Planning Commission’s Recommendation for a National Competition Policy for India.
- Promoted competition reforms in over 30 developing countries in Asia and Africa through research, advocacy and networking.
- The Planning Commission of India has appointed Pradeep S Mehta as member of its newly formed Working Groups on Consumer Protection and on Competition Policy under its 11th Five Year Plan.
- After implementing regional projects on competition policy and law and international trade issues, it was realised that there is an urgent need for further research and building capacity on trade and regulatory policy issues. Therefore, CUTS Hanoi Resource Centre was established in 2007.
- The Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Shyamala Gopinath presented the M R Pai Memorial Award to Mehta at a function organised by All-India Bank depositors Association, in Mumbai, on April 09, 2008 to commend CUTS for its relentless campaign to educate consumers on competition and regulatory issues.
- CUTS Geneva Resource Centre, the fifth overseas resource centre of CUTS, was launched on July 16, 2008. It will work closely with Geneva-based developing country negotiators and their policy makers and civil society representatives. It will ensure the presence of a pro-trade, pro-consumer developmental NGO closer to trade policy debates.