

Project on 'Clean Energy Transition and Electricity Governance'

Media Workshop cum Project Closing Meeting

Agartala Press Club, Thursday, November 28, 2024

Report

Consumers Protection Association (CPA), in partnership with Citizen, Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG), Chennai, organized a Media Workshop cum Project Closing Meeting at the Agartala Press Club on Nov. 28, 2024, under the project on 'Clean Energy Transition and Electricity Governance' in the state of Tripura.

Background



CPA in partnership with CAG, launched the project "Accelerating Clean Energy Transition by Improving Stakeholder Participation for Electricity Governance

in India", along with one-day seminar discussing the electricity issues in Tripura. The launch event was held on March 9, 2024 at Agartala Press Club,

Tripura. The project was for a period of 9 months from March to November, 2024. **Mr. D. Radhakrishnan**, Chairman, Tripura Electricity Regulatory Commission (TERC) the Chief guest, who formally launched the project. 35 participants from voluntary organizations, teacher associations, self-help Groups, and domestic consumers participated in the seminar. The following were the activities carried out under the project.

Project Activities

S. No.	Month	Activity	Plecae/Venue
1	March 9, 2024	Launch cum Seminar on Electricity Governance	Agartala Press Club
2	May 11, 2024	1 st Meeting of Local Electricity Forum	Bishlgarh, Sepahijal District
3	May 25	2 nd Meeting of Local Electricity Forum	Teliamura, Khowai District
4	June 15	1 st Capacity Building Workshop	Agartala
5	July 13	3 rd Meeting of Local Electricity Forum	Tripura South District
6	August 10	2 nd Seminar on Electricity Governance	Tripura Students Health Home, Agartala
7	Sept 28	2 nd Capacity Building Workshop	Dharmanagar North Tripura District
8	November 7	4 th Meeting of Local Electricity Forum	Agartala
9	November 28	Media Workshop cum Project Closing Meeting	Press Club, Agartala



The media workshop was organized on Nov. 28, marking the conclusion of the project activities. **Shri Abhishek Singh**, IAS, Secretary, Dept. of Power, Govt. of Tripura was the Chief Guest. **Smt. Mina Debbarma**, Secretary, Tripura Electricity Regulatory Commission; **Shri Nirmal Debnath**,

Sr. Manager and **Smti. Arpita Chakraborty**, Manager, from the Tripura State Electricity Company Ltd.; **Smt. Moushumi Chakkraborty**, Registrar, State Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission and **Smt. Daliya Saha**, Member, State Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission were the other guests/speakers who were present in the Media workshop.

The workshop started by 11.00 am with welcome and introductory address and by presenting flowers bouquets to guest/speakers and by lighting the lamp. Adv. Amrit Lal Saha, presented souvenir published for the participants to the workshop to the Chief Guest Shri Abhishek Singh. Since Shri Ratan Lal Nath, Honorable Minister for Power, Government of Tripura could not attend the event, a message sent by the Minister was read in the Meeting.

Shri Abhishek Singh, IAS, addressed the workshop highlighting the commendable work done by CPA and CAG in India. He appreciated the initiatives, such as capacity-building programmes, local electricity forum meetings, seminars on energy conservation and renewable energy, and energy audits in tea factories run by workers' cooperative societies. He humorously remarked, "You are doing our job," underscoring the alignment of these activities with government objectives.



Speaking about Tripura's energy landscape, Shri Singh noted that the state is power surplus and exports electricity to Bangladesh. However, its per capita electricity consumption stands at 450 kWh/year, primarily due to a lack of industrialization, as

most consumers are from the domestic and commercial sectors. He highlighted that Tripura is growing rapidly in economy, which will likely drive rapid increases in per capita energy consumption in the coming years.

He outlined the state's clean energy initiatives, beginning with its ambitious target of achieving 500 MW of solar capacity by 2030. He emphasized the promotion of the PM *Suryagarh* Scheme, which provides subsidies for rooftop solar installations, citing his own experience of saving 70-75 percentage on electricity bills through installation of rooftop solar system in his own residence. Plans are also underway for rooftop solar installations on government buildings and the establishment of solar parks. However, he acknowledged



that the state's solar potential of 2000 MW is underutilized due to a lower capacity utilization factor (CUF) of 12–14%, compared to the national average of 18–19%, which deters investors.

Hydropower and biomass energy are also being prioritized. Tripura has identified a small hydro potential of 40–50 MW and signed an MoU with NHPC for 800 MW of pumped hydro capacity across four locations. In collaboration with IOCL, the state plans to install 16,000 decentralized biogas plants for household cooking and lighting. Additionally, Tripura is working with MNRE on micro grids, solarization of irrigation pumps, sewage treatment plants, and solar-powered streetlights. He added that Tripura is the only state providing subsidy for drilling bores for farmers who wish to install solar systems for their irrigation pumps.

Energy efficiency is another focus area, with the state partnering with EESL to



promote energy-efficient appliances in government buildings adopting passive architectural designs for natural lighting and ventilation. However, the state faces challenges with high Aggregate Technical and

Commercial (AT&C) losses, primarily due to the dominance of domestic and commercial consumers. To address this, initiatives such as smart meters, aerial bundled cables to prevent theft, and awareness and enforcement drives have

been implemented. These measures have led to a 150% increase in DISCOM revenue and a significant shift in consumer behavior, with more people paying their electricity bills regularly.

On the regulatory front, Shri Singh acknowledged delays in implementing yearly tariff regulations which will be starting very soon. He stated that there is an increase in gas prices up to three times, used in Natural gas based power plants in Tripura due to Ukraine Russia war. He also highlighted the need to notify consumer rights for reliable service and quality electricity in Tripura's electricity regulations, an area where further action is planned.

In conclusion, Shri Singh expressed his gratitude to the CPA Tripura and CAG for their valuable contributions to clean energy transition activities in Tripura. He reiterated the importance of such efforts in creating a sustainable and inclusive energy future for the state. He also expressed interest in the energy audits, carried out by CAG.

Adv. Amrit Lal Saha, Founding President of CPA, chaired the Media Workshop



and spoke about the interventions of CPA in Tripura, working in various sectors for the last almost 37 years, since 1987. He said in the past CPA had worked with various regulators, He said working in the area of electricity governance was a new

initiate and with the guidance of the Regulatory Commission (TERC) and the

Dept. of Power, CPA achieved good results. He also shared his feedback from various activities and thanked the local coordinators.

George Cheriyan, Working President of CPA, in his introductory remarks said, electricity has become an essential need of life. CPA implemented the project in Tripura by way of organizing seminars, capacity-building workshops and meetings of local electricity forums, to empower people with knowledge about the electricity sector.

George said, there are several highlights and low lights emerged about Tripura. Tripura is lagging behind in renewable energy adoption, awareness, and utilization of government schemes despite its potential and special provisions. The state must



prioritize promoting rooftop solar, addressing un-electrified households, reducing T&D losses, and encouraging energy conservation measures.

Nationally, India source 53% from fossil fuels, 45% from renewables (including hydro), and 2% from nuclear power. In contrast, Tripura's comprises 84% fossil fuels (coal and gas) and only 16% renewables. This is significantly below the national average and far behind states. Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020, which was amended twice in 2021 & in June 2023, is meant to empower the consumers of electricity and added that these Rules emanate

from the conviction that the power systems exist to serve the consumers and the consumers have rights to get the reliable services and quality electricity. However, the same is not notified in the state of Tripura yet.



B. Kirubakaran, Researcher, Electricity Governance, CAG, spoke about the significance of launching a project in Tripura. The project implemented in 5 states in India, aims to empower consumers and enable their

greater participation in the electricity sector, while also enhancing their understanding of electricity governance. He also shared the key outcomes of the energy audit conducted among the tea gardens in Tripura, and presented a copy of the Energy Audit.

Mina Debbarma, Secretary, Tripura Electricity Regulatory Commission (TERC) said, framing rules for the Discoms is the primary responsibility of the commission. She said the TERC is in the process of transition



with appointment of New Chairman and Members, which is expected soon.

Sri Nirmal Debnath, Sr. Manager and **Smti. Arpita Chakraborty**, Manager, represented the DISCOM, the Tripura State Electricity Company Ltd. Spoke about various services and activities of the distribution companies.

Smt. Moushumi Chakkraborty, Registrar, State Consumer Commission and **Smt Daliya Saha**, Member, State Consumer Commission spoke about the grievance redressal mechanism available under the Consumer Protection Act to redress the grievances of the electricity consumers.



Certificates were distributed to local coordinators, who helped in organizing the activities in

various part of Tripura. The workshop concluded by 1.45 pm with summing up and vote of thanks, and lunch. Around 35 media representatives and representatives of consumer organizations attended the meeting.

Media Coverage:

Media Workshop & Project Closing Meet on “Clean Energy Transition & Electricity Governance” held in city, Agartala , Nov 28, 2024,
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