

Laudable efforts by CUTS on child protection and women's empowerment: Maneka Gandhi, Women and Child Development Minister of India

New Delhi, 19th February, 2019: "Child protection and women's empowerment are two major pillars of India's future development. We can't simply ignore the valuable contribution that the one-half of our humanity is making towards the growth and development of our country," said Maneka Gandhi, Women and Child Development Minister of India. She was speaking on the occasion of the release of "Stories of Change", which captures some glimpses of a journey by the CUTS Centre for Human Development, Chittorgarh of its grassroots interventions in several districts of southern Rajasthan over a period of last 25 years. The occasion was graced by a number of female networkers, who are taking such messages forward to the society at large. Over the years, CUTS (Consumer Unity & Trust Society) has facilitated the formation of more than 1500 self-help groups in these districts, which are mostly managed by women.



Lauding the efforts of CUTS and its networkers across villages in these districts in creating opportunities for women to become entrepreneurs, she underlined the need for sensitising the men-folk of the society on virtues of protecting girl child and empowering women. "Societal inequalities can only be addressed by reducing inequality in opportunities," she added. Speaking on the occasion, Pradeep Mehta, Secretary General of CUTS, said: "When women are empowered, whole families benefit, and these benefits often have ripple effects to future generations." This sentiment was

echoed by Badam Bai, who belongs to Gadia Lohar community and is an ironsmith by profession in Ochdi village, Chittorgarh. Life changed for her when, with support from CUTS, she formed Radhe Krishna self-help group of 11 members. She became the first woman from her community to take a step towards bringing a change. They took loans from banks to promote their traditional business.

Other than CUTS representatives and its networkers, the occasion was also graced by a number of representatives of CUTS' development partners who are helping the organisation in taking forward its grassroots interventions. Notable among them were Deepshikha Prasad of CHILDLINE India Foundation, Alka Singh and Namrata Jaitley of Save the Children.
