

Analysis of Feedback on CUTS' Publications on Competition & Regulatory Issues

Purpose

The purpose of carrying out the survey was to review CUTS' publications and outreach policy in order to make it more effective and useful for its target readers.

Background

Ever since its inception, CUTS has been working on a range of subjects that include Consumer Protection, Competition, International Trade, Investment, and Economic Regulation.

Aiming to promote fair and effective competition culture and to disseminate information so as to create awareness regarding various regulatory matters across the globe, CUTS has been coming out with various publications on competition and regulatory issues. Through its various publications, CUTS has blended the cold of research with the hot of advocacy.

It has been regularly printing Research Reports, Discussion Papers, Viewpoint Papers, Briefing Papers, Monographs, Policy Briefs, e-newsletters, and flagship Newsletters like ReguLetter and PolicyWatch whose sole objective has been to create awareness among various stakeholders who in turn are active at the national, regional, and international level, on issues related to competition and consumer welfare.

These dedicated publications have been showcasing issues and cases thwarting competition in countries across the globe, providing readers an insight into the competition scenario therein. Evaluation of the quality of information disseminated thus becomes highly crucial and significant and with this objective in mind, a survey was conducted to elicit readers' views on a variety of issues relating to the publications to help ensure that it meets the need and necessity of readers, as well as satisfies their quest for knowledge and information.

Methodology

The survey was conducted by way of a Feedback Form, which essentially carried six questions. The Form was subsequently mailed out to all readers on our various mailing lists. A Sample Feedback Form has been illustrated below:

Sample Feedback Form

Feedback on CUTS Publications on Competition and Regulatory Issues

CUTS is reviewing its publication and outreach policy for making it more effective and useful for its target readers. Kindly respond to the following questions if you have ever received our publications on competition, regulation and related issues. Kindly also treat this as urgent and send us your feedback at your earliest convenience. Please mark the relevant options as your replies.

1. How often do you receive CUTS' publications?

- (a) Once or twice in a year;
- (b) Three times or more in a year;
- (c) Rarely;
- (d) Never

2. How often you read them?

- (a) Usually;
- (b) More than 50% of them;
- (c) Less than 50% of them;
- (d) Never

3. How would you rate the quality of our publications?

- (a) Excellent;
- (b) Good;
- (c) Average;
- (d) Below average or poor

4. To what extent do you find our publications useful for your work?

- (a) Usually;
- (b) Often;
- (c) Sometimes;
- (d) Rarely;
- (e) Never

5. What, in your opinion, are the unique features of our publications
(You can choose more than one)?

- (a) Simple and reader-friendly;
- (b) Useful and practical;
- (c) Analytical;
- (d) Informative;
- (e) Dealing with issues usually left out by others;
- (f) Any other (specify)

6. Do you have suggestions to improve our publications and outreach?

Actual Responses Received

An overwhelming response was received to the Feedback Questionnaire sent out to the readers. 65 responses were received in total – a detailed account of which has been elaborated in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Result Table

<u>Questions/Items</u>	<u>Responses to Options</u>											
	Option A		Option B		Option C		Option D					
Item 1. How often do you receive CUTS' publications?	Once or twice		3 times or more		Rarely		Never					
	14		41		6		4					
Item 2. How often you read them? *	Usually		More than 50%		Less than 50%		Never					
	33		20		6		1					
Item 3. How would you rate the Quality of our publications? *	Excellent		Good		Average		Below Average					
	18		38		4		0					
Item 4. To what extent do you find our publications useful for your work? *	Usually		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never			
	18		24		16		2		0			
Item 5. What, in your opinion, are the unique features of our publications? *	Option A		Option B		Option C		Option D		Option E		Option F	
	Simple & Reader Friendly		Useful & Practical		Analytical		Informative		Dealing with issues left by others		Others	
	28		31		19		48		20		3	

* 1 no response, 4 never received publications

Item 6 asked for readers' suggestion, towards improving our publications and network to which quite innovative and interesting responses were received – discussed further in the report.

A multitude of responses were received from readers across the globe. Respondents from different corners of the world came forward and participated in the survey providing us better insight as to our work and activities. Asian and African countries had considerable representation in the responses. The respondents comprised of various Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Government Agencies, Inter-governmental Agencies, and others (which included lawyers, researchers, corporate heads, private firms, professors, etc). The following provides the geographical and broad occupational representation of responses:

Figure 1: Geographical Representation (in %)

Table 2 - Geographical Representation

Continents	Responses	%
Asia Pacific	28	43%
Africa	10	15%
Europe	19	29%
North America	6	9%
South America	2	3%

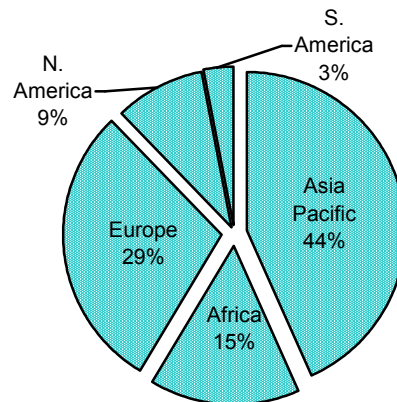
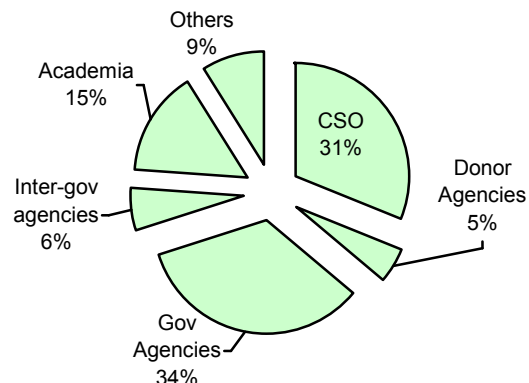


Figure 1 reveals that about 43 percent of the respondents who participated in the survey were Asian and about 29 percent were Europeans. Almost 15 percent of the responses were from Africa. Representation of responses for North America stood at nine percent, while for South America it was three percent. CUTS’ publications aim at creating awareness among various stakeholders about competition and regulatory issues, particularly in developing nations. Representation of Asian and African countries in the survey conducted signifies the extent to which this objective has been met. Though responses from African countries have been moderate, yet the responses are gratifying enough and reflect on all the hard work put in bringing out these publications.

Result 2 – Occupational Representation

Occupation	Responses	%
Civil Society Organisations	20	31%
Donor Agencies	3	5%
Government Agencies	22	34%
Inter-governmental Agencies	4	6%
Academia	10	15%
Others	6	9%

Figure 2: Occupational Representation (in %)

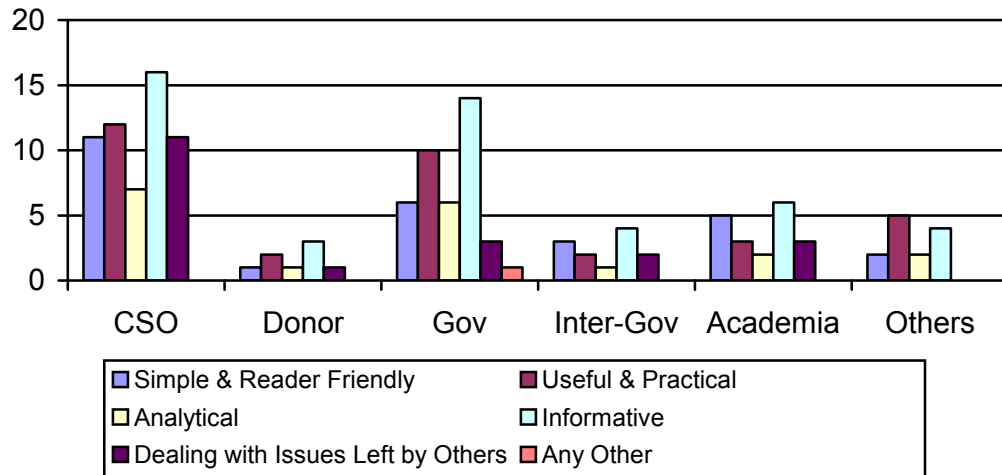


About 31 percent of the responses were from civil society organisations, while 34 percent were from various government agencies including competition commissions and authorities, ministries, institutions set up under various ministries, anti-monopoly agencies, etc. About five percent of the responses were from Donor Agencies like DFID and AusAid. Responses from various inter-governmental agencies such as ASEAN, UNCTAD, etc stood at around six percent of the total responses received. Academia accounted for around 15 percent and ‘others’, which included lawyers, corporate heads, private firms etc represented nine percent of the responses. See Figure 2 above.

Unique Features of Publications – Survey Outcome

Item 5 on the feedback form elicited responses with reference to unique features of CUTS’ publications. Figure 3 showcases the results of an occupation wise analysis of the same. Most of the CSOs, donor agencies, government bodies, inter government bodies, and others responded that the informative content of our publications is the most striking and unique feature. Besides, the attribute of utility and practicality was another unique feature identified in the survey. According to a few, the publications are analytical in their approach, and simple and reader friendly. The other outstanding attribute is the fact that our publications deal with issues left out by others.

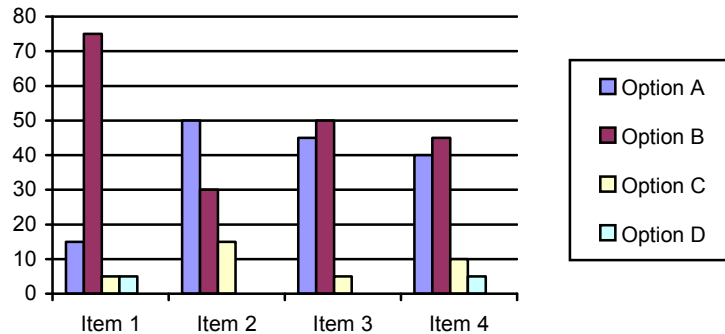
Figure 3: Unique Feature of CUTS' Publications (Combined Representation)



Detailed Occupational Analysis

I. Civil Society Organisations

Figure 4: Analysis of Responses - Civil Society Organisations (in %)

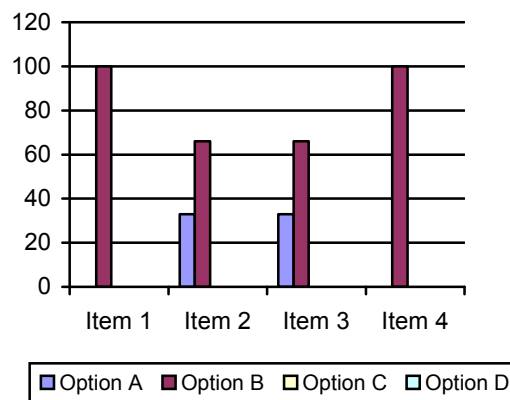


Analysis of the responses by the civil society organisations reveals that as many as 75 percent of the CSOs receive our publications three times or more in a year. The analysis further shows that about 50 percent of them usually read our publications, and about 30 percent read them more than 50 percent of the times. In response to Item 3, 50 percent of CSOs rated the quality of our publications as good and 45 percent rated it as being excellent. As regards the utility of our publications in work, 45 percent of the CSO respondents stated that they often find the publications useful and relevant for their work. About 40 percent said that the publications were usually useful to them in work activities. See Figure 4 above.

II. Donor Agencies

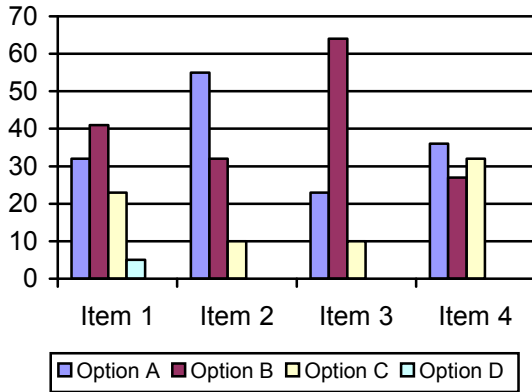
Responses from donor agencies indicate that they receive the publications more than three times a year and that 33 percent of them usually read the publications and about 66 percent read more than 50 percent of the times. Further, 33 percent of the donor agencies rated the quality of our publications as excellent and about 66 percent rated the quality as good. In response to utility and relevance, the donor agencies found our publication often of utility and of significant relevance in their work. See Figure 5.

Figure 5: Analysis of Responses - Donor Agencies (in %)



III. Government Agencies

Figure 6: Analysis of Responses - Government Agencies (in %)



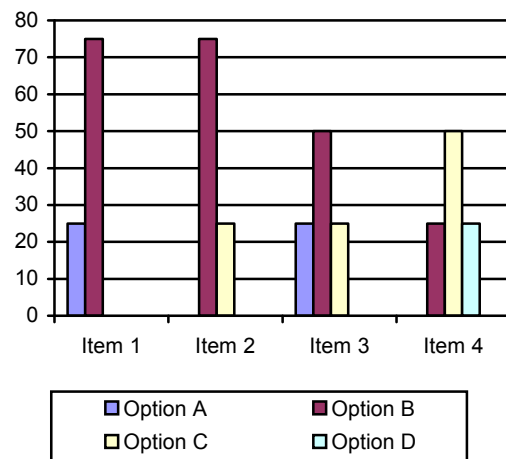
About 41 percent of the government agencies responded that they receive our publications more than three times a year.

Around 32 percent received the publications once or twice a year and 23 percent said that they rarely receive them. About five percent responded that they never receive. In response to Item 2, 55 percent of the government agencies responded that they read our publications usually, and about 32 percent indicated that they read it more than 50 percent of the time. As regards the quality, 64 percent rated the quality as good and 23 percent rated as excellent. While about 10 percent of the government agencies said that the publications are of average quality. With regard to utility of publications, 32 percent of these respondents indicated that they find them useful sometimes; 36 percent responded that they usually find it useful and about 27 percent found our publications relevant and useful often. See Figure 6.

IV. Inter Governmental Agencies

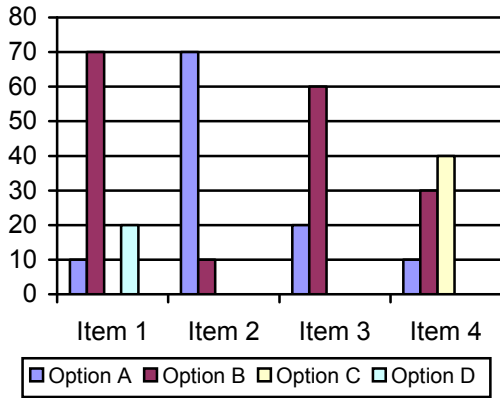
About 75 percent of the inter-governmental agencies indicated that they received our publications more than three times a year and read them more than 50 percent of the time. With regard to quality of the publications, about 50 percent rated the quality as good, 25 percent rated the quality as excellent and the remaining 25 percent rated it as average. In response to Item 4, 50 percent of these respondents stated that they sometimes found it useful for their work. About 25 percent of the responses stated that our publications are relevant often in their work. See Figure 7.

Figure 7: Analysis of Responses - Inter-Governmental Agencies (in %)



V. Academia

Figure 8: Analysis of Responses – Academia (in %)



Other than CSOs, donor agencies, government agencies, and inter government agencies, many researchers, professors, economists, etc also participated in the survey and which have

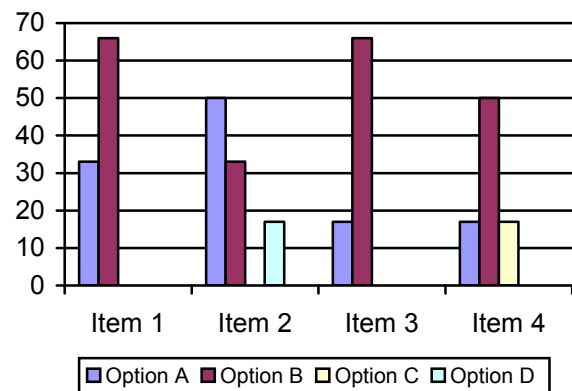
been grouped under ‘Academia’. About 70 percent of the respondents in this group indicated that they receive our publications more than three times a year and about 10 percent indicated that they receive it once or twice a year. Likewise, about 70 percent of the academia responded that they read our publications usually, and 10 percent indicated that they read it more than 50 percent of the time. As regards quality, 60 percent found the publications good and about 20 percent rated it as excellent. Almost 40 percent indicated that they find our publications useful only sometimes, while 30 percent responded that they often find CUTS’ publications useful. See Figure 8.

VI. Others

‘Other’ included lawyers and private firms. It was found that about 33 percent of the respondents in the group receive our publications once or twice a year and about 66 percent stated that they receive them more than three times a year. Further, about 50 percent of the lawyers and private firms stated that they read our publications usually and about 33 percent read them more than 50 percent of the time. Around 17 percent also responded that they never read it. With regard to the quality of our publications, 66 percent rated it as being of good quality, while 17 percent rated it as excellent. In response to Item 4, about 50 percent of the respondents in the group said that they

often found CUTS’ publications useful and relevant. See Figure 9

Figure 9: Analysis of Responses – Others (in %)



General Interpretation

The first item on the Form sought to know how frequently readers receive our publications. As evident from Figure 10, 63 percent of the respondents received our publications three times or more in a year. About 22 percent received it once or twice a year. About nine percent responded that they rarely received our publications and about six percent said that they never received any of the documents. The responses reflect that though the despatch and distribution system of our publications is very much intact and sound, yet due care must be taken and the occurrences of no receipt or rare receipt of publications must be minimised. See Figure 10

Figure 10: How often do you receive CUTS' publications? (in %)

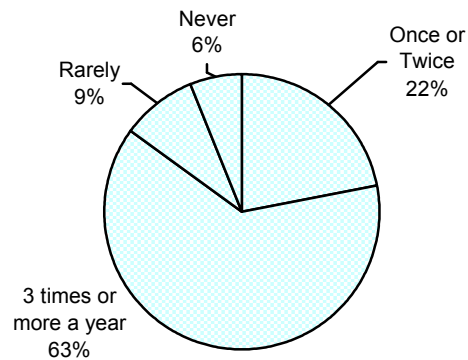
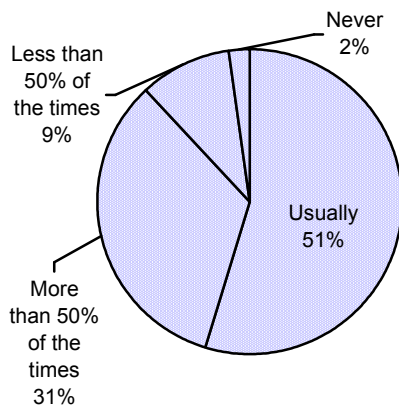


Figure 11: How often you read them? (in %)

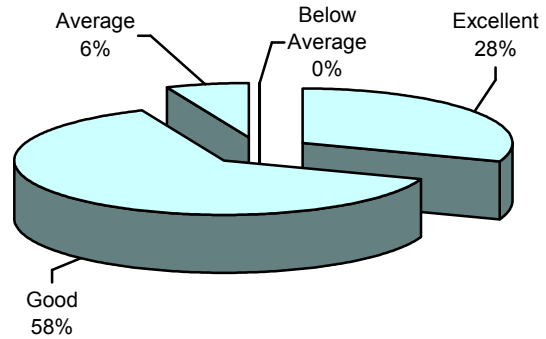


In response to the frequency of reading the publications, the survey revealed that 51 percent of the respondents read it

usually and 31 percent read them more than 50 percent of the times. About 9 percent of the respondents expressed that they read our publications less than 50 percent of the time and about two percent responded that they never read it. This item in the questionnaire aimed at assessing the fruit of all our efforts put into our publications – the responses to which have been overwhelming and encouraging, as the survey revealed that 86 percent of the readers in total read our publications most of the time, thereby acknowledging our hard work and the extensive amount of detailing employed in bringing out these publications. See Figure 11.

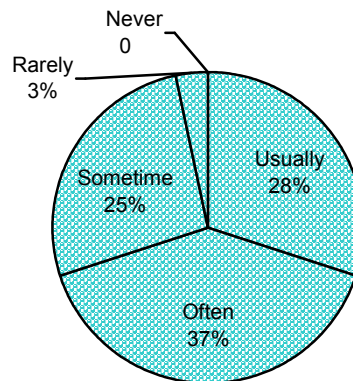
The third item in the questionnaire asked respondents to rate the quality of our publications. About 58 percent of the respondents found the quality of our publications good. There were about 28 percent who rated the quality as excellent. Only six percent found it of average quality and there were no responses at all to the below average option. See Figure 12. The responses given again are indicative of the time and effort employed by us in yielding fruitful results. However, efforts can be initiated towards converting the positive responses for average quality into good or excellent.

Figure 12: How would you rate the quality of our Publications? (in %)



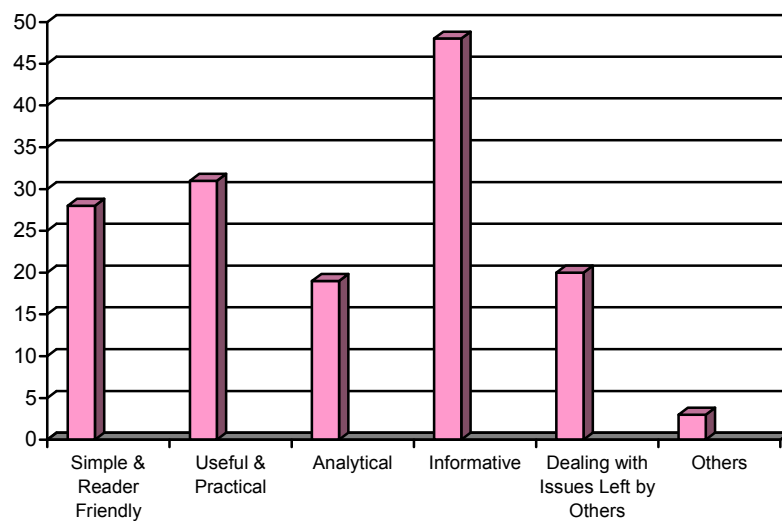
In response to the extent of utility of our publications for our readers in their work, it was found that 40 percent found it often useful and relevant, and 30 percent found it usually helpful to their work. About 27 percent also responded that they found the publications useful only sometimes in their work. Readers who rarely found the publications useful were found to be three percent. None of the readers responded that they never find our publications useful. It is encouraging to know that our publications are of utility to our readers. Though in varied amounts, yet it is gratifying to discover the fact. See Figure 13 below.

Figure 13: To what extent do you find our publications useful for your work? (in %)



With regard to the unique features of our publications, about 48 respondents out of 65 felt the publications to be informative. The publications were found to be useful and practical by 31 respondents. Similarly, 28 readers who responded to the questionnaire responded that the publications were simple and reader friendly. About 19 responded them to be analytical in their approach and 20 said that the publications deal with issues usually left out by others. Some other features that came as noteworthy: i) often the analysis given is unique; ii) provide a south centered perspective; and iii) serve as useful handbooks. See Figure 14 below. The results thus lay impetus on not only making publications informative, but also making them increasingly analytical in approach with an edge over others.

Figure 14: What in your opinion, are the unique features of our publications?



Item 6 on the Feedback Form sought to invite suggestions and comments from the readers, which led to a multitude of responses. Important **SUGGESTIONS** and comments that surfaced include the following:

- Making publications little easier for readers who are not conversant with technical economic terms to understand the issues/concerns being raised in the publications;
- Sending summaries of all regular publications via e-mails;
- Since it's becoming increasing difficult to manage papers and easy to maintain electronic files, many of the readers suggested making the publications available on Internet or sending them via e-mail;

- Suggestions were also floated with regards to conducting quarterly review of developments in competition laws and in their implementation focusing particularly on developing nations and exploring developing countries' economic reports;
- Increasing frequency of publications;
- Taking the help of a cartoonist to draw a few cartoons on relevant topics, thus making the documents more lively;
- Striving for greater outreach – making entities other than regulatory bodies aware about the publications such as various chamber of commerce in the SAARC, consumers and policy makers and by ensuring convenient availability of publications across the globe;
- Translation of various publications in Spanish for wider dissemination in Latin America; and
- Keeping information clear and focused