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The Public Newsense

Quarterly newsletter of Citizen consumer and civic Action Group

April-June 2025

Dear friends

I am pleased to write to you this second quarter with all our exciting news. Firstly, Climate Action Month (CAM) 2025 is running right now! Make sure that you are a part of it, as activities continue across the city of Chennai, over July. If all the news about climate change worries you, CAM changes the focus from anxiety to action. Be a part of this exercise in solidarity and collective action.

Our many projects on energy governance and conservation have carried into this year. We have particularly been working to increase solar energy uptake in Tamil Nadu, via the installation of rooftop solar panels. This has included workshops and campaigns across Chennai, together with information dissemination via printed material and social media. We've also continued to build on the success of our energy audits, expanding our efforts to include apartment complexes and government buildings. With Chennai's rising temperatures and increasing air conditioning use across the country, energy conservation has become more urgent than ever. However, for many low-income households without access to ACs, coping with the heat is a serious challenge. Our Cool Roof project addressed this by combining climate action with practical technology to help vulnerable families achieve thermal comfort. The project evaluated several cost-effective Cool Roof solutions that could achieve high impact with minimal investment.

Our work in the area of environmental conservation took the form of a project on wetland conservation commissioned by the State government. We analysed the effectiveness of different strategies that could be used to empower local communities to preserve their environmental assets. The report will inform further work by the government, as they seek to harness community participation in protecting the commons.

While local communities play a vital role in protecting the environment, our work also engages policymakers across multiple focus areas. Recently, we conducted a study to understand the environmental attitudes of Members of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly. The study reveals both encouraging findings and critical gaps, underscoring the need for more effort in information dissemination across all stakeholders.

Our work on road safety continues with a strong push for key amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act—changes that hold the potential to save thousands of lives. While policy reform is vital, translating these changes into real-world impact remains central to our mission. This quarter, we conducted detailed road safety audits around select city schools, with findings set to be released soon. By bridging policy and ground-level action, we aim to make our cities safer and more accessible for all—especially our most vulnerable road users.

The core of our work continues to be protecting you as a consumer and a citizen. All our latest work is on our website, and our social media pages. So do stay in touch. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out to us. We would love to hear from you.

With regards,
S.Saroja
Executive Director



Inside the assembly: How much do Tamil Nadu's policymakers really know about climate change?

A first-of-its-kind study by Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG) explores the climate literacy and environmental attitudes of Tamil Nadu's MLAs. The findings highlight strong environmental values and a growing interest in climate action, while also identifying opportunities for strengthening scientific understanding to support informed policymaking.

🕒 5 min read



Understanding mediation in consumer disputes: A simple guide

Confused about settling a consumer dispute without court intervention? This guide explains how mediation—under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019—offers a faster, cost-effective solution. Learn who can use it, how it works, and why it could be a win-win for all parties involved.

🕒 6 min read



India's neglected roads: A compounding crisis

There are numerous factors that can lead to road accidents, but did you know that inadequate signage, poor road conditions, potholes are also significant contributors? These issues can even result in fatalities. Discover about how road infrastructure contributes to these accidents, potential solutions to address the problem.

🕒 7 min read



No dustbins, no safe disposal: Unmasking rural India's silent waste crisis

Over 900 million rural Indians live without basic waste systems, no bins, no collection, no disposal. This article unpacks the silent crisis and the urgent reforms needed to clean up rural India.

🕒 4 min read



Overview of residential rooftop solar installations in India 2025 (PART 2)

India's residential rooftop solar journey is gaining momentum, with nationwide installations reaching 16 GW in January 2025 under the PM Surya Ghar Scheme. State-level policies play a pivotal role in this energy transition ranging from high-support states that offer additional subsidies, streamlined procedures, and innovative models, to moderate and low-support states that focus primarily on regulatory easing and central subsidies.

🕒 7 min read

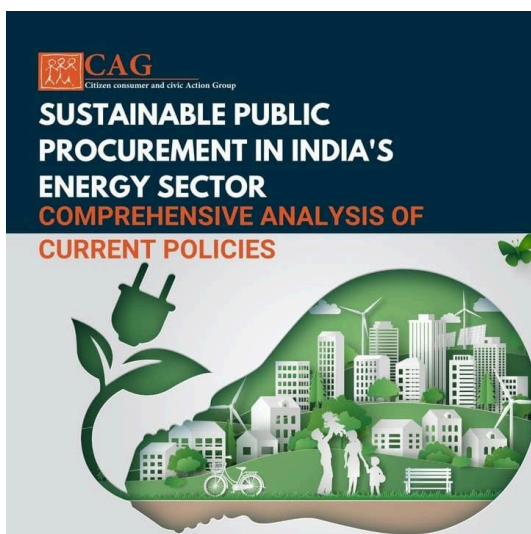
Resources for you



Plastic, policies and people: A bottom-up dialogue on the global plastics treaty

Plastic, Policies and People brings grassroots voices into the global conversation on plastic pollution. This report captures insights from waste workers, youth, RWAs, and MSMEs across four cities, highlighting their expectations, concerns, and priorities for the Global Plastics Treaty. It underscores the need for an inclusive, just, and accountable treaty that reflects the lived realities of those most impacted.

⌚ 15 mins read



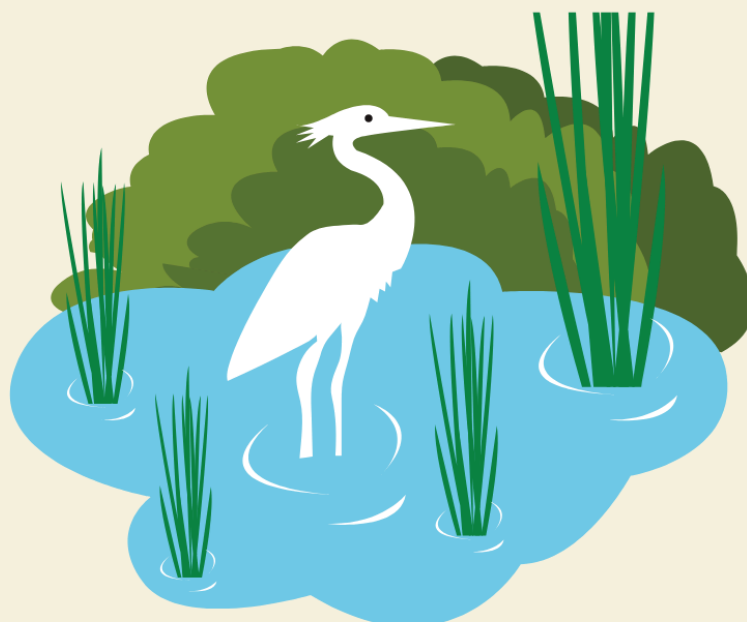
Sustainable public procurement in India's energy sector

We can't fight climate change with business-as-usual spending. India's energy procurement is full of untapped potential, but sustainability is still not a priority. This report shows how we can turn every public purchase into a climate win.

⌚ 20 mins read

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EPISODE 39: WATER, WETLANDS & WELLBEING: EXPLORING THE VALUES OF CHENNAI'S HIDDEN ECOSYSTEMS



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