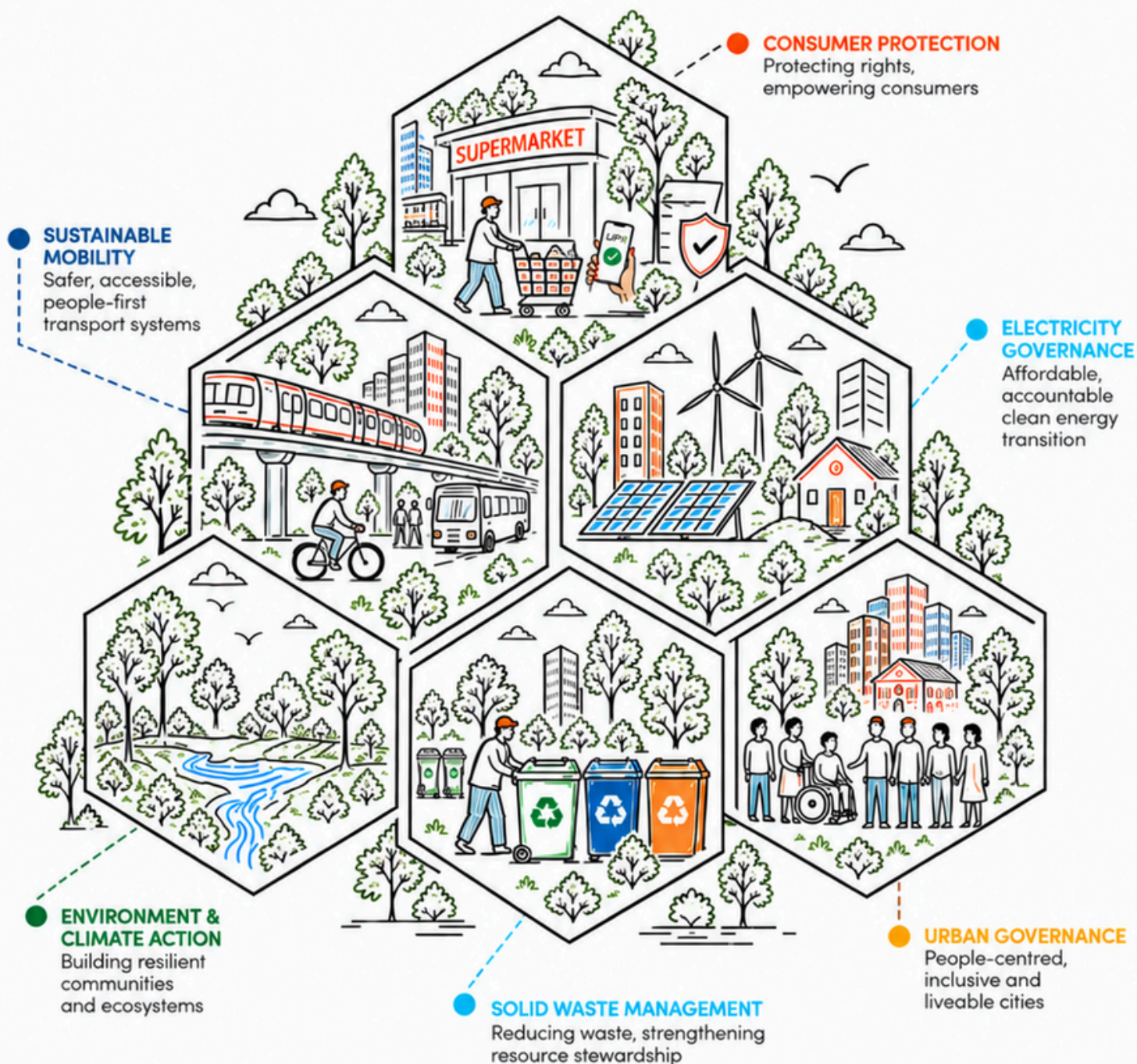


PUBLIC NEWSENSE

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM
CITIZEN CONSUMER AND CIVIC ACTION GROUP



Opening Thoughts

Dear Friends,

October 7th marks 41 years of CAG — more than four decades of working in the public interest, strengthening consumer rights, building evidence and pushing for systems that are fairer, safer and more sustainable. Milestones are useful moments to look back, but also to ask what relevance that work has today. The issues may have changed in form, but the underlying questions remain familiar: Are consumer services working for everyone, and safe for all? Are our cities equitable spaces? Are decisions being informed by evidence and by the experiences of those most affected?

This quarter's work continues to act on these questions in many ways. Our District Road Safety Conferences pick up on conversations on how road safety commitments can translate into action on the ground. The report 'Moving Without Barriers' brought greater attention to the everyday mobility challenges faced by persons with disabilities and senior citizens. Our TRAI consumer awareness programmes focused on helping people better understand their rights and responsibilities in an increasingly digital world.

Elsewhere, our work ranged from rooftop solar and electrical safety to consumer protection, climate action and stronger public services. Across all of these areas, our role remains the same: to listen, question, document, convene and help turn concerns into informed action.

As we mark 41 years, we are grateful to the communities, partners, institutions and individuals who have been part of this journey. Their engagement continues to shape and strengthen our work. We hope you enjoy this edition of Public Newsense and the glimpse it offers into the quarter gone by. As always, we welcome your thoughts at helpdesk@cag.org.in.

With warm regards,



S. Saroja
Executive Director



IN FOCUS

A MONTH OF CLIMATE ACTION

For one month, climate action moved out of reports and conference rooms and into colleges, neighbourhoods and public spaces across Chennai. The fifth edition of Climate Action Month, organised throughout July, brought together students, communities, experts, artists and practitioners to explore what climate action can look like in everyday life.

More than 37 events reached over 6,000 participants through workshops, expert discussions, nature walks, waste audits, performances, traditional-knowledge sessions and community activities.

This year's programme explored a wide range of interconnected concerns – from electronic waste, ocean science and green jobs to solid waste management, wetlands and community climate action.



Special guests at the CAM inaugural event



Young learners engrossed in a comic on sustainable cities



Cultural performances bring the message of climate action closer to audiences



A water Ph testing activity helped demystify the science of water availability

One of the month's signature events, Kuppai Thiruvizha, turned conversations around waste into a celebration of practical solutions, bringing waste practitioners, entrepreneurs, students and innovators together around zero-waste living and the plastic crisis.

The impact went beyond individual events. At the Madras School of Social Work, for example, participation in Climate Action Month led to the creation of a new Eco Club, helping climate engagement continue beyond July.



SAFER ROADS, BETTER PLANNING

DISTRICT ROAD SAFETY CONFERENCES ACROSS TAMIL NADU



Road safety challenges differ from district to district. What works in one place may not address the realities of another. This quarter, CAG organised a series of District Road Safety Conferences to bring local concerns, data and institutional responsibilities into the same conversation.

Conferences were held in Cuddalore, Salem, Madurai, Coimbatore and Chengalpattu, bringing together government departments, enforcement agencies, transport authorities, healthcare professionals, educators, consumer organisations, civil society groups and members of the public. The aim was to identify district-specific road safety priorities while building support for a comprehensive State Road Safety Action Plan that can translate into practical action at the district level.

Across the conferences, discussions repeatedly returned to the need for better data, stronger interdepartmental coordination, safer infrastructure for vulnerable road users, speed management, enforcement and improved emergency response. Participants also raised concerns specific to their districts, from inadequate pedestrian infrastructure and unsafe school travel to gaps in public transport.



A demonstration of life support - Salem conference



The audience at the Cuddalore conference



Audience participation at the Madurai conference



Speakers at the Coimbatore conference

CLIMATE RESILIENT AGRICULTURE

Climate change is making farming increasingly uncertain. Unpredictable rainfall, droughts, floods, heat and declining soil health are affecting farming communities across India. The risks – and the solutions – are different from one region to another, shaped by local ecosystems, livelihoods and farming practices.

CAG's Climate Resilience for Agriculture initiative, in collaboration with ASAR through the Alliance for Climate Resilient Agriculture (ACRA), works across Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra and Bihar. We bring together farmers, Farmer Producer Organisations, civil society groups, researchers, agri-businesses and government departments to develop locally appropriate, farmer-led approaches to climate resilience.

A key part of the work has been listening to farming communities, understanding their challenges and learning from practices that work. The project also connects field-level learning with capacity building, pilot models and existing government schemes.



Women farmers share their experiences and perspectives on the challenges and opportunities in their region.

Focus Group Discussion at Kaneri

LEARNING ACROSS REGIONS



Focus group discussions help us understand local challenges and identify practices that can strengthen resilience.

FGD session at Karanjgaon.



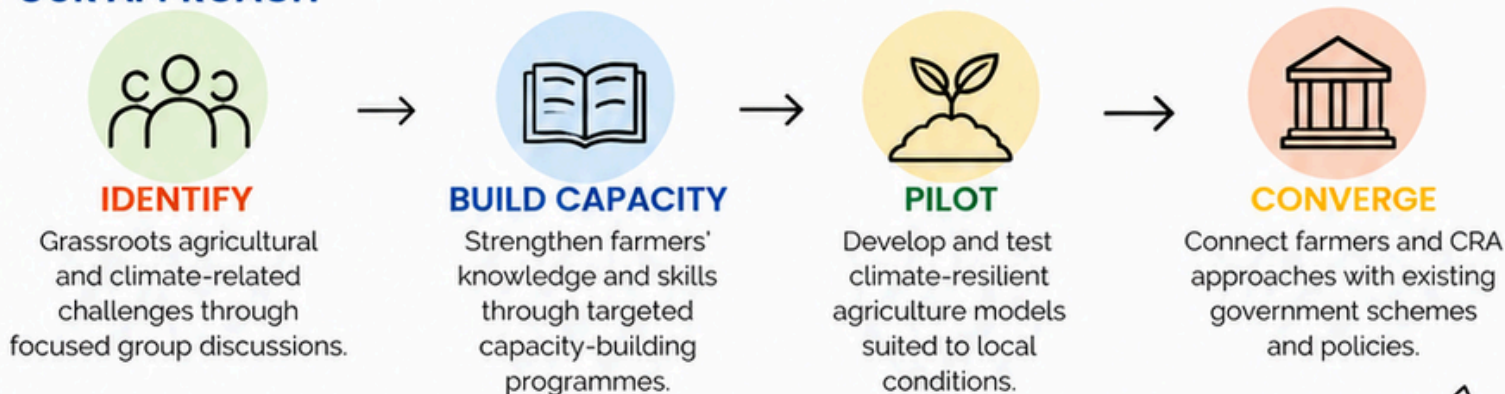
Field visits help us understand local cropping patterns, water availability and the conditions farmers are working with.

Groundnut plantation at Karanjgaon village.



We work with farmers, organisations and government departments to explore solutions and link them with existing schemes and support.

OUR APPROACH



SNAPSHOTS FROM THE QUARTER

CONSUMER AWARENESS ON TELECOM SERVICES

CAG, in association with the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), continued consumer awareness programmes across Tamil Nadu on telecom and broadcasting services. Sessions focused on consumer-friendly regulations, tariff and billing, cyber safety and grievance redressal mechanisms. Representatives from telecom service providers also engaged directly with participants.



The programmes aim to help consumers better understand their rights, recognise violations and take informed action when services fall short.

LEAD-SAFE ALUMINIUM COOKWARE

CAG and Pure Earth India, in collaboration with BIS Chennai and the Madras Aluminium Merchants and Manufacturers Association, brought together stakeholders from across the aluminium cookware value chain. Discussions covered BIS standards, sources of lead contamination, safer raw material practices, testing, compliance and certification.



The workshop strengthened awareness of how safer manufacturing and better compliance can help ensure quality-assured cookware reaches consumers.

BARRIERS AND PATHWAYS

CAG launched Barriers and Pathways: Mobility Realities for Persons with Disability, bringing together findings from a year-long study of accessibility barriers in Chennai's public transport system. The report documents the everyday challenges faced by persons with disabilities and examines what needs to change to make mobility more inclusive.



The launch created space for transport agencies, disability advocates and other stakeholders to discuss pathways towards more accessible and inclusive mobility.



SNAPSHOTS FROM THE QUARTER

CONSUMERS & ELECTRICAL SAFETY

CAG and WRI India convened a roundtable with 25 stakeholders from TNERC, the Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services, TNPDC and electrical safety institutions. The discussion explored consumer electrical-safety challenges and opportunities to strengthen policies, regulations, institutional arrangements and implementation.



The roundtable helped bring practical experience from different institutions into a shared conversation on safer electricity systems for consumers.

SOLAR MELAS

Across Solar Melas in Madurai, Salem and Chennai, CAG brought solar vendors, banks and electricity-sector representatives onto a common platform so consumers could explore rooftop solar options, compare solutions and clarify questions directly with relevant stakeholders. In Salem alone, more than 100 consumers participated.



The Melas made rooftop solar easier to understand by bringing technology, finance and electricity procedures together in one place.

RIGHT TO PUBLIC SERVICES

CAG convened a roundtable consultation to discuss a possible framework for a Right to Public Services Act for Tamil Nadu. The meeting brought together voices from civil society, government, academia, law and the media to deliberate on gaps in public-service delivery and accountability.



The consultation explored how a stronger rights-based framework could make public services more transparent, responsive and accountable to citizens.



RESEARCH & POLICY

EVIDENCE. ACTION. CHANGE.

Every quarter brings new research, reports and important developments that deepen understanding, strengthen accountability, inspire informed action and help create healthier communities, resilient cities and a more sustainable future.



 [Moving Without Barriers – Documenting mobility barriers encountered by people with disabilities in Chennai](#)

 [Check out our latest podcasts here](#)

 [Read our blogs here](#)



HAPPENING NOW!

GREEN ACTION WEEK 2026

This October, CAG's Green Action Week will turn the spotlight on traditional seeds and grains and their role in building more resilient food systems. Through farmer and student-focused activities in Tamil Nadu, the initiative will explore how seed diversity, local knowledge and sustainable food choices can support both livelihoods and the environment.

TOGETHER, WE MAKE
CHANGE POSSIBLE

YOU CAN BE A PART OF THIS

