

The Public Newsense

Quarterly newsletter of Citizen consumer and civic Action Group

October to December 2024

Dear friends,


Happy new year! As we step into 2025, I am excited to write to you, both with our accomplishments from the last quarter of 2024, and what we look forward to in the new year.

We ended 2024 with the particularly impelling Climate Literacy Conference 2024. The event brought together policy-makers, educators, students, civic society organisations and citizens to forge a path ahead in climate literacy. The event was inaugurated by Thiru Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozi, Minister for Education, Government of TN. FOCUS for Beginners, a primary school aged, climate literacy curriculum for grades 3-5, created by CAG, was also released on the day. We will be piloting the curriculum in schools over the coming months, after which, the textbook will be available for public distribution.

This year, we've had the opportunity of working closely with the government on projects such as the TN Climate Mission. We're also proud to have engaged with diverse departments such as the TNPCB, the Tamil Nadu Police, and the transport department for reports and projects, all of which have been well received, and will hopefully inform future policies. An example of this is our recent release, the 'Environmental Law Enforcement Manual to Facilitate Investigation of Environmental Crimes'.

This quarter saw the release of several reports on sustainable transport. November and December were marked by the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims events in schools and colleges across Tamil Nadu. As road crash fatalities in India continue to rise, the WDoR day was one of awareness building, and introspection, as we remembered lives lost needlessly to road crashes.

Speed being one of the major causes for road accidents and related deaths in India, CAG organised a discussion on the need for speed management guidelines for enhanced road safety in Tamil Nadu. The event saw the participation of officials from the transport and police departments, the State



Highway, IIT Madras, CUMTA, IIT Kharagpur, road safety advocates and civil society organisations.

Strengthening public participation in electricity governance through forums, meetings and workshops, continues across the country (Tripura, Chhattisgarh and Telangana), as we reach out to the public to empower them on their electricity rights and responsibilities as consumers. We also continue working closely together with policy makers to strengthen consultation processes. Our energy audits have now spanned businesses, government buildings, educational institutions and hospitals, as we help them improve their energy consciousness, and reduce their electricity bills.

Our work to bolster consumer protection continued with our recent study to look at the presence of lead in aluminium cookware. The findings of the study were presented at a consultation organised by CAG in December 2024 where representatives from the Bureau of Indian Standards, health department, food safety and standards authority, UNICEF, medical field, IIT Madras - Metallurgy division, etc participated.

As we step into 2025, we are more energized than ever to build on this momentum. This year, we look forward to deepening our partnerships and engagements with the government, other organisations and communities, as we all work towards a more sustainable and safe future. I want to take this opportunity to thank you again for being interested in our work. Our website, and our social media pages carry all our latest work. And should you have any questions for us, do not hesitate to get in touch. We would love to hear from you!

Regards,
S.Saroja
Executive Director



The complex legacy of COP29: A crossroad for climate action

COP29 concluded with mixed outcomes. While progress was made in operationalising the Loss and damage Fund and reducing methane emissions, a stalemate in climate finance and the dominance of oil-producing nations highlighted the persistent gaps in global climate action.

⌚ 5 min read



Plastic or progress? The INC-5 outcomes unveiled

After a marathon of late-night negotiations, sleepless strategising, and coffee-fueled debates, INC-5 in Busan finally wrapped up at a crisp 2:50 a.m. on Monday, December 2. The consensus? Well, it's a bit like plastic itself: complicated, long-lasting, and hard to break down. But with over 100 countries "HOLDING THE LINE" by pushing for ambitious action on plastic pollution and fighting the lobbying, there is hope!

⌚ 5 min read



Energy efficiency of public water supply system : A case study in Vengikkal village panchayat

Village panchayats have a public water supply system, where water is pumped from borewells / open wells to common overhead tanks located at various habitations in the village. CAG audited the efficiency of water supply in the Vengikkal village panchayat, with this article giving insights into the village's consumption patterns, and energy use, while recommending strategies for energy and cost reduction.

⌚ 6 min read



How India's greenwashing guidelines can protect consumers

India's new guidelines for prevention and regulation of green or misleading environmental claims introduced in 2024 could help to combat greenwashing by promoting transparency in environmental claims and enabling informed consumer choices.

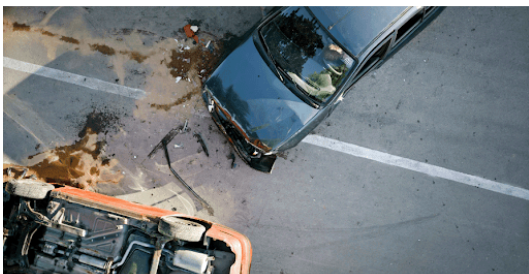
⌚ 5 min read



Improving urban mobility, one mobile app at a time

Technology is revolutionizing our lives by enhancing our daily routines and providing us with continuous access to information. Travel apps, such as the Chennai bus app, significantly benefit public transport users by delivering all necessary transport-related information directly to their mobile devices. In this article, we will explore various ways to enhance this app.

⌚ 4 min read



Remembering lives lost on the road: World Day of Remembrance 2024

Every year, the World Day of Remembrance for road traffic victims serves as a reminder for all road users to prioritize safety and protect ourselves from potential tragedies. It is significant to educate our young adults about road safety to ensure safer roads in the future. Find out more about the initiatives taken by CAG to commemorate this significant day.

⌚ 6 min read

Resources for you



From bazaar to building

The Pedestrian Plaza project in Pondy Bazaar, under the Chennai Smart City Initiative aimed to create pedestrian-friendly spaces by relocating street vendors to a dedicated complex. CAG's study, surveying 350 customers and 170 vendors, found that 94% of vendors reported changes in their income post-relocation, with 64% experiencing an increase. The findings highlight the need for better visibility, accessibility, and community engagement in the complex.

⌚ 20 mins read



Doctors' perspectives on the challenges of treating hypertension in Chennai

Following our study on patient perspectives on access to hypertension care through PHCs in Tiruvannamalai, this study looks at doctors' perspectives in treating hypertension. The study examines responses from 25 doctors from a cross section of specialties, looking at diagnoses protocols, patient compliance, reported affordability of treatment etc.

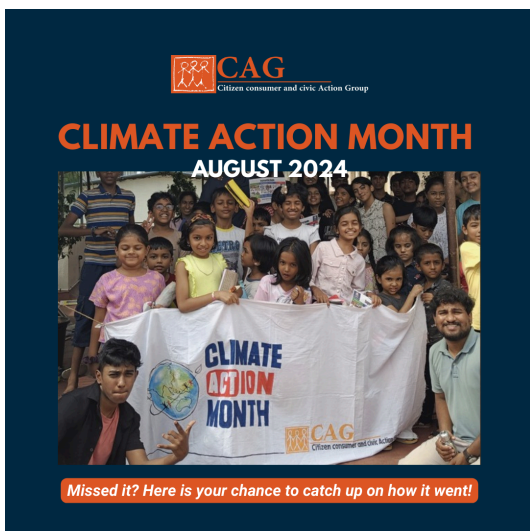
⌚ 8 mins read



Enhancing urban mobility

The emergence of smartphones has transformed public transportation in cities such as Chennai. Commuters now have access to various digital tools, such as the MTC's Chennai Bus Application, to enhance their daily commutes. This report seeks to evaluate how effectively the MTC's Chennai Bus Application supports its users in their everyday lives and to identify potential improvements for the future.

⌚ 15 mins read



Climate Action Month 2024

Climate Action Month 2024 was an incredible success, reaching over 20,000 individuals, including students and the general public. Throughout August, a series of engaging events took place across schools, colleges, public parks, and other venues. These events creatively conveyed the urgent message of climate change through a variety of artistic expressions, such as music performances, mime acts, flash mobs, and puppetry.

⌚ 15 mins read

Studio CAG

EPISODE 33

VOICES FROM THE LAST MILE

Personal narratives of people
living with hypertension
in Tiruvannamalai

Available on Spotify



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**BILINGUAL
PODCAST
TAMIL /
ENGLISH**

EPISODE 34:
**Rooftop Solars
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THE  OF



The management of e-waste presents a significant challenge in India; however, it also offers an opportunity for innovation and responsibility. Embracing effective recycling methods and raising awareness can help mitigate the environmental impact of electronic waste.



Plastic waste is choking our environment, breaking down into harmful micro and nano particles that end up in our food and bodies. As we prepare for the fifth session of discussions towards a global plastics treaty, Saroja, Executive Director at CAG explains that it's only when everybody's voices are heard will it be a fair, equitable and just treaty. #StopPlasticPollution #GlobalPlasticsTreaty



CAG conducted a 'Climate Literacy Conference 2024' which saw the release of FOCUS for beginners, a climate literacy curriculum for primary aged children by Education Minister Thiru. Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi who also emphasized the importance of climate literacy among students, policy makers, officials and the public. Several speakers presented and gave their contributions in the three sessions held. If you missed the event, you can catch up here.



CAG

Citizen consumer and civic Action Group



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