

Annual Activity Report

2015-16



Consumer Rights Commission of Pakistan (CRCP)

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Message from Secretary General

I am pleased to share the annual report of CRCP for the year 2015-16. The year marks the uncompromised commitment of CRCP, reflected through activities under major thematic areas, for articulation and promotion of the interests and rights of consumers and citizens. Appreciation of the concerns of disadvantaged groups and representation of their interests along with the provision of appropriate platforms has been the hallmarks of our activities for the year.

During the reporting year, CRCP actively worked to minimize the vulnerabilities of the consumers of Pakistan emerging out of market inefficiencies, weak governance structures and operational procedures, and ineptness of redressal mechanisms. I am also pleased to share that CRCP successfully continued its efforts under different program areas through funded as well as non-funded initiatives. Robust systems developed by CRCP over the past decade continue to effectively carry out its core functions with minimal or no external support. Right from consumer protection to the assessment of state of transparency in governance, CRCP successfully launched and completed initiatives on its own.

Development of MAAPAY Model, concerning parental voice for quality education, stands as the most significant contribution of CRCP towards furthering the campaign for quality education for the disadvantaged. Successful modeling of inclusion of parental voice in service delivery of education has set the necessary backdrop for the government to improve upon the current practices at school level. Creation of school councils at the tehsil and district levels has proved to be the much needed and appropriate forum for oversight of quality of educational inputs and steer schools towards desired results.

I take this opportunity to thank members and volunteers of CRCP for their unwavering support to CRCP work. I also extend my appreciation for CRCP team for its professional commitment to our vision. We invite consumers and citizens to critically review our work and suggest for further improvements.

Mian Abrar Hafeez
Secretary General

List of Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADF	Asian Development Fund
BHUs	Basic Health Units
CCPL	Campaign for Consumer Protection Laws
CCRF	Consumer Complaints and Redress Forum
CDA	Capital Development Authority
CRCP	Consumer Rights Commission of Pakistan
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
FOI	Freedom of Information Ordinance
HRCP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
IESCO	Islamabad Electric Supply Company
LESCO	Lahore Electric Supply Company
LFO	Legal Framework Order
LHVs	Lady Health Visitors
MEPCO	Multan Electric Power Company
OGRA	Oil and Gas Regularity Authority
PCRWR	Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources
PCSIR	Pakistan Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
PESCO	Peshawar Electric Supply Company
PNAC	Pakistan National Accreditation Council
PSQCA	Pakistan Standard and Quality Control
SAFTA	South Asia Free Trade Agreement
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
WCRD	World Consumer Rights Day

Introduction

Consumer Rights Commission of Pakistan (CRCP) is a rights-based initiative registered under the Trust Act, 1882. Established in 1998, CRCP is an independent, non-partisan and not-for-profit organization. It largely works through local fund-raising and engaging volunteers. It is not supported by any industry or commercial sector. It is the first national consumer organization in the country that approaches the issue of consumer protection in comprehensive and holistic terms. Work strategies of CRCP have linkages with both the market and governance issues, and seek to consolidate the achievements and the space gained by the civil society initiatives through building capacity of the citizens and consumers to assert their rights and use related laws.

Our Mission

“The mission of CRCP is to articulate and promote the interests and rights of citizens and consumers at all socio-economic levels, with a particular emphasis on the inarticulate and disadvantaged groups; and facilitate the emergence of an organized movement in Pakistan, so that the citizens could have legally enforceable rights.”

The Rationale Behind

Consumer rights, an integral component of civil rights, present a dismal picture in Pakistan with a large number of problems confronting the citizens and consumers both in the public and private sectors. Most of these problems stem from the crisis of governance in the country and the monopolistic and informal nature of market.

The government is largely indifferent to the interests of the citizens and consumers because it lacks an objective and deeper understanding of their concerns and grievances. In addition, the general lack of awareness of civil rights and the pervasive culture of apathy undermine the capacity of citizens to become organized and protect their rights. Result is that government has yet to come up with an appropriate legal and institutional mechanism to redress consumer-related grievances and to protect their rights.

Private sector has little cause for consumer protection due to monopolistic and informal nature of market in Pakistan. In the absence of a consumer movement, which can positively influence the market forces, the consumers are provided with unsafe and substandard goods and services without any recourse to justice. The situation has become worse in the wake of recent measures aimed at deregulation and corporatization, and the consequent shrinking role of the state and mounting market forces.

The above understanding of the need for asserting civil rights provides substance to the collective efforts of a group of conscious citizens and activists comprising CRCP. Its members have a diverse experience in civil society initiatives, social organization and community mobilization. Drawing on the vast experience of its members, CRCP is committed to promote the cause of consumer protection and civil rights in a broader perspective, with the aim of laying the foundations for a vibrant consumer movement all over the country.

What We Aim At

CRCP aims at

- creating awareness among citizens and different categories of consumers, including the inarticulate, marginalized and disadvantaged groups, about their roles, rights and responsibilities;
- encouraging and supporting the formation of citizen and consumer groups and organizations at all socio-economic levels of society;
- undertaking advocacy and lobbying activities for the promotion of citizens' and consumers' perspective at the policy formulation and execution levels;
- intervening on behalf of consumers where a regulatory or redress framework is available;
- training civil society groups and communities in citizen and consumer rights and the use existing laws to protect their legitimate interests;
- facilitating greater coordination among civil society initiatives and individual efforts for civil rights and consumer protection;
- improving understanding of existing and emerging issues concerning consumer protection at grass-root and policy marking levels;
- taking appropriate measures to check unfair trade practices including misleading product information, and supply of substandard goods and services; and
- lobbying for the enactment and implementation of improved legislation on issues related to civil rights, including consumer protection and freedom of information.

Our Program Areas

CRCP has five core program areas, which are mutually reinforcing, and overlapping. All of these areas are closely inter-linked and feed into each other with the aim of

making optimal utilization of resources. These include Research and Publications, Governance and Legislative Affairs, Advocacy, Training and Mobilization, Market and Corporate Practices, and Law and Public Interest Litigation.

1. Research and Publications

Under this program area, research is undertaken from inter-disciplinary perspective in order to provide scientific input into various strategic actions and interventions made by CRCP. Policy research and surveys are undertaken to have in-depth understanding of consumer problems and grievances both in the context of public services and markets. The work of this unit feeds into other program areas. This unit is also involved in comparative testing of consumer products. The reports of these tests, surveys and researches are published for advocacy, awareness-raising and information dissemination to have a wider outreach.

2. Governance and Legislative Affairs

Under this program area, governance issues are examined from citizens' perspective. This area particularly focuses on transparency, freedom of information, citizens' participation in governance and issues related to public service delivery. It reviews existing laws with the aim of making policy input for their improvement. New laws are proposed to achieve maximum protection of citizens' legally enforceable civil rights, and to ensure that participation of citizens in governance is enhanced and performance of public services improved, especially by having such schemes of legislation, which empower citizens and provide redress mechanism for their grievances. For this purpose, this area has significant emphasis on constructive engagement with legislative bodies, public representatives and various government departments at national, provincial and local levels.

3. Advocacy, Training and Mobilization

On the basis of research undertaken at CRCP, a series of advocacy and awareness activities are undertaken. These activities generally include personal meetings and correspondence with public representatives, government officials and market actors, electronic and print media coverage, participation in radio/TV talk-shows, dissemination of information materials directly as well as through citizen groups, campaigns, holding of talks, seminars and consultations, and organization of community events. In addition, this program area deals with formation and mobilization of citizen groups, their training and follow-up work, as and when required, with the aim of motivating and enabling citizens to take initiatives, which are aimed at protection of their legally enforceable rights.

4. Market and Corporate Practices

This program area focuses on market processes and corporate practices from consumers' perspective, with emphasis on trade liberalization, privatization and

emergence of regulatory regimes in Pakistan. It particularly focuses on aspects such as accessibility, availability, affordability, quality and standards, transparency and accountability, market ethics, monopolies and unfair trade practices. On one hand, this area acts as a watchdog of market and corporate practices, and on the other hand, it tries to provide scientific input into relevant policies so that market becomes responsive to consumer interests.

5. Law and Public Interest Litigation

This program area reviews various laws from citizens' and consumers' perspective and undertakes research on issues, which are faced by citizens in the context of practice of laws. In addition, it undertakes public interest litigation for protection of civil rights of consumers and citizens, if and when required. The Consumer Complaints and Redress Forum (CCRF), established under this program area, handles consumer complaints. It gives free legal advice to consumers of various products and services.

Sectoral Focus

Within these core program areas, CRCP focuses on various sectors, which include provision of basic goods and services; quality standards for essential items of consumer use; services like water, health and sanitation; public utilities such as telecommunication, electricity, oil and gas as well as institutional mechanisms for regulation, legislative frameworks, environment, and sustainable consumption patterns.

1. Policy Research

Independent policy research for representation and articulation of consumers' demand is getting overwhelming importance due to low priority given to corporate social responsibility. CRCP has firm belief that consumers must have representation in all decisions affecting their lives. To create an interface between the policy community and the citizens, the civil society groups are required to act proactively. The civil initiatives need to engage the concerned authorities for formulation of policies that are cognizant of the interest and concerns of all stakeholders, especially the poor and marginalized.

In the reporting period, CRCP's policy research ranges from the sectoral focus at the grassroots to broad legislative framework. Main policy research areas include:

- Freedom of Information
- Regulation of Public Utilities
- Legislation and Governance

2. Publications: 2015-16

Authentic information is vital for citizens' empowerment. In the reporting period, following research documents were published by CRCP for citizen empowerment and bridging information gaps.

1. MAAPAY Model: Parental Voice for Quality Education

Consumer Rights Commission of Pakistan (CRCP) introduced an innovative model to fill the institutional vacuum in public education sector of Punjab - called the "Maapay Model". The model establishes a common ground to aggregate the voices of parents and communities at tehsil and district levels in the form of Tehsil School Councils (TSCs) and District School Councils (DSCs), respectively. The Model focuses on fostering an institutional mechanism through which the interests of parents and communities converge at a point which is closer to decision-makers than what is possible through an individual school council. It also involves building the capacity of parent members of TSCs and DSCs, and creating a vertical feedback system by establishing linkages between district education management and members of TSCs and DSCs.

2. Automobile Safety in Pakistan

Safe vehicles and road safety is still considered as an alien concept in Pakistan. There is a general state of apathy at all levels towards safe vehicles

despite the fact that it affects every one of us. Improving vehicle safety is a key strategy used in addressing international and national road casualty reduction targets and in achieving a safer road traffic system. Pakistan presents a dismal picture as far as auto safety is concerned. We not only lack policy declaration from the incumbent government, our legislations are old and further down, the implementation of the existing mechanisms are completely absent and dysfunctional.

Based on its research, CRCP recommended that following steps should be taken:

1. Make availability of Airbag and ABS in all variants as mandatory upon manufacturers with immediate effect and ensure minimum safety to the consumers.
2. At Policy level, incumbent government must finalize the long awaited Auto Policy in which following areas must be looked into:
 - a. Ensuring consumer interests are looked after
 - b. Putting in Place Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Standards
 - c. Putting in Place Pakistan Auto Safety standards and ensure implementations

At legislative level out dated laws should either be amended or repealed and new laws which are coherent with the international standards should be introduced.

3. At implementation level PSQCA must build up its capacity of inspection, audit and testing system and establishes links with international agencies to get accreditation of labs and standards. Similarly, clear functions of EDB (Engineering Development Board) must be elaborated. In order to achieve these goals, the government should announce clear time lines for the implementation of standard safety and emission policies and at the same time the automobile manufacturers should voluntarily comply with international safety and quality standards that would ultimately make them globally more competitive and offer Pakistani consumers good value for money.

3. A Review of Annual Reports: Exploring Transparency in Pakistan

Publication of annual report/year book and placement of the same on websites by the respective public bodies is recognition of the citizens' Right to Information (RTI) in the country. In this backdrop, Consumer Rights Commission of Pakistan (CRCP) conducted a preliminary research study focusing broadly on the following two aspects:

- Desk analysis/review of availability of annual reports/year books and information related to FOI/RTI laws on websites of government ministries/divisions/departments.

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- Content analysis of the annual reports/year books for year 2012-13 as per key features of international best practices.

In order to ensure transparency and accountability, it was suggested that:

- Timely publication of annual reports/year books should be ensured by respective heads of concerned public bodies. This being a case of maladministration, Federal Ombudsman should also intervene to take notice of this grave situation and should constantly monitor the performance of public bodies in conjunction with Cabinet Division.
- Annual reports/year books should follow international standards especially the financial statements of the public bodies should be integral part of it. All the departments should place soft copies of these reports on their websites for easy access of the general public.
- It is not mandatory for government entities to publish annual reports/year books in both English and Urdu languages, however, publication in Urdu can help ordinary citizens of Pakistan to understand these easily.

3. Surveys

To collect information and data on issues, relevant to consumer interests and to share the same with the relevant authorities for necessary action, CRCP conducts different surveys. These surveys are conducted with particular view of addressing the problems of the poor and disadvantaged sections of the society. No surveys were conducted during the reporting period.

4. Resource Center

Although a modest start in 1998, CRCP resource center has now a collection of a number of books on different subjects. It also contains a large number of publications and research reports on consumer protection, market and governance issues in Pakistan. CRCP owns one of the biggest collections on public utilities and regulatory bodies. The collection includes books, articles, brochures, and booklets on the relevant laws and judicial decisions, reports by various consumer and citizen groups, and policy papers. Besides, the Center maintains year-wise newspaper clippings on selected subjects. Any body can have access to the Resource Center.

Programme Area II

Governance and Legislative Affairs

CRCP puts great emphasis on the programme area of Governance and legislative affairs. CRCP team deeply analyses the laws affecting directly the consumer rights. This area particularly focuses on transparency, freedom of information, citizens' participation in governance and issues related to public service delivery. It reviews existing laws with the aim of making policy input for their improvement. New laws are proposed to achieve maximum protection of citizens' legally enforceable civil rights, and to ensure that participation of citizens in governance is enhanced and performance of public services is improved especially by having such schemes of legislation, which empower citizens and provide redress mechanism for their grievances. For the said purpose, this area has significant emphasis on constructive engagement with legislative bodies, public representative and various government departments at national, provincial and local levels.

Interventions in Regulatory Bodies

CRCP is working for the consumer rights all across the country, with a particular focus on regulatory bodies. CRCP have been consistently engaged with different regulatory bodies to defend and endorse consumer interests. These regulatory bodies include, amongst others, National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA), and Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA).

A concise illustration of CRCP interventions in different regulatory bodies is given below:

1. National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA)

Since 1998 CRCP has been actively involved in the proceedings of NEPRA, and its participation areas include all areas of operation of NEPRA. During the reference period CRCP made several interventions in the matters related to tariff requirements of KESC, GEPCO, LESCO, and PESCO for the grant of licenses to generation and distribution companies and performance standards. CRCP has been regularly attending the public hearings of NEPRA and has been raising voice for the rights of electricity consumers.

2. Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA)

CRCP has been advocating for the rights of gas consumers since the inception of OGRA. Tariff determination and inefficiencies of distribution have been key areas of concern for the consumers of gas in Pakistan. CRCP actively engaged with OGRA over the reporting period to voice the concerns of consumers.

CRCP believes that until findings of the research conducted in different areas are shared and widely disseminated, and unless on the basis of this research, series of advocacy and awareness activities are undertaken, it can not bring the desired results. For this purpose, all available sources of communication are utilized. These advocacy efforts also aimed at bridging information gaps between the policy community and citizens. Different channels, like personal meetings and correspondence with the public representatives, government officials and market forces, print and electronic media coverage, participation in radio/TV talk shows, dissemination of information materials directly as well as through citizen groups, campaign, holding of talks, seminars and consultations and organizations of community events, are used for disseminating information. This programmed area also deals with the formation and mobilization of citizen groups, need based training and follow-up work, with the aim of motivating and enabling citizens to take initiatives for their legally enforceable rights.

1. Talks, Seminars and Discussion

The reporting period is marked by consolidating of advocacy and lobbying role of the existing areas and extending it to some others like legislative strengthening in Pakistan and gender related consumer issues. The core point of the advocacy is to bring the consumers and citizens' perspective into social, economic and political issues and to strive for evolving national policies, which reflect citizen perspective as merger and not sub-merger.

2. Campaigns

Since its inception, the campaigns for promoting consumer interests are the integral part of CRCP policies and activities. These campaigns not only aim at making citizen aware of their rights and the issues affecting their lives, but also engage government agencies for taking appropriate actions. Series of activities are undertaken under these campaigns. These include information dissemination through brochures, print media coverage, participation in relevant TV and Radio Programmes, letters to government officials, talks and seminars. During the reporting period CRCP actively implemented following campaigns:

2.1 Campaign for Consumer Protection

The first landmark was achieved in this field by proposing Model Consumer Protection Act in 2000. The second Model Consumer Protection Act was proposed in 2001. From 2001 onward, CRCP launched full-fledged campaign for enactment of comprehensive consumer protection legislation as the existing laws were not able to take care of consumer concerns adequately. During the reporting period, CRCP commemorated the World Consumer Rights Day with

the theme “Antibiotic Resistance”. It highlighted the need to stop the overuse of antibiotics in food-producing animals as it produces antibiotic resistant bacteria in food producing animals, which can ultimately contaminate the foods.

2.2 Campaign for Freedom of Information

Information plays an overwhelming and significant role in citizen empowerment. Denial of these basic rights led to misappropriation by civic authorities. Well-informed decisions by citizens are vital for flourishing democracy and good governance. Owing to its importance, CRCP launched an integrated campaign for freedom of information in January 2000. After a series of deliberations, CRCP succeeded in drafting a Model Freedom of Information Act in 2001. As a result of these efforts, the President of Pakistan promulgated Freedom of Information Ordinance, 2002. After this, CRCP focused on its implementation and notification of rules of business. CRCP intends to take up extensive review of laws on freedom of information in different provinces.

2.3 Campaign for Safe Drinking Water

After air, drinking water is the second most important requirement for human life. Due to urbanization and industrialization, fresh water resources are continuously deteriorating in Pakistan. Though the National Environment Quality Standards were approved back in 1993, they have not been implemented in letters and spirit. During the reporting period CRCP remained actively involved with different government agencies for enactment of Safe Drinking Water Act.

2.4 Campaign for Environment Protection

- The campaign aimed at protecting environment through promotion of sustainable energy attitudes at the household level and advocacy for measures at the policy level that could reduce significant losses of energy at the transmission and distribution stages. The campaign activities included significant emphasis on media coverage with the aim of creating mass awareness, sensitization of manufacturers and related policy makers, and strengthening the lobbying efforts at various levels in the Government. Engagement was focused on sensitizing stakeholders on the role of relevant regulatory bodies and how these bodies needed to be strengthened to promote energy efficiency standards and their compliance in energy supply systems.

4. Group Mobilization and Training in Rights

CRCP conducts different training workshops for small society groups and journalist, so that, they are able to join the mainstream initiatives and play their effective role in their respective areas. It also provides technical support as and

when required in different areas for formation and strengthening of consumer groups. Realizing that very few consumer organizations exist in Pakistan, it is very important that more and more consumer groups are formed to work as building block of a vibrant nation-wide consumer movement. Such movement is the need of hour to provide citizens with equal opportunities to enable them face the challenges inflicted by shrinking state control and expanding market forces. Consumers must become organized so that they could engage both the market and the state to protect and promote their legitimate interests. It is in this context that CRCP gives great importance to group formation at the community level. It has a network with the number of national and international organizations to disseminate the message of consumer protection.

5. Print and Electronic Media Coverage

5.1 Print Media

Print and electronic media has an important role in CRCP advocacy campaign. Fortunately, print media in Pakistan is receptive to the consumer concerns and most of the press release issued find suitable place in print media. CRCP issued a number of press releases on issues of public concern.

5.2 Electronic Media

CRCP has always actively participated in the talk shows and discussion programmes organized by the electronic media.

6. Walks

CRCP organizes walks on important occasions to raise public awareness about issues confronted by pertaining to citizens with special focus on consumer problems. These walks always have a great demonstrative effect for articulating citizen grievances.

CRCP organized a walk to commemorate the World Consumer Rights Day on March 15. A large number of people including representatives of consumer groups, civil society activists, journalists, lawyers, academia, students and women participated in the walk. The walk started from the Faisal Chowk and ended at Faisal Mosque in Islamabad. In the concluding address Mr. Abrar Hafeez, Secretary General CRCP, highlighted major consumer issues in the country. He stressed the need for enactment of comprehensive consumer protection laws and an effective and strong consumer movement to promote consumer interests.

7. International Days

CRCP also observes international days to raise awareness about different issues. During reporting period CRCP commemorated following international days.

7.1 World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD)

March 15

CRCP commemorates World Consumer Rights Day every year. This year CRCP conducted a walk on WCRD, which was participated by large number of people. The Secretary General of CRCP delivered a public message “Antibiotic Resistance”. The need to stop the overuse of antibiotics in food-producing animals was highlighted as it produces antibiotic resistant bacteria in food producing animals, which can ultimately contaminate the foods.

7.2 World Water Day

March 22

Accessibility and availability of safe and clean drinking water is worsening day by day. The constant neglect by the successive governments in Pakistan has always added to the gravity of the situation. The available outdated infrastructure, obviously, can not cope with the increasing demands, while the paces of new initiatives remained very slow. Furthermore, constant contamination of the available fresh water resources by industrial and municipal water is getting an alarming stage.

On the World Water Day, CRCP became a focal point of many activities where number of individuals, groups and organizations contacted CRCP to share information on water.

7.3 World Health Day

April 8

On World Health Day, CRCP organized a roundtable conference with focus on theme of the day. Participants from different backgrounds spoke about the status of transportation, number of deaths, injuries due to road accident and road safety measures. Participants urged government to ensure implementation of traffic rules and regulations.

7.4 World Environment Day,

June 5

CRCP also commemorates World Environment Day every year. This year the theme of the day was “Zero Tolerance for the Illegal Wildlife trade”. This year’s World Environment Day celebrations are hosted by Angola, a country seeking to restore its elephant herds, conserve Africa’s biodiversity-rich wildlife, and safeguard the environment as it continues to rebuild after more than a quarter-century of civil war.

This program area focuses on market processes and corporate practices from consumers' perspective, with emphasis on trade liberalization, privatization and emergence of regulatory regimes in Pakistan. It particularly focuses on aspects such as accessibility, availability, affordability, quality and standards, market ethics, monopolies and unfair trade practices. This area acts as a watchdog on market and corporate practices. It also tries to provide scientific input into relevant policies so that market becomes responsive to consumer interests.

1. Engagement with Manufacturers / Business Sector

Under the initiative of “Sustainable Energy Consumption and Consumer Protection” the CRCP team made successful engagements with the manufacturers of various home appliances and arranged meetings with Gujrat Chamber of Commerce and members of All Pakistan Fan Manufacturers Association in Gujrat, and briefed them about issues related to quality standards pertaining to fans.

It was particularly emphasized that the training programmes must also aim at sensitizing the trainees about the implications of substandard fans for consumers' and environment. They expressed willingness to do so with the cooperation and assistance of CSOs and Government.

CRCP team also held meetings with the representatives of Gas Appliances Manufacturers Association in Gujranwala and sensitized the officials of the association about the issues related to health and safety of consumers, environment protection and energy efficiency in context of gas appliances.

Under this program area CRCP reviews various laws from citizens and consumers' perspective and undertakes research on issues, which are faced by citizens in the context of practice of laws. In addition, it undertakes public interest litigation for protection of civil rights of consumers and citizens whenever required.

1. Consumer Complaint and Redress Forum (CCRF)

To handle consumer complaints and provide assistance and compensation to them, CRCP established Consumer Complaints and Redress Forum (CCRF). This forum gives free legal advice to consumers of various products and services. A greater part of the complaints handled by CCRF is related to government departments, manufacturers of home appliances and food items. Majority of complaints are received against water, electricity, natural gas, automobile, and courier services. In addition to handling consumer complaints, CCRF extends legal advice to its members and citizens at large, who have some grievance against the civic agencies and market practices.

Way Forward

CRCP resolves to further its agenda of consumer protection and advocacy throughout the country in the following years. CRCP intends to build upon its learning regarding the inherent value of aggregation and articulation of voice of consumers, and then engaging with the key stakeholders through procedural advocacy. All program areas of CRCP will be strengthened through research and exploration of indigenous solutions to the challenges of consumer rights in the country.