



Law Department
Government of Sindh

LAS
LEGAL AID SOCIETY



SLACC

Sindh Legal Advisory Call Center

BI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT



July 01 to
December 31 | **2023**

24/7 Helpline 0800 70806

SLACC

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Contents

A.	Message from the Secretary Law and Parliamentary Affairs	5
B.	Message from the Chief Legal Advisor	6
C.	SLACC Performance during July-December, 2023	8
a.	Objective 1: Provide free legal advice and information to 33,000 people	9
	i) Analysis of Calls	9
b.	Objective 2: Raising Awareness of the Sindh Legal Advisory Call Centre (SLACC)	17
	i) Analysis of Geographical Demographics	17
	ii) Analysis of Sources of Knowledge of Callers of the SLACC	20
	iii) Integration of SLACC with the Chief Secretary's Office, Sindh	20
	iv) SMS Campaign	22
	v) Placement of Publicity Boards	23
	vi) Publicity Visits	26
	vii) Leveraging main stream and social media	30
	viii) Partnerships and networking	32
	ix) Submission of SLACC Proposal 2024-2029	34
c.	Objective 3: Ensure quality and effective provision of legal advice	35
	i) Capacity Development of the SLACC Legal Advisors	35
	ii) Notable Developments	40
	iii) Success Stories	40
d.	Objective 4: To collect data and conduct data analysis, research and produce policy briefs	43
	i) Work on Policy Brief	43
	ii) Relaying Cases to Sister wings at LAS from SLACC	43
	iii) Reassignment of categories	44

A **Message From** **THE SECRETARY LAW AND** **PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS**



The Sindh Legal Advisory Call Center (SLACC) stands as a beacon of hope for marginalized communities across the province. The initiative by the Government of Sindh under the umbrella of the Legal Empowerment of People Program (LEPP) was envisioned to uplift the communities of the province by not just offering access to justice to the oppressed and destitute citizens but by also collaborating with the Government to disseminate important information. The essence of this Call Center lies in its dedication to empowering the downtrodden, ensuring that even the most vulnerable and marginalized individuals in Sindh can seek cost-free, and high-quality legal advice.

It fills me with great pride knowing that the Center, since July 2023, has helped solve over 14,250 legal problems, each representing a plea for justice. Among them, 7,157 were about Civil Law, 2,120 were of Criminal Law, and 1,418 related to Public Service Matters.

With the recent inauguration of the Center with the Chief Secretary's complaint portal, the Center now acts as a bridge, connecting citizens to the relevant administrative department so they obtain a swift redressal of public administrative issues in their respective localities.

We hope to keep supporting SLACC so it continues to extend legal welfare to people, especially the underprivileged, bringing justice to those who need it the most.

Mr. Ali Ahmed Baloch
Secretary Law & Parliamentary Affairs,
Government of Sindh

B **Message From** **THE CHIEF LEGAL ADVISOR,** **LEGAL AID SOCIETY**



I am pleased to present the Bi-Annual Progress Report of the Sindh Legal Advisory Call Center (SLACC) covering the period from July 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023. Established in 2014 by the Legal Aid Society (LAS) under the Chairpersonship of Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid, SLACC has evolved into a successful public-private partnership since 2018 with the Government of Sindh, facilitated through the Law Department. Under the Legal Empowerment of People Program in Sindh (LEPPS), SLACC offers free legal advice and information primarily to vulnerable communities, especially those unaware of their legal rights across Pakistan and particularly in Sindh.

I am delighted to share that since its inception, SLACC has received an impressive 440,999 calls on its Interactive Voice Recording (IVR) system, registering 229,163 legal queries from more than 600 cities and towns across Pakistan. This underscores the crucial role SLACC plays in bridging the gap between the supply and demand for justice.

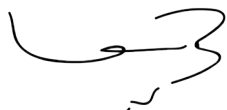
SLACC serves a unique purpose by providing free legal advice and information to callers across the country, particularly those who cannot afford access to justice through the formal court system or legal representation. This year, from July 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023, SLACC received 20,662 calls and formally registered 14,250 queries. The breakdown of queries includes 10,694 from male callers, 3,542 from female callers, and 14 from gender non-conforming individuals.

The toll-free helpline ensures convenient access to legal advice from anywhere within and outside the country, benefiting vulnerable groups such as women and religious minorities. Notably, 24.86% of our calls were made by women, and over 244 calls were received from members of religious minority communities.

In addressing public sector deficiencies, SLACC ensures the streamlining of grievance redressal mechanisms in public administrative departments and has recently integrated with the Chief Secretary's complaint cell on November 1st, 2023. To date, we have forwarded a total of 21 complaints on SPMS, with the public service matters currently being investigated.

Additionally, SLACC continues to support those affected by the severe floods of 2022 (across Sindh), especially those who lost documentation and are struggling to access public welfare benefits.

Looking ahead, our commitment is to ensure that SLACC consistently exceeds annual targets and supports the Government of Sindh in elevating Pakistan's ranking on global human rights indicators, including the international Gender and Rule of Law Index. I extend my sincere gratitude to the Government of Sindh for their unwavering support in this crucial endeavor.



Justice Arif Hussain Khilji

Former Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan

Chief Legal Advisor, Legal Aid Society

SLACC PERFORMANCE DURING JULY–DECEMBER, 2023

SLACC offers telephonic legal guidance by connecting callers directly with qualified and experienced lawyers (SLACC Agent Lawyers licensed to practice before the High Court; through a unique CRM system (based on the popularly deployed Avaya Telephony System). The CRM system has been customized to record metrics relating to socio-economic demographics and the content of the query and the solution provided. The queries are linked by record and are assigned a time-stamp. SLACC Legal Advisors provide advice throughout a 24-hour period: via live calls during office hours, from 9.00 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Monday to Friday, and post 5 p.m. and on the weekends through recorded voicemails. From its inception till December 2023, SLACC has registered over 440,999 calls from across Pakistan while during the reporting period of July – December 2023, the SLACC has registered 20,662 calls.



PERFORMANCE AGAINST DELIVERABLES AT OUTCOME AND OUTPUT LEVEL; HIGHLIGHTING KEY ACTIVITIES:

Objective 1:

Provide free legal advice and information to 33,000 people.

14,250 queries of citizens through calls have been formally registered, which is 43.18% of the annual target for the entire project period. These callers have obtained a customized solution through the advice of SLACC.



Analysis of Calls

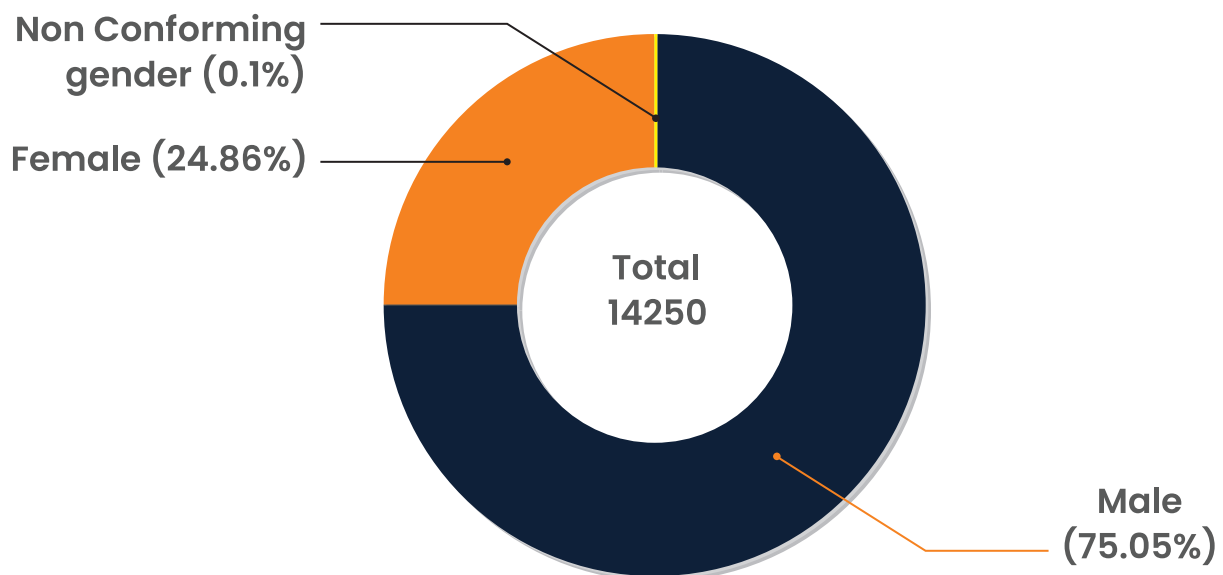
The following table is the breakdown of the calls through the six-month reporting period shown in Table 1:

Month	Registered Queries	Civil Law	Criminal Law	Public Service Matters	General Information Queries	Male	Female	Other
July	2226	1156	339	234	497	1612	614	0
August	3492	1791	478	364	859	2657	829	6
September	1747	956	275	141	375	1211	535	1
October	2244	1163	361	199	521	1650	592	2
November	2021	985	292	217	527	1530	490	1
December	2520	1107	375	263	775	2038	478	4

Table 1: Distribution of queries during the reporting period (July to December 2023)

Table 1 shows the distribution of queries during the reporting period of July to December 2023 according to the categories and the gender of the caller. As shown in Figure 1, out of 14,250 queries, 75.05% of the registered queries were made by male callers while 24.86% were from female callers. This is primarily due to the greater ease of access of information by men who are able to navigate the public space more easily and hence can confidently seek justice. Often, male callers ask for advice on behalf of female relatives in their family matters such as inheritance laws, divorce and custody of children or documents related to their legal identity. Additionally, 14 queries were also registered from gender non-conforming persons.

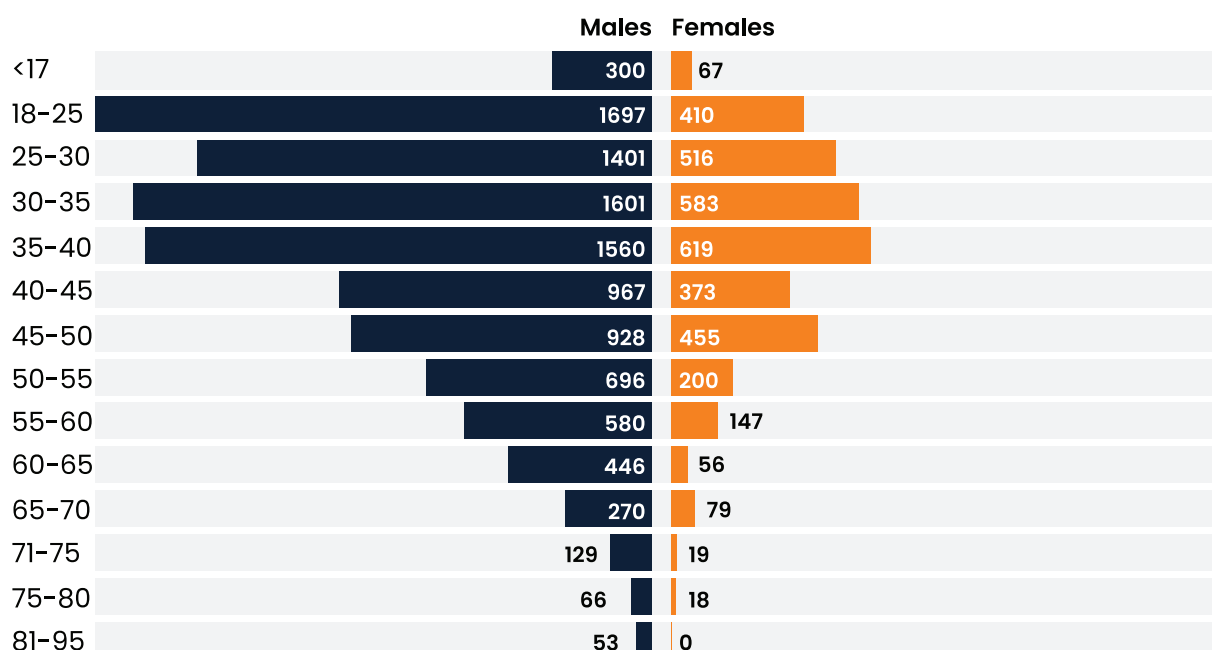
Gender-Wise Distribution of Registered Legal Queries
(July to December 2023)



**Fig 1: Gender-Wise Distribution of Registered Queries through Calls -
(July to December 2023)**

In figure 2, we can see that people between the ages of 18-25 are the biggest target demographic that reach out to SLACC for advice. This is in line with the demographics of the country as youth constitute the majority of the population of Pakistan. There is also a sizeable representation from people born between 1965-1979 as well as those born between 1946 and 1964.

SLACC Callers Age and Gender Demographic (July to December 2023)

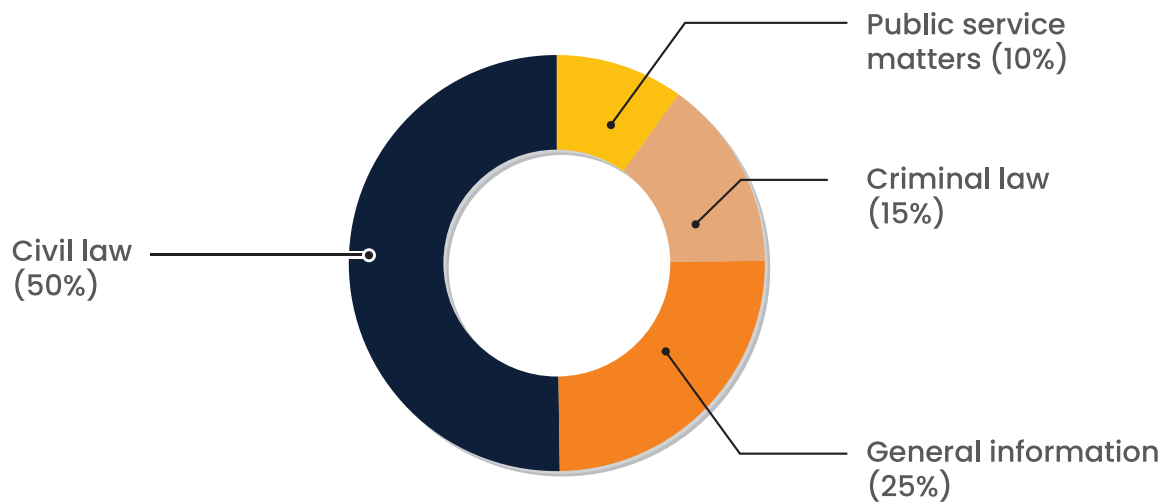


**Fig 2: Age and Gender-Wise Distribution of Registered Queries through Calls -
(July to December 2023)**

Each query at the call center is categorized and marked with a main category (referring to the type of law it involves) followed by the tag of category (e.g. Family law within Civil) followed by the sub-category tag (e.g. Recovery of maintenance, dower and dowry articles within Civil-Family Law). The category and sub-category are defined by the legal advisor based on the issue being faced by the caller. Often, in interpersonal relationships, some categories overlap as a simple maintenance matter of the civil law convolutes to a criminal matter where custody of children may be snatched by either parent without adopting the due course of law.

Figure 3 below shows the division of registered queries through calls by the main categories of law. As can be seen from Figure 3, the majority of registered queries through calls are in the Civil Law category (7,157 queries), followed by Criminal Law category (2,120 queries) and the smallest figure is of the Public Service Matters (1,418 queries). Moreover, the center received (3,555 queries) about General information.

Category wise Distribution of Registered Queries
(July to December 2023)



**Figure 3: Category Wise Distribution of Queries
(July to December 2023)**

Within the biggest category, Civil law, most callers inquired about matters pertaining to Family Law followed by Partition, which often included queries related to filing suits for partition of their inherited property. The queries regarding the Civil Procedure Code are mainly related to jurisdiction of cases, negotiable instruments, and other procedural issues such as written statements, trial stage, and execution. The service law queries concerned cases in National Industrial Relations Commission (NIRC), promotion, pension, seniority, EOBI, gratuity, workmen's compensation and other labour law related cases. The cases relating to specific relief were based on callers seeking injunctions and specific performance. The miscellaneous queries included employees of one organisation asking if they could file a suit against their employer, complaints about a factory wasting water, in addition to public nuisance caused due to blaring music in the neighbourhood or violent confrontations between neighbours.

Category Wise Distribution of Civil Law Queries (July -December 2023)

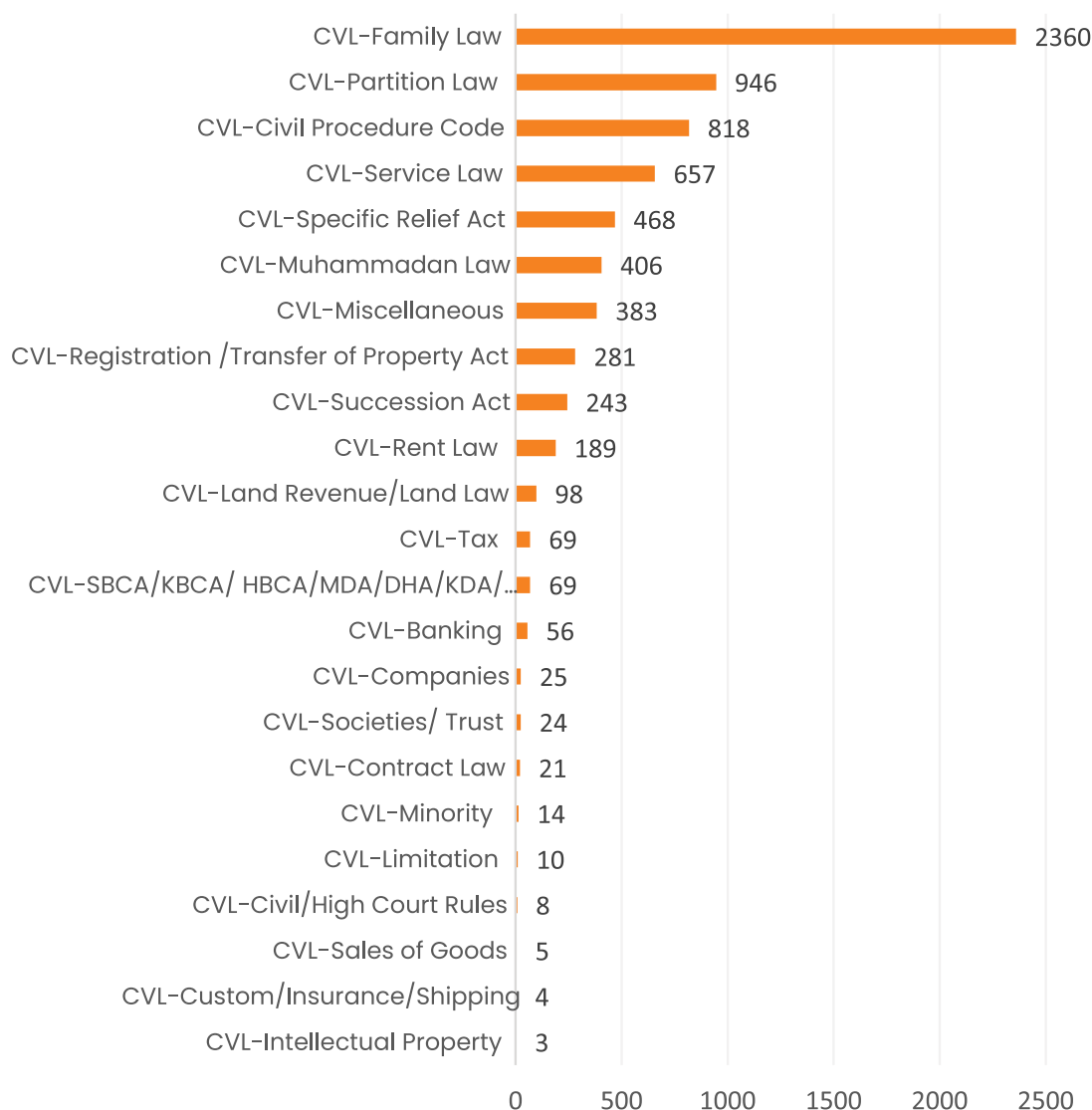


Figure 4: Category Wise Distribution of Civil Law Queries during July to December 2023

Within Criminal law, as shown by the following Figure 5, most callers experienced issues related to various cases involving the Criminal Procedure Code, 1898, such as appeal, revision, petition for habeas corpus, First Information Report (FIR), direct complaint, compromise and others. In the female Gender Based Violence category, the vast majority of callers sought legal advice for domestic violence, which was related to forced marriage in some instances. Other callers complained of general and sexual harassment. In the Miscellaneous category, distribution of calls included complaint to the Magistrate under Section 22-A CrPC to lodge FIR, malicious prosecution/quashed cases and other matters.

In cases related to illegal dispossession, callers complained of either the land mafia dispossessing them of their property or immediate and close relatives occupying jointly inherited property, denying other family members their rightful share. Those queries marked as related to PPC included but not limited to the calls relating to polygamy and grievous hurt. Some percentage of the callers also inquired about cyber-crimes' complaint mechanisms, concerning leaking important and confidential personal information.

Category Wise Distribution of Criminal Law Queries **(July to December 2023)**

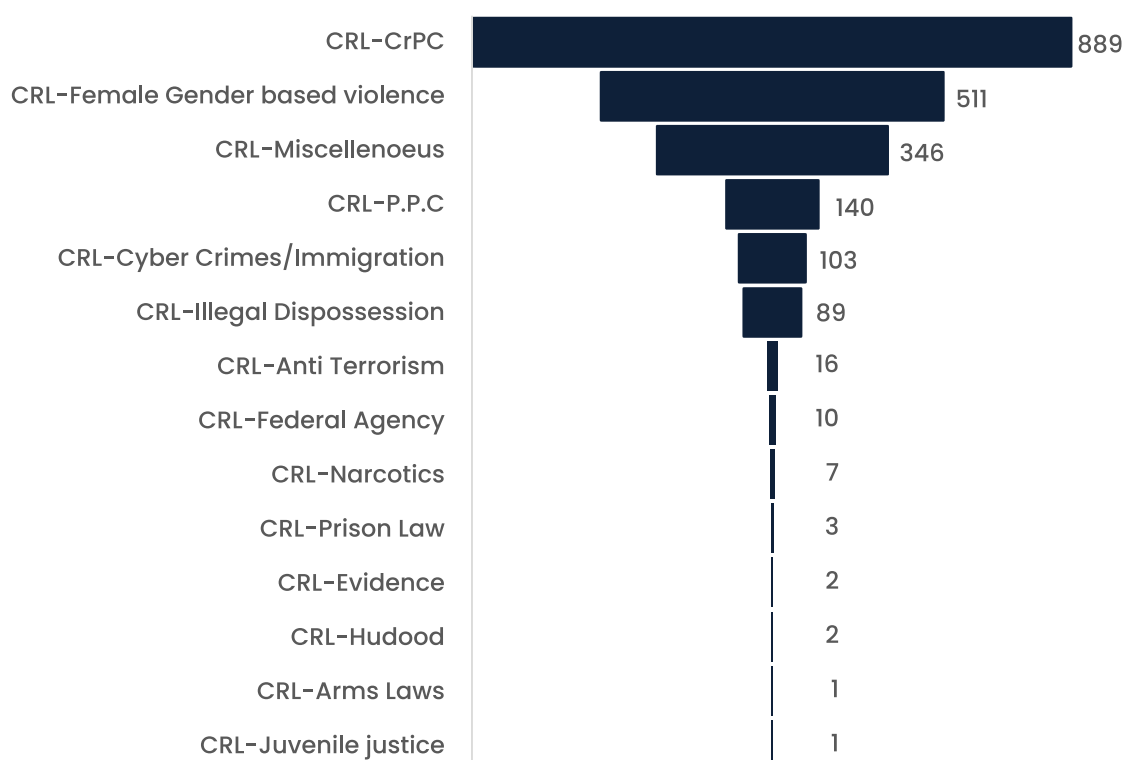
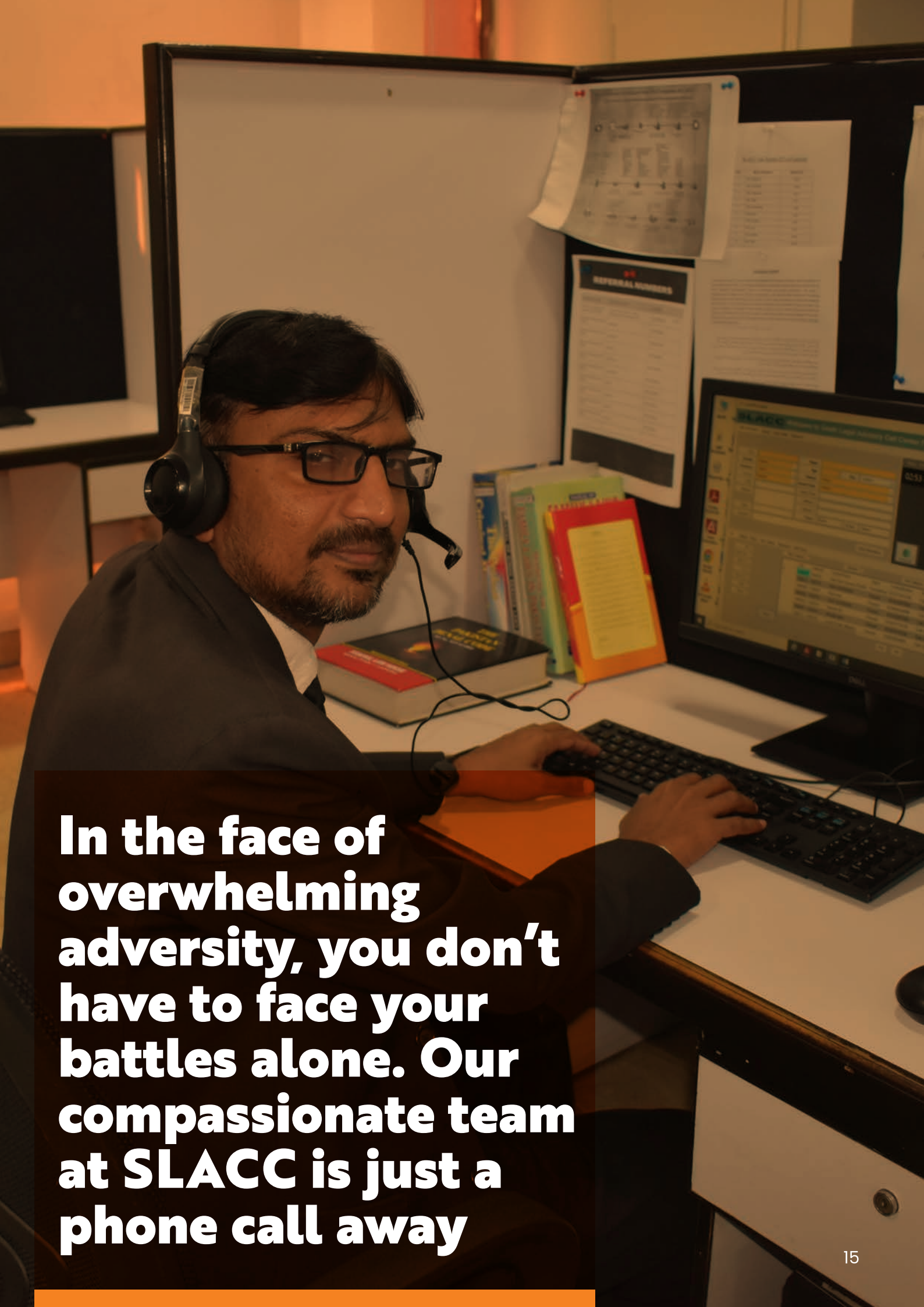


Figure 5: Category Wise Distribution of Criminal Law Queries during July to December 2023

In regards to the Public Service Matters, Figure 6, most callers were distressed by miscellaneous issues related to various government departments, this was followed by NADRA and B-form matters. Callers were also distressed by the theft of ATM cards and many called enquiring about the Ehsaas card and other similar schemes. Many callers were seeking advice against K-electric and WAPDA amongst others for over-billing or charging electricity bills with a damaged meter or the disconnection of electricity. During this reporting period, we also received numerous queries regarding zakat, the education sector and telecommunication services.

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a headset, is seated at a desk in an office. He is looking at a computer monitor which displays a software interface. On the desk, there is a keyboard, a mouse, and several books. A whiteboard with various papers pinned to it is visible in the background. The scene is lit with warm, orange-toned light.

**In the face of
overwhelming
adversity, you don't
have to face your
battles alone. Our
compassionate team
at SLACC is just a
phone call away**

Category Wise Breakdown of Public Service Related Matter

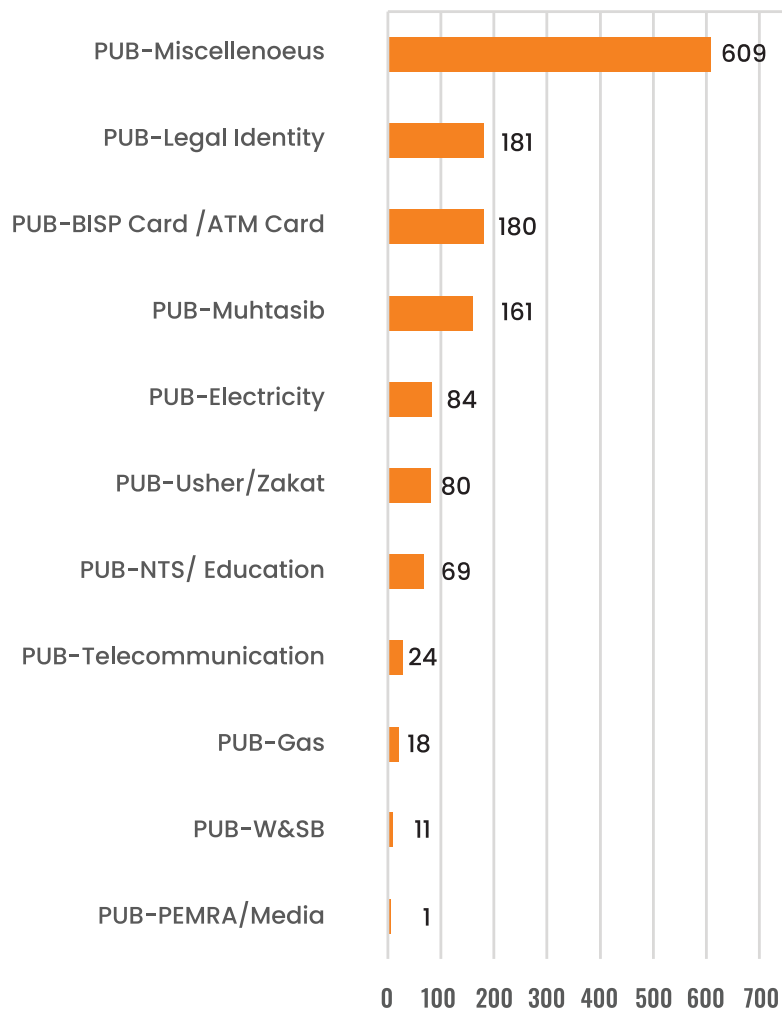


Figure 6 Category Wise Breakdown of Public Service Matters Queries during July to December 2023

Objective 2:

Raising Awareness of the Sindh Legal Advisory Call Centre (SLACC)

Analysis of Geographical Demographics

The SLACC received the most calls from Sindh, followed by Punjab, Baluchistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit Baltistan. The chart below highlights the geographical demographics for the reporting period:

Province Wise Distribution of Legal Queries Received

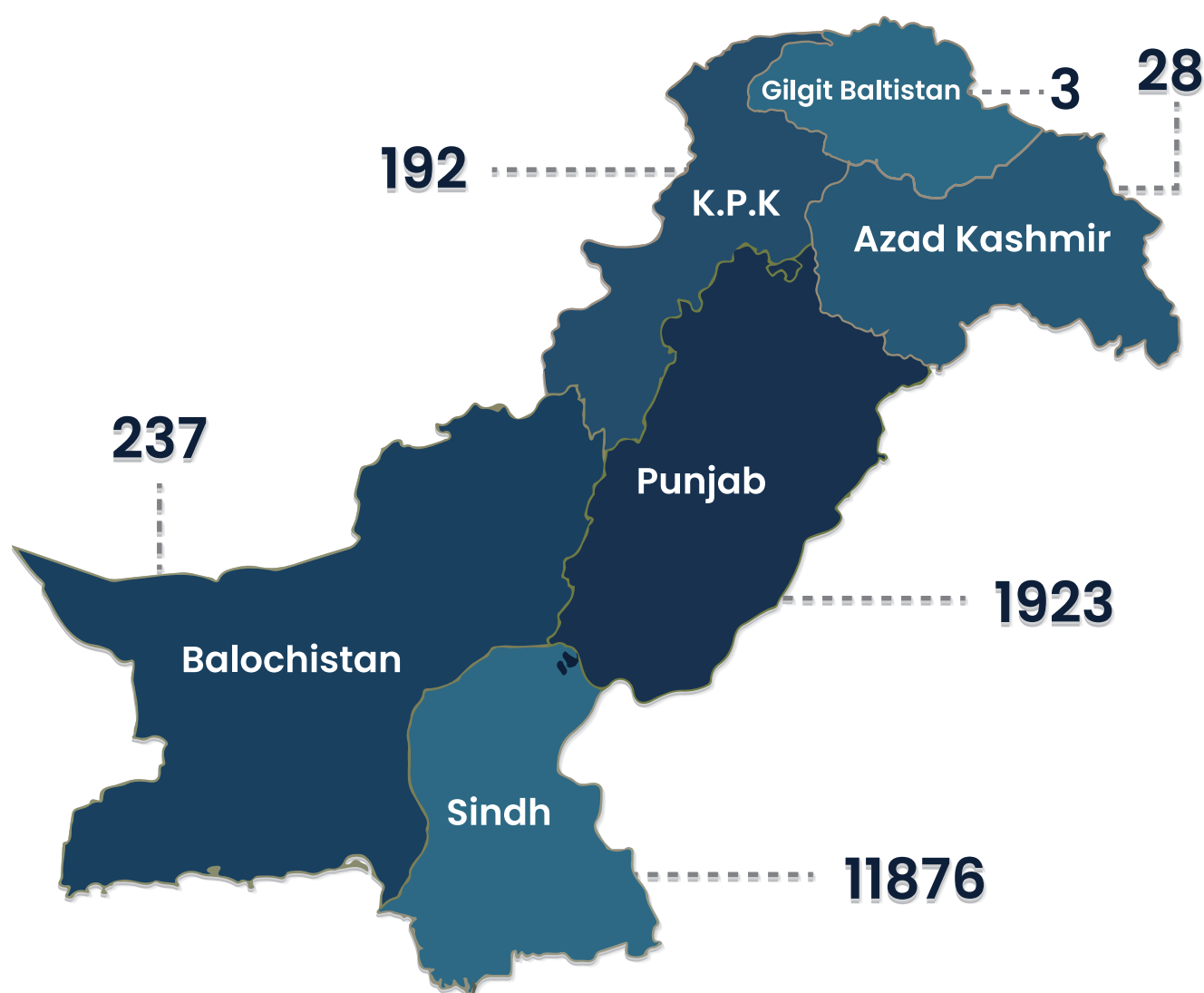


Figure 7: Province-Wise Distribution of Registered Queries through Calls
(July to December 2023)

Within Sindh, as illustrated by Figure 8 below, the greatest number of callers were residents of Karachi, followed by Hyderabad, Khairpur, Sanghar, Larkana, Shaheed Benazir Abad, Mirpurkhas, Sukkur, Shahdadkot and Dadu. This is due to the SMS Campaign that is run every week that targets these districts in Sindh. There is also strong presence of Legal Aid Society offices all across Sindh where community sessions are held regularly. Many callers also heard about the SLACC from their friends, relatives and neighbors. Furthermore, the SLACC has placed boards in areas of high footfall to increase awareness with the masses. Other sources of advertisement have been the newspaper ads sponsored by the Law Department, social media campaigns, rickshaw ads and referral by bodies like Sindh Commission on the Status of Women (SCSW) and Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC).

Top 10 Cities in Sindh from Where SLACC Receives Calls

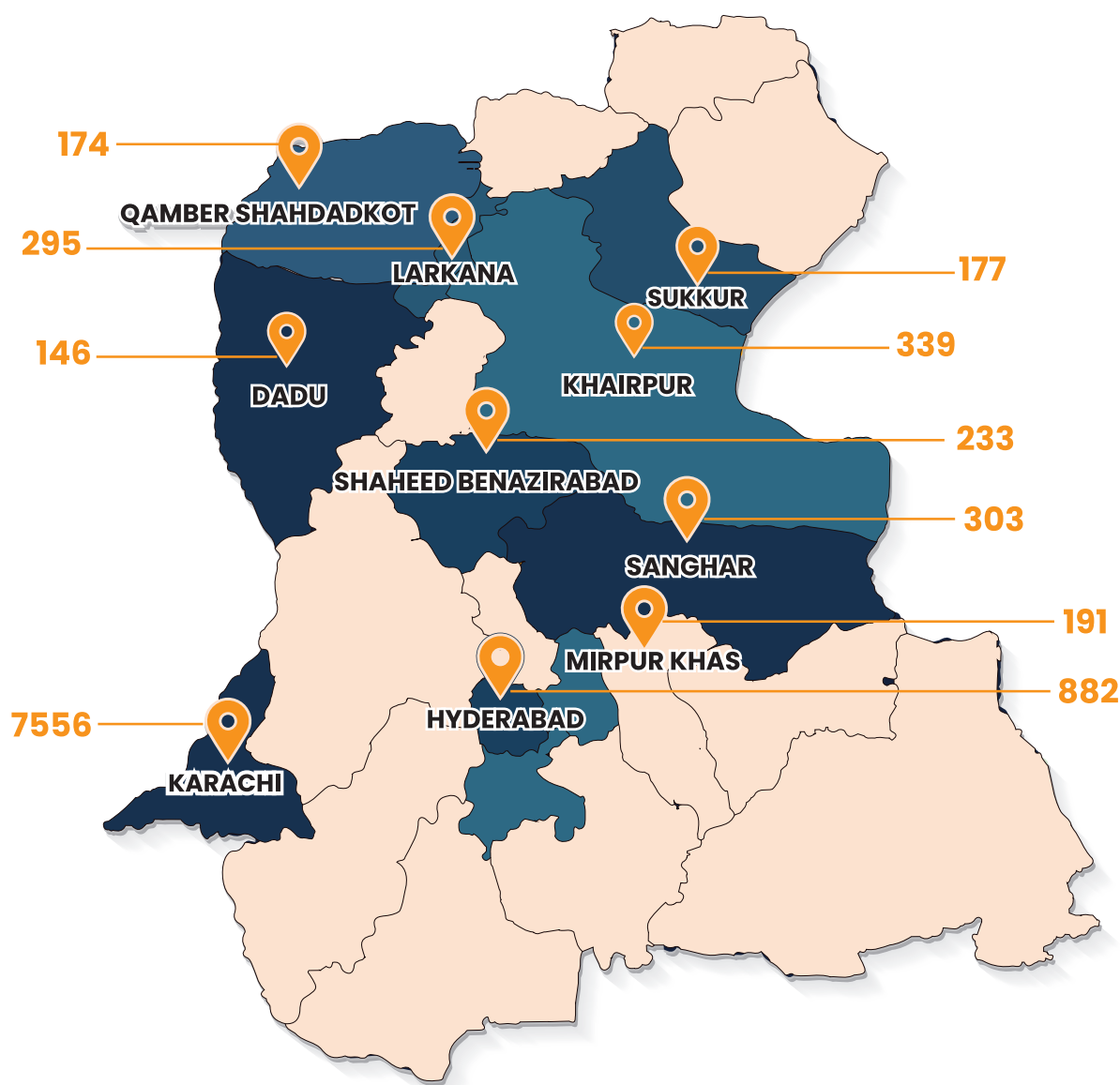


Figure 8: City-Wise Distribution of Registered Queries through Calls from Sindh during July to December 2023

As shown by Figure 9 below, Lahore has the greatest number of calls from other provinces followed by Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Multan, Faisalabad, Quetta, Peshawar, Rajanpur and Sargodha. Positive word of mouth and social media posts contributed to the calls received by the center from other provinces.

Top 10 Cities from Other Provinces from Where SLACC Receives Calls

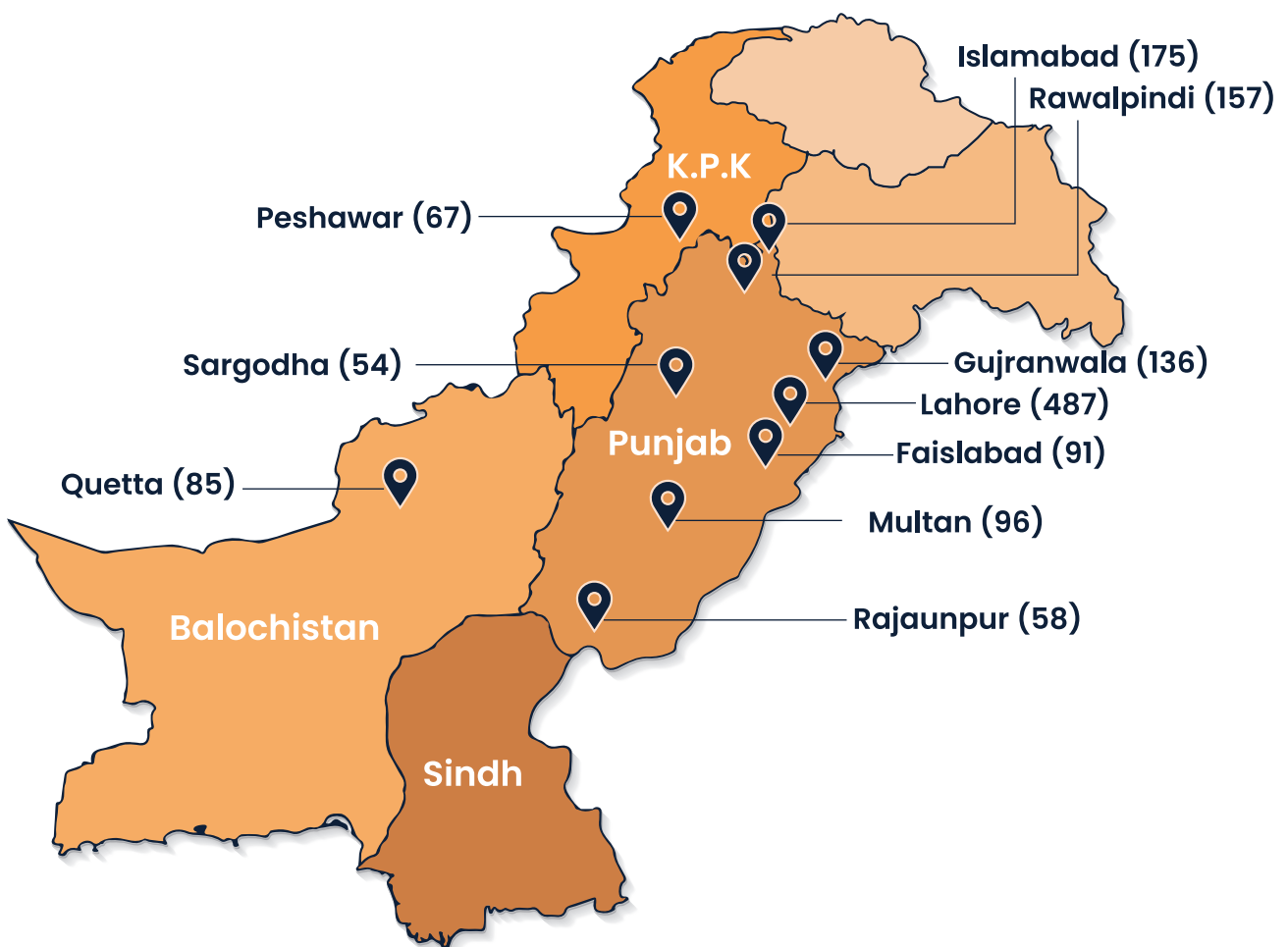


Figure 9: City-Wise Distribution of Registered Queries through Calls from other provinces during July to December 2023

Analysis of Sources of Knowledge of Callers of the SLACC

The SLACC services have been advertised and publicized in a variety of ways. The majority (6,662) of callers called because they had received an SMS or had seen it on the internet and social media (2,510) while others became aware of it through word of mouth (1475). The chart below shows the numerous channels through which the beneficiaries heard about SLACC:

Sources of Knowledge of Callers of the SLACC

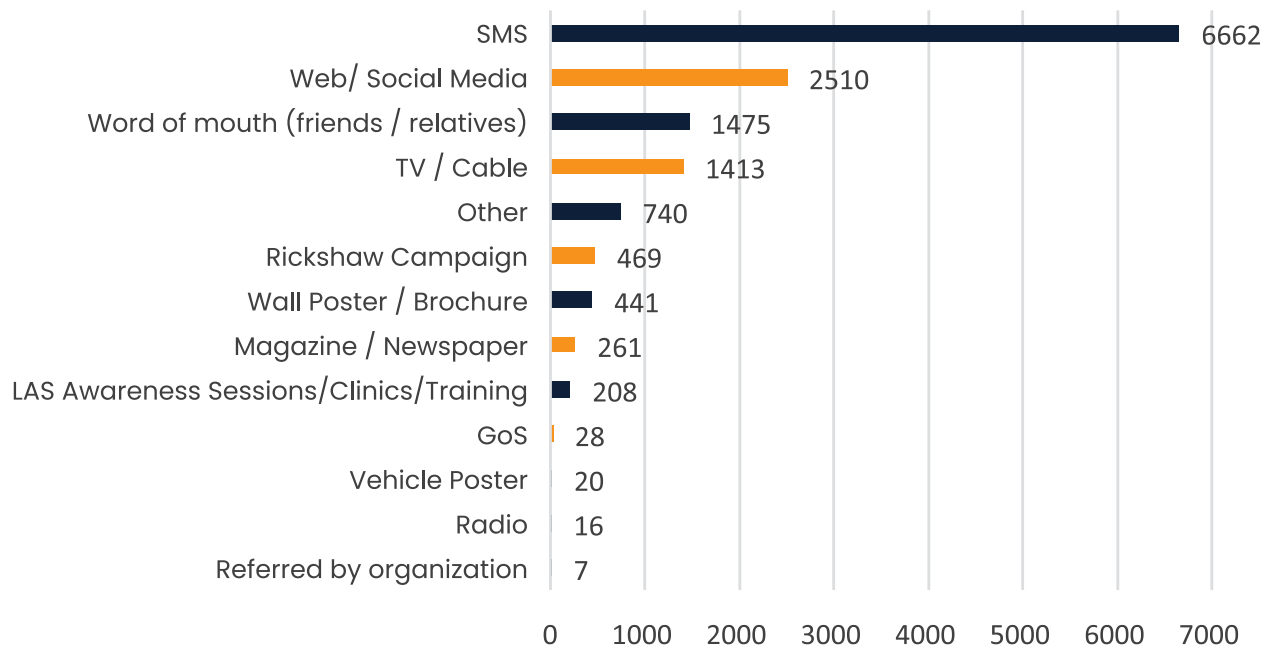


Figure 10: Knowledge-Wise Distribution of Registered Queries through Calls during July to December 2023

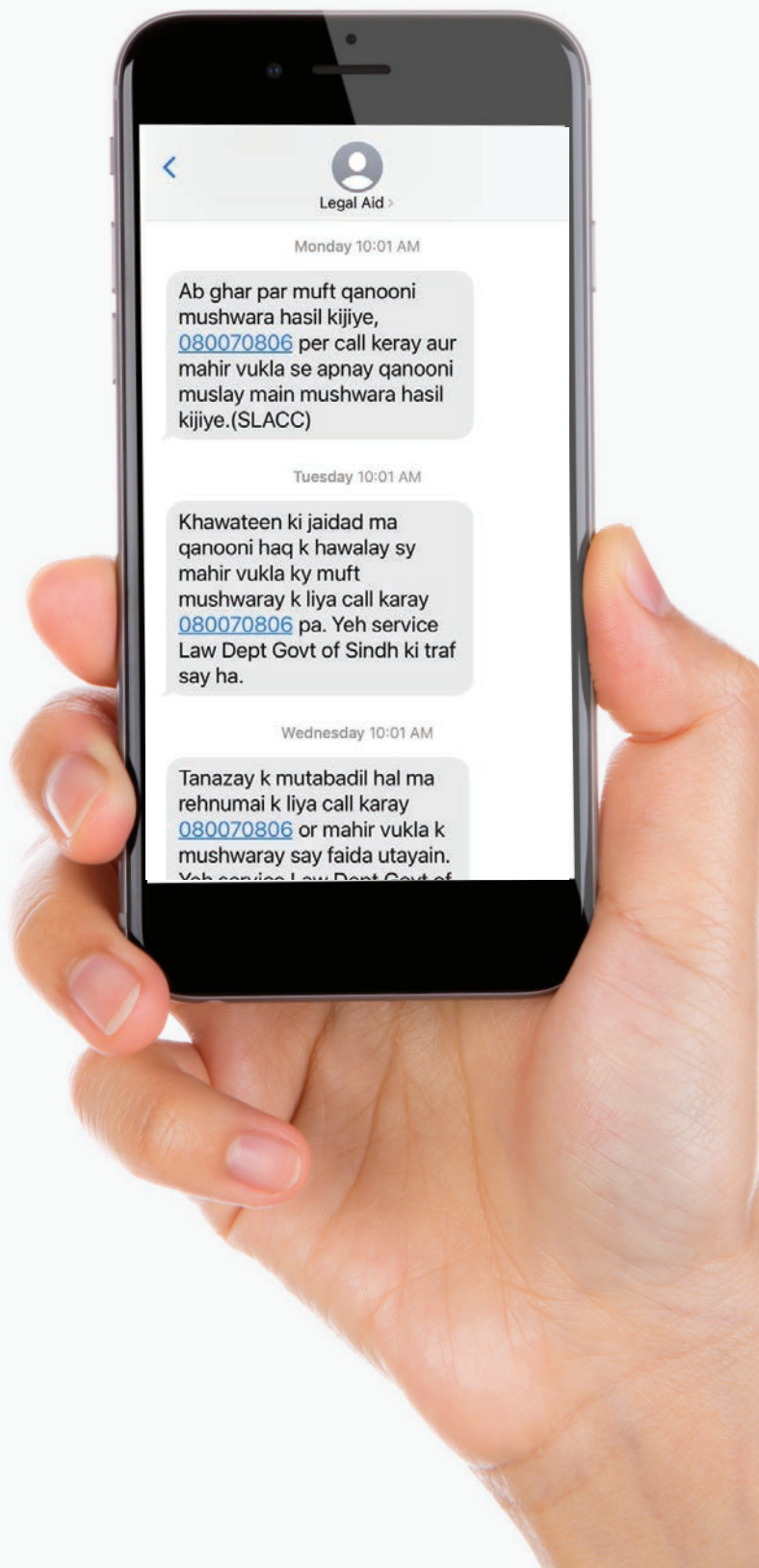
Integration of SLACC with the Chief Secretary's Office, Sindh

SLACC successfully integrated with the Chief Secretary's Office through the CS Complaints Cell, "The Sindh Citizen's Portal" on the 1st of November 2023. The objective of the integration is to provide effective remedy to the beneficiaries for queries regarding the Sindh Government and to ensure that the relevant government departments are actively handling such complaints. The portal was inaugurated by the Minister for Law, Religious Affairs and Human Rights, Government of Sindh, Mr. Mohammed Omer Soomro who uploaded the first query into the portal. Since then, 21 complaints have already been added to the portal, and investigations are underway by the relevant departments.



SMS Campaign

After SMS rates were jacked up by all Telecom companies, the SLACC was left with no choice but to run SMS campaigns with a network that offered the most economical rates and enjoyed penetration within Interior Sindh. Because of this the Ufone network was selected and through weekly campaigns and synergies with other LAS programs, customized text messages were delivered to over 10.64 million users in Sindh during the past 6 months, helping promote the SLACC toll-free number to the public.



Placement of Publicity Boards

Since its inception, the SLACC has tried to increase awareness about its facility through publicity boards strategically placed in areas where there is traffic of people such as in public parks, police stations, universities and other locations to enhance its outreach. During the past six months more boards were placed at key locations in order to raise awareness amongst people. In addition, boards have been installed in Hyderabad, Khairpur, Sukkur, Larkana, Sanghar, Dadu, and Shaheed Benazirabad.



SLACC Board at Rama Peer Mandar at (Hyderabad). Thousands are visiting the site daily on occasion of Rama Peer Mela.



SLACC Board at Channel Bus Stop in Hyderabad



SLACC Board at Badin Stop Hyderabad



Board placement in Khairpur



Board placement in Sukkur

Publicity visits

Visit of Ms. Rozina Mistri

Ms. Rozina Mistri—Consultant for The Women Development Department (WDD) visited the Sindh Legal Advisory Call Centre (SLACC) on 6th October 2023. The purpose of the visit was to familiarize the Women Development Department, with the operations of the SLACC, introduce them to state-of-the-art IVR calling systems, and look forward to ways to promote the work being done by SLACC. The visit by Ms. Rozina's team was a fruitful one, as she recognized the efforts made by SLACC, and discussed ways to promote our services.



Visit of Ms. Tanzila Um e Habiba

MPA Ms. Tanzila Um e Habiba (Special Assistant to CM: Information Science & Technology) visited the Sindh Legal Advisory Call Center (SLACC) on the 2nd of August 2023. She was provided with a tour of the call center by Ms. Haya Zahid, CEO-Legal Aid Society and Justice Arif Khilji, Chief Legal Advisor-Legal Aid Society, and was given an overview of how advocates at the center receive and resolve legal queries. Ms. Tanzila showed special interest in the research being done by SLACC, and appreciated how the center plays a crucial role in certain legal and societal issues; whereafter she highlighted the lack of legislation regarding the maintenance of elderly parents.



Publicity Visit of Ms. Kirstine Drew from International Accord

Kirstine Drew, the Head of Workplace Safety Program at International Accord, visited SLACC on the 7th of November 2023. Kirstine visited as part of a scoping mission to develop a complaint mechanism and training program under the Pakistan Accord. She placed special interest in the type of labor queries SLACC was receiving on a daily basis as her organization is working on reforming workplace laws in Pakistan. She identified SLACC as a key stakeholder that can help in this regard.



Visit of Mr. Rahim Gul (Secretary Law and Prosecution, Gilgit Baltistan)

Mr. Rahim Gul, Secretary Law and Prosecution –Gilgit Baltistan paid a visit to both the LAS head office in Karachi as well as the SLACC office before submitting the bill to the Chief Minister. The visit aimed to study ADR legislative frameworks in Sindh, which will be replicated in Gilgit Baltistan. The model Mediation Bill 2023, after its passage in the assembly, will be instrumental in establishing a state-recognized ADR system in Gilgit Baltistan, thus attracting investment to the region and reducing case pendency. The Law Department of the Gilgit Baltistan Government submitted the LAS drafted Model Mediation Bill, 2023 to the Chief Minister of Gilgit Baltistan for his approval in the cabinet and in the Gilgit Baltistan Legislative Assembly.



Leveraging mainstream and social media

Leveraging influencer marketing and podcasts

In order to reach more people, SLACC started to leverage the power of influencer marketing. The center reached out to a number of celebrities in order to raise awareness and empower the vulnerable and the marginalized. Some were quick to respond to the call with Lead singer for the band Kashmir Bilal Ali, that won the second season of Pepsi battle of the bands, posted about SLACC and encouraged his followers to share the message so more people can get legal advice and get their issues resolved.



Barrister Haya Emaan Zahid, CEO of Legal Aid Society Pakistan went on The Pakistan Experience podcast as well as the encyclomediahub YouTube channel for a Special Podcast Session. There she talked about how the Legal Aid Society is working for the welfare of the people in order to help them get justice. During the encyclomediahub podcast, the host made a dummy call to the SLACC call center to test its effectiveness and was happy to have received the accurate guidance from our Lawyer Rakhshanda Jabbar.



Facebook Ad Campaign

Taking cognizance of the fact that a greater number of Pakistanis from all socio-economic backgrounds are spending time on social media on a daily basis, particularly Facebook, paid Ad campaign was run from time to time to boost different SLACC Facebook posts. After a pause in the first few months, the campaign was restarted in November, 2023, with the support of the Law department and is an integral part of SLACC's overall marketing strategy. Besides, paid ads, SLACC lawyers also post video messages on the page from time to time, explaining their motivation for working in the center.



Leveraging TV Ads

SLACC with the support of the Law department and Sindh Information Ministry was able to successfully run a nationwide TVC advertisement for SLACC across a wide variety of TV channels in Pakistan on the 8th and 9th of August. The results of this were seen immediately with SLACC receiving twice the number of calls on the subsequent day of its airing. A long-term sustainable campaign over weeks or months can bring greater awareness for people across the country so they can take advantage of the facility.



Partnerships and networking

Partnership with Pakistan Hindu Council

The SLACC, through the Legal Aid Society (LAS), has signed an MoU with Pakistan Hindu Council on the 11th of August 2023 in order to promote the services of SLACC. The day was graced by distinguished attendees, including Ramesh Kumar Vankwani (Patron-in-Chief, Pakistan Hindu Council and Chairman, Task Force on Gandhara Tourism), Mangla Sharma (Honorable Member of the Sindh Assembly), Ms. Komal Khatri (Director to Patron-in-Chief), and Ms. Sunena Shantilal (General Manager, Pakistan Hindu Council). Barrister Haya Emaan Zahid, CEO Legal Aid Society and Parshotam Ramani, General Secretary of Pakistan Hindu Council sealed the agreement by affixing their signatures to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU will help the two organisations to work together to empower marginalized communities in Sindh.



Partnership with Sindh Human Rights Commission

Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC) and the Legal Aid Society (LAS) signed a MoU on the 31st July, 2023 to promote legal awareness and provide free legal aid to the vulnerable communities in Sindh. The MoU signing ceremony was witnessed by Iqbal Ahmed Detho, the Chairperson of the Sindh Human



Rights Commission, and Justice Arif Khilji, the Chief Legal Advisor of Legal Aid Society, who played pivotal roles in making the collaboration a reality. The two bodies also discussed the possibility of forming closer links with the police facilitation centers in order to reach out to citizens as well as to authority bodies, which will ultimately help to promote SLACC along with other entities that citizens can pursue for their legal needs.

Distribution of SLACC brochures at Human Rights Rally

To mark International Human Rights Day on the 10th of December 2023, a team from SLACC went to participate in the Human Rights rally that was organized from Sindh Assembly to the Press Club and drew participation from civil society, students, and others. SLACC lawyer Faheem Toor participated in the rally and distributed brochures about SLACC in order to raise awareness about the facility.



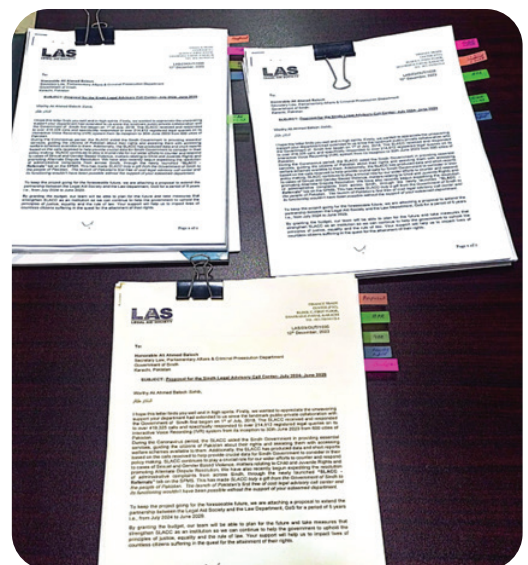
Participating in consultative session on Anti-Human Trafficking

People from SLACC were invited to an Anti-Human Trafficking conference organized by the organization SHARP. At the conference, suggestions were given on how to stop the inhumane practice and how SLACC and Legal Aid Society can help close the legal gap through its free of cost legal advisory call center.



Submission of SLACC Proposal 2024-2029

SLACC proposal for the period of 2024-2029 was submitted to the Law Department on December 12, 2023. The renewal of the proposal will help LAS plan for the long term to ensure that the SLACC number becomes a key part of national discourse and helps people get access to justice for years to come.



Objective 3:

Ensure quality and effective provision of legal advice

Capacity Development of the SLACC Legal Advisors

Training on Corporate and Company law in Pakistan

On the 11th of October 2023, a training on Corporate and Company Laws in Pakistan was conducted by Basam Ali Dahri, Litigation Specialist at LAS. The training covered topics such as private company laws, labour laws, NIRC laws, and civil servant laws. The interactive session saw the lawyers fill their knowledge gaps they might have had and ask questions related to the subject matter.



Training on Criminal Law

Advocate Bassam Ali Dahri conducted a session on criminal law on the 18th of October, 2023. He covered the major statutes relating to criminal law from the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 and the Criminal Procedure Code, 1898. In the interactive session, the lawyers discussed the most frequently asked questions by the callers, so they can be better able to respond to their queries.



Emotional Cleansing Mental Wellness Workshop

With the lawyers having to listen to hundreds of calls every single day, these narrations of incidents can take a toll on their mental health. To help give them the tools they need to keep doing their job productively without it affecting them personally and professionally, an emotional cleansing workshop was conducted by the mental wellness organization 'Ruhbaru'. The topic was titled Fostering mental resilience and stress management and saw the two instructors Dr. Shaista Ali Siddiqui and Rida Hameed talk about the strategies by which the lawyers can keep performing their noble duties whilst simultaneously taking care of their overall health.



Trainings on Afghan refugees' rights and their current issues

With the crackdown on Afghan Refugees, there were reports of the rights of legal Afghan refugees also being affected. On humanitarian grounds and in line with LAS mission of Access to Justice for all, trainings were planned on the crucial subject. The first workshop by SHARP UNCHR Manager Sikander Mahmood was held on the 24th of November, 2023 on the topic of the Status of Afghan refugees and migrants in Pakistan and how the rights can be protected. The basic premise of the training was to equip SLACC lawyers with the appropriate knowledge they needed in case a person of Afghan origin, with all the legal documents, facing harassment called the free-of-cost legal advisory call center. The lawyers were appreciative of the session as it helped enhance their knowledge in this crucial area. Mr. Sikandar shared his organization's contact numbers in case SLACC wanted to refer cases to them.



The second session by SHARP IOM program was held on the 26th of December with SLACC lawyers, on how to handle calls related to Afghan citizen card and directing such relevant calls to them. This was a follow up session to the previously held session by SHARP UNHCR program that dealt with Proof of registration cards. The session talked about how SLACC lawyers can identify the callers and then answer their legal queries.



Refresher Training on the Integration of SLACC with the Sindh Performance Management System (SPMS)

After the integration of SPMS with SLACC, lawyers were given a comprehensive refresher training by senior data processing officer (SPMS) Mr. Tahir Ali Memon and Deputy Secretary Mr. Jareer Adnan Pathan on the 22nd of November. The topic revolved around discussing the scenarios for which SLACC lawyers are required to tag the relevant Sindh government department in the CRM. Mr. Tahir Ali Memon discussed the SOPs and how each entry to the portal needs to be made including ensuring the caller is sending the picture of the hand written application and their NIC copy.



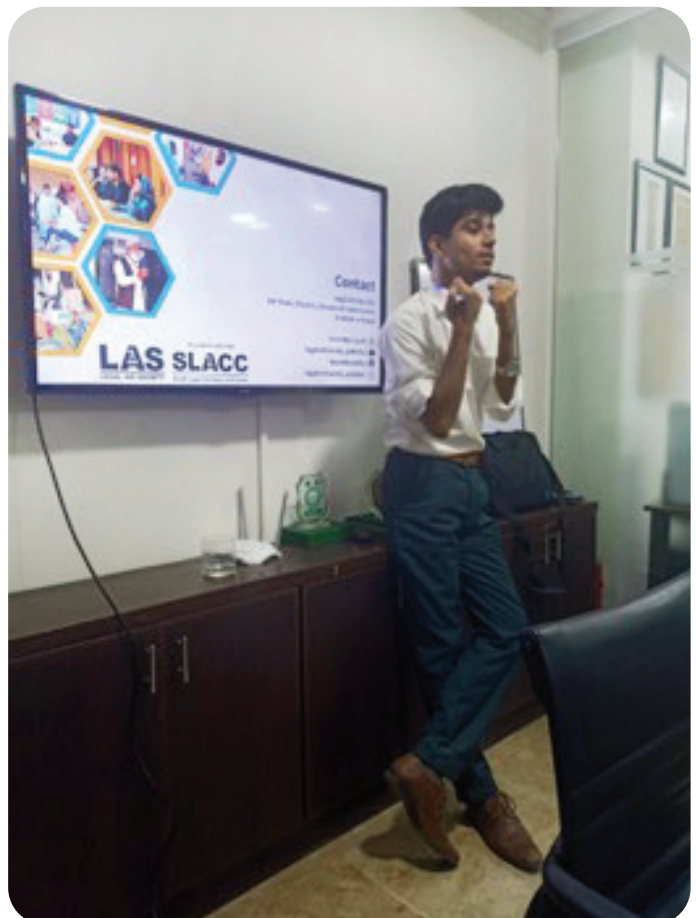
Training on Muslim Family Law

A training was held by Muslim Family Law (MFL) program team at LAS on the classification and categorization of MFL related issues (e.g. nikkahnama, family laws) in the internal CRM system for the benefit of the SLACC lawyers. The training was led by Advocate Rashid Mahar on 31st November, 2023. The lawyers were trained on Muslim women's rights and privileges in a Nikahnama, as well as relevant Muslim Family Laws, such as: Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961; Sindh Child Marriages Restraint Act, 2013; Family Courts Act, 1964; The Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939; The Dowry and Bridal Gifts (Restriction) Act, 1976; and The Sindh Child Marriages Restraint Rules, 2016.



Protecting and Promoting Religious Freedom (PPRF) Orientation session

With the launch of a new program Protecting and Promoting Religious Freedom (PPRF) by Legal Aid Society, a short orientation session was held on the 21st of December 2023 for SLACC lawyers. The team became acquainted about the new project that deals with issues of forced conversion of minor women belonging to religious minorities in Pakistan. SLACC lawyers were guided on how they can assist the program by handling of calls and query categorization that falls within its ambit.



Notable Developments

Avaya software and hardware upgrade

Old servers at SLACC have been migrated to the latest Avaya VM machine model in November 2023. The upgradation will lead to improved server reliability and availability as well as efficient utilization of physical servers and power. It will also reduce downtime for physical infrastructure maintenance so that the center is always able to cater to the calls received by people from across the country.

Promotion of Call Center Agent Lawyer to Legal Analyst

In line with LAS mission to offer continued growth to its human capital, SLACC Agent lawyer Tabassum Aijaz was promoted to the position of legal analyst in the month of November, 2023. As one of the most senior officers in the call center, Tabassum has a strong grip on law and now plays a crucial role through mentoring lawyers on how to best answer the callers on a daily basis.

Success Stories

Adding Another layer of Assurance for People with Ongoing Court Proceeding

Mr. I, aged 55, called from Karachi after receiving an SMS about the SLACC's services.

Legal Matter:

FIR was lodged against the caller Mr. I for a case involving dishonored cheque. He was very worried about legal proceedings and wanted to tread very carefully in his case so he could prove his innocence. The punishment under section 489 F of the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 stipulates that a person if found guilty can face 3 years imprisonment or a fine or both.

Legal advice:

The Caller was in regular contact with the respective Agent Lawyer assigned to advise him in this matter. The caller was informed that the onus of proof was on the complainant, and during the proceedings it had transpired that he had failed to produce the witnesses. Moreover, the report submitted by the bank before the Court made it clear that the cheque was in output clearance and did not return due to non-sufficient funds. The decision of the Court was, as predicted by the SLACC Agent lawyer, in favor the Caller and Mr. I was acquitted. He called back to express his gratitude to the SLACC representative for giving an extra layer of assurance and moral support during the case.

Helping an Old Mother get a new lease of Life in the face of Soul Charring Cruelty

Ms. J, aged 69, called from Karachi after receiving an SMS about the SLACC's services.

Legal Matter:

An old woman, Ms. J gifted her property to her son. In an ugly turn of events the son started to beat her mother as per Caller and threw her out of the house. The woman wanted to get the property back in her name. However, legally speaking this proved to be difficult as gifts cannot be returned. So, in a desperate attempt, she went to District Commissioner of her area to explore her options, or even request him to mediate in the matter. However, the DC was not cooperative.

Legal advice:

After receiving the call, the SLACC Agent lawyer guided her to inform the DC that since SLACC is now integrated with the Chief Secretary's complaint cell and that she would exercise her right to register a complaint against the DC if he failed to cooperate with her in resolving the matter. Consequent to which, the DC took her more seriously, and summoned her son for mediation. The son agreed to give a lump sum amount to the mother. The woman now lives on rent and is supported by her daughters.

Empowering Dreams for a New Beginning

Ms. S, 41 called from Karachi after receiving an SMS about the SLACC's services

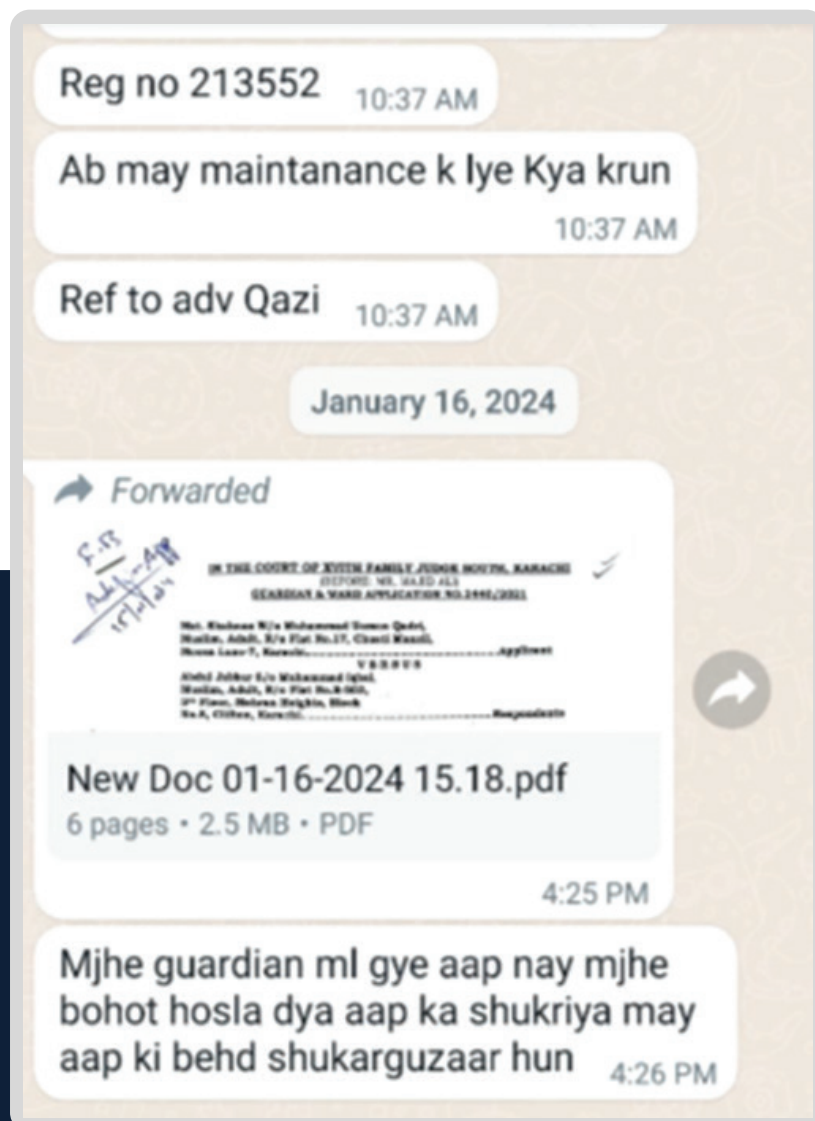
Legal Matter:

Ms. S, whose daughter M, aged 17, who was living with her since her birth, wanted to apply for the Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program funded by the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. For these proceedings as well as for going on Umrah she needed a guardianship certificate. However, the father, who she had divorced in 2009, was of the opinion that on one hand, the mother claimed that the minor is being raised in an Islamic environment, on the other hand, he expressed concerns about sending the minor abroad to USA alone. Secondly, since the father was now a Na-Mehram, it made it impractical for him to accompany Ms. S in preparation of necessary documents for the minor. To circumvent the two situations, she wanted the court to make her the guardian of the minor so that she would have full authority to take decisions pertaining to her minor daughter's welfare.

Legal advice:

The Agent Lawyer attentively listened to her history of cases involving her and her ex-husband. She helped the woman understand the Guardians and Wards Act, 1890 and advised on the strategies she can work on with her lawyer to get a decision in her favor. She was guided on how

she needed to prove that the father failed to provide love, affection, and fulfill his legal and moral obligations towards the daughter and was unfit to be the guardian. The understanding helped her to get a decision in her favor. The woman sent in a thank you message on SLACC's WhatsApp number along with the guardianship certificate, which she was able to get with the help of SLACC's Agent Lawyer's advice. The Caller was further guided on the future course of actions where the daughter will herself be able to claim maintenance from the father after she turns 18 in a few months.



Snapshot of message sent to SLACC's WhatsApp number

Objective 4:

To collect data and conduct data analysis, research and produce policy briefs

Capacity Development of the SLACC Legal Advisors

Work on Policy Brief

Data based on the SLACC calls was analyzed to complete work on the important topic, “Alternate Dispute Resolution methods as a solution to Women’s Property cases”.

Taking cognizance on how ownership of land or property is a gateway to greater economic independence for women, the report sheds light on female participation in land ownership and land management in Pakistan. For this study, data collected by SLACC between January 2018 and November 2023 was quantitatively assessed, particularly in regards to property related queries and the gender of the caller. The report gives recommendations for policy makers to improve ownership levels of property for women across Pakistan.

The policy brief is currently in the final stages before being published for onward distribution to stakeholders.

Relaying Cases to Sister wings at LAS from SLACC

In many cases, SLACC advisors divert cases requiring legal representation to the Legal Aid Office at Legal Aid Society for pro bono representation. This is done by checking the relevant tab on the CRM software to automatically relay this information to the LAS Litigation team.


- 118 registered queries through calls have been diverted towards ADR methods, thereby resorting to resolving disputes other than by adjudication through courts.
- 57 registered queries through calls have pertained to Gender Based Violence.
- 394 registered queries through calls were about matters regarding Women’s Right to Legal Property.
- 243 registered queries through calls were for women related queries which includes issues regarding marriage, divorce, and maintenance.

Reassignment of categories

Reassignment of categories in which the calls are categorised and used for research and for mapping trends, has been an ongoing process throughout the period to make the system more efficient and effective. To help provide greater access to information and legal processes to the public, the Case Referral System incorporated suggestions from all the programs including Muslim Family Law and Protecting and Promoting Religious Freedom (PPRF). Elements of confidentiality, efficacy and redressal mechanisms were updated for the ease of the advisors.

Contact us

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 SLACCPakistan



This product is being offered free of cost by the Legal Aid Society. If any person or organization asks you or people you know for money in return for this product, please immediately lodge a complaint at the official complaint number

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or send a letter to the following address anonymously:
First Floor, Block C, FTC Building, Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi.