

LAS

LEGAL AID SOCIETY

INCREASING LEGAL
EMPOWERMENT IN PAKISTAN



NEWSLETTER
JANUARY - MARCH 2021

15th Edition

LAS | **SLACC**
LEGAL AID SOCIETY | South Legal Advisory Call Center

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

GOAL

- To enhance the demand and supply through increased support of sector and increasing its use through trained mediators and ensure quality services and compliance.

OBJECTIVES

- Encourage buy in and promotion of ADR with stakeholders.
- Educate the public on the use of and how approach ADR mechanisms.
- Legal Professionals provide improved ADR services.
- Improve the framework of ADR.

OUTREACH

- Karachi | Hyderabad | Sanghar
- Larkana | Benazirabad | Khairpur

FOR FREE LEGAL ADVICE
CALL: 0800-70806

www.las.org.pk | LegalAidSociety

EDITORIAL SECTION: from the desk of LAS Board of Directors

Barrister Furkan Ali



In January this year, the Lahore High Court specifically abolished the abhorrent ‘two-finger test’ and directed medico-legal examiners to refrain from conducting virginity testing, being a clear violation of the fundamental rights to dignity, security and life guaranteed under our Constitution. Subsequently, the Supreme Court of Pakistan also went out of its way to observe that the courts should discontinue the use of intrusive and inappropriate expressions, like


“virgin”, for the alleged rape victims even if they find that the charge of rape is not proved against the accused. Justice Mansoor Ali Shah further stated that a woman, whatever her sexual character or reputation may be, is entitled to equal protection of law and that no one has the license to invade her person or violate her privacy, on the ground of her alleged immoral character.


Implementation of legislation pertaining to women’s rights and empowerment in Pakistan has historically been subject to numerous challenges. The obstacles are considerable, whether on a societal or executive level, where the roots of misogyny run deep. However, two recent judgments passed by the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the Lahore High Court in relation to the Protection of Women Act 2006 provide a glimmer of hope.

The Protection of Women Act 2006 provides that virginity testing on victims of sexual violence must not be performed, and the medical examination of a victim must be undertaken only pursuant to a judicial order. This too was only allowed after obtaining written consent of the victim. The victim could still refuse either a medico-legal examination or collection of evidence or both, and such refusal could not be used against them to deny treatment. That said, despite the passage of 15 years, these practices continued unabated.


“habituated to sex”, “woman of easy virtue”, “woman of loose moral character”, and “non-

While these are encouraging developments spearheaded by the legislature and judiciary, it is clear that more needs to be done to ensure that women enjoy full and equal protection of the law. This cannot be realized without the support of the executive. It is evident that the goal of women empowerment and protection will only be achieved if all three branches of government are on the same page.






Tired of Cyber-bullying?




Call us at

0800-70806

for free legal advice





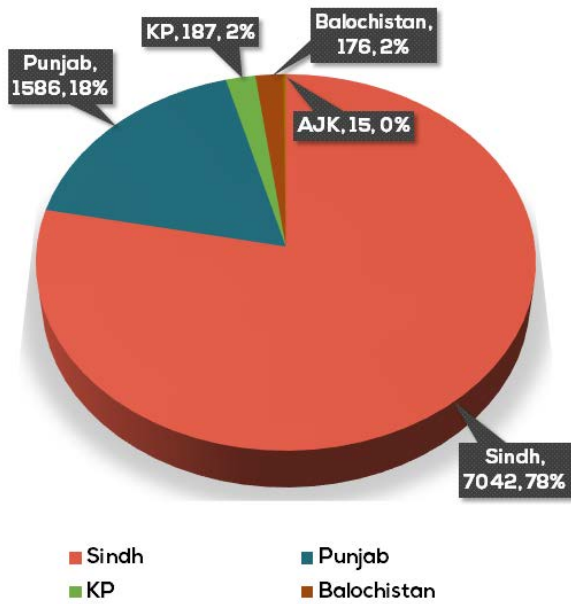
Your FREE legal advice is just a call away . . .

SINDH LEGAL AID CALL CENTRE: Legal Empowerment at the Fingertips of Citizens (0800-70806)

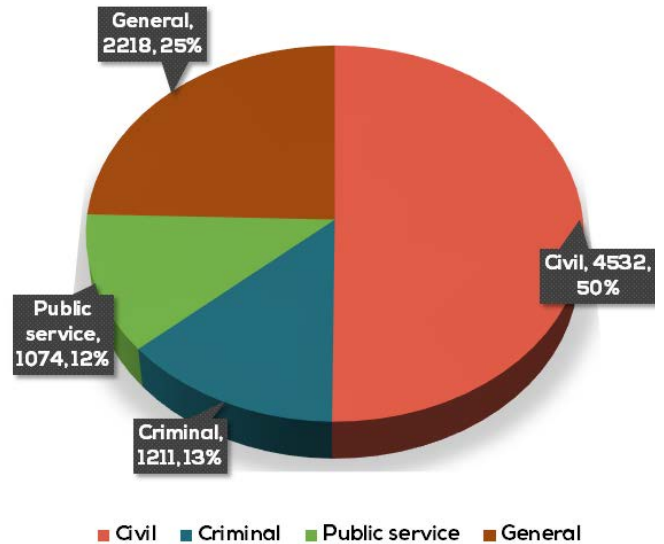
The Sindh Legal Advisory Call Centre (SLACC) is being run in partnership with the Law Department of the Government of Sindh. The service received 12,033 calls from January to March 2021 on the Interactive Voice Recording (IVR) system. The calls were received from 260

cities, towns, and villages across Pakistan, and were attended by qualified and experienced high court enrolled lawyers. During the aforementioned period, the SLACC registered 9,033 legal queries i.e. it addressed and provided legal assistance in these cases.

Provincial Breakdown of SLACC Callers



Legal query categories



SLACC OUTREACH



Outreach activities from the Sindh Legal Advisory Call Center included the running of an extensive SMS and FaceBook Campaign, Placement of Publicity Boards at various public places, along with dissemination of IEC materials in different communities. A rickshaw campaign was managed on the National Women's Day (February 12, 2021) during which, 50 Rickshaws carrying signage of the SLACC were used. 159 publicity boards were placed throughout police stations, hospitals, railway stations, government buildings, NADRA Offices, and at public places during the reporting quarter to enhance the visibility of the toll-free number.

CELEBRATING THE ROLE OF WOMEN in Pakistan



Women in Pakistan play a vital, yet unthankless part in bringing stability and growth to our society. To pay tribute to and to acknowledge their many roles they play, we at the Legal Aid Society strive to ensure their rights are protected.

To honor women and their importance, the Sindh Commission on the Status of Women (SCSW) celebrated National Women’s Day on February 12, 2021, at the Frere Hall, and LAS was honored to be a part of this commemoration. Representatives from LAS demonstrated some of our efforts in ensuring equal access to justice for women.



MOMENT OF PRIDE FOR ENSURING EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR WOMEN IN PAKISTAN

On the occasion of National Women’s Day 2021, LAS Chairperson Justice (R) **Nasir Aslam Zahid** was honored with the Life-Time Achievement Award for his contributions towards the protection and advancement of the rights of women across Pakistan. The Sindh Commission on the Status of Women presented the Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Award for Lifetime Achievement to Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid.



LAUNCH OF THE DIRECTORY OF SUPPORT SERVICES: A Relief for Women & Girls Seeking Support Against Violence



LAS in collaboration with the Sindh Commission on the Status of the Women (SCSW) and OXFAM launched the Directory of Support Services for Women and Girls Experiencing Violence and Abuse on March 31, 2021, in Karachi. **Ms. Anjum Iqbal Jumani** (Secretary, Women Development Department) graced the event as chief guest, along with the attendance of **Ms. Mahnaz Rahman, Ms. Nazish Brohi, Justice Arif Khilji, Barrister Haya Emaan Zahid, and Ms. Muzhat Shirin** (Chairperson SCSW).

The directory has been developed to support women and girls who have experienced violence by increasing their agency and ability to access the police, shelters and medical facilities, legal and psychosocial support providers, and other essential service providers across 6 districts of Sindh. The composition of the services is presented in a concise and user-friendly manner; essential service providers are listed through district-wise compartmentalization in the following order: police, hospitals, shelters, legal aid

providers, NGOs, and other Government service providers.

The services listed in this Resource Directory have been verified by extensive fieldwork and data collection and are deemed as being relevant, accessible, functional, and responsive to the immediate needs of survivors of Violence Against in Dadu, Hyderabad, Qambar Shahdadt, Shaheed Benazirabad, and Umerkot.

District, Provincial, and Federal helplines and service providers are also listed. The details of

addresses, contact / focal persons, telephone numbers, and operational hours are listed along with mention of the existence of referral services and other support mechanisms where relevant. It is hoped that the development of this tool will strengthen the coordination between service providers and will ensure better referral pathways are put in place.



Representatives from Sindh Police, Judiciary, Women Development Department, along with other government bodies participated in the event and appreciated the directory.



To Strengthen the Criminal Justice System's Response to Sexual Violence in Sindh, the LAS team conducted an observational assessment of 27 Gender-Based Violence (GBV) courts across Sindh to assess and evaluate the current state of infrastructure, facilities and implementation of special protection measures.

A baseline assessment was conducted in July and August of 2020, while the current assessment was conducted in January and February 2021. The purpose of conducting the end-line assessment was to gauge the improvements, if any, in the implementation of special procedures for GBV cases. The single-site observations were conducted across Hyderabad, Tando Allahyar, Tando Muhammad Khan, Jamshoro, Matiari, Mithi, Mirpurkhas, Badin, Thatta, Dadu,

STRENGTHENING SPECIAL PROTECTION MEASURES in Gender-Based Violence Courts

ASSESSMENT OF GBV COURTS IN SINDH



Shaheed Benazirabad, Sukkur, Ghotki, Kashmore, Shikarpur, Larkana, Kamber-Shahdadkot, Jacobabad, Umerkot, Sanghar, Khairpur, Naushero Feroze. The assessment was also conducted in Malir, Karachi East, Karachi South, Karachi West, and Karachi Central districts.

Besides the surface level information regarding court infrastructure and facilities, a very common but salient feature surfaced in this assessment: the severe lack of special

protection measures and special procedures for GBV cases. While considerable improvement is still needed to enhance the provision of special protection measures for victims of GBV crimes, interventions including evidence-based research, training, and advocacy to enhance the criminal justice system's (CJS) response to sexual violence have proved to be instrumental in improving infrastructural facilities in GBV courts.



EXTENDING ADVOCACY FOR SURVIVORS OF SGBV to Hyderabad and Sukkur

Violence against women remains one of the most widespread violations of human rights across the world. Rape, in particular, is an underreported crime with an extremely low conviction rate. Legal Aid Society aims to increase awareness and provide victims of sexual and gender-based violence with fair and equal access to justice. Here is a look at some of our recent efforts from January 28 to February 19, 2021 to achieve this objective:

CONDUCTING ASSESSMENTS FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF ONE-STOP RELIEF CENTER (OSRC):

An OSRC is one building housing all stakeholders – police, medico-legal, and lawyers – to help victims of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). This eliminates the need for the victim to travel to different locations for accessing different services. It also results in better sectoral coordination and response, improves the experience of victims in the criminal justice system, and reduces delays and potential attrition through fast-track movement in response to an incident of violence. LAS conducted an assessment on the recommendation of the Women Development Department and Home Department, Government of Sindh for this purpose in Sukkur and Hyderabad regions. The LAS team visited necessary sites to conduct the assessment to understand the current mechanisms of reporting, existing referral pathways, and recommendations for the establishment of a successful OSRC on a pilot basis.



DISSEMINATION OF FREE LEGAL AID PROVIDERS DIRECTORY AND INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION (IEC) MATERIAL:

LAS had earlier developed and launched a Directory on Legal Aid Providers and IEC material in collaboration with the Sindh Police, Sindh Commission on the Status of Women and Women Development Department, Government of Sindh. During this quarter LAS continued with dissemination and distribution of the same to the necessary criminal justice actors. The directory and IEC material are now available in Hyderabad and Sukkur at District and Sessions Courts, Women Protection Cells, Medico-legal departments, Civil Hospitals, Darul Amaans (Shelter Homes) and across all Women Police Stations.



STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES OF STATE ACTORS to curb and address Sexual Violence

Legal Aid Society conducted a two-day workshop on medical examination of victims of sexual violence with 17 Medico-Legal Officers (MLOs) from Hyderabad (5) and Karachi (10), engaging them in interactive sessions covering theoretical and the technical aspects of the topic including an understanding of physical and forensic evidence, along with role plays. The training was held at the Pakistan Society for Training and Development (PSTD) on February 2-3, 2021 to enhance competencies and skillsets of Medico-Legal Officers to conduct medico-legal examinations, with a special focus on understanding violence cases against women, rape & sodomy laws, along with the new medico-legal performa.

The various role plays and related activities laid grounds for an exploration of both the performas and its language, stirring up interesting questions from the participants based on their field experiences. The session also included a thorough discussion on the physical examination of rape and sodomy victims, the importance of consent, and appropriate methods for examining victims. The workshop also included collaborative sessions where **Mr. Rana Khaliq Mazhar (ADPP)**, **Advocate Bassam Dahri**, and **Dr. Summaiya Tariq** (Additional Police surgeon – JPMC) simulated a court atmosphere to demonstrate how a weak examination of the MLO damages the case. Moving forth, the MLOs explored deeper into the problems they face and how to best address them.



CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP FOR INVESTIGATION OFFICERS

AS organized a two days Capacity Building Workshop for Investigation Officers of Hyderabad, aimed at enhancing the competencies and skillsets of Police in Sindh in investigating Rape and Sodomy Cases. The workshop was held at the Pakistan Society for Training and Development (PSTD) on March 26-27, 2021. The objective of this training was to cater to the core competencies and values of police, with a special focus on gender and social context. The training was attended by 17 participants who were engaged in interactive sessions covering crime scene investigations and their strategies and understanding

of forensic evidence. The training was graced with the presence of **Mr. Sharjeel Kharal** (DIG Sindh Police- Hyderabad) and Madam Ms. Nuzhat Shirin (Chairperson Sindh Commission on the Status of Women) who emphasized the collection of evidence and shared

keynote addresses. **Dr. Summaiya Tariq**, alongside **Advocate Maliha Zia** (Associate Director, LAS) and **Advocate Bassam Dahri** were lead trainers who enriched the knowledge of the Investigation Officers with their experience.



ASSISTING WOMEN in Realising their Rights to Property



Gender disparity in terms of property ownership in Pakistan is created by inadequate policy implementation, poor government facilitation, and lack of legal awareness and education regarding issues of marital and inheritance rights. Denying women their legal rights to marital and inheritance property consequently impacts women's economic security, social security, mobility, and decision-making power in their households and communities. LAS organized

a two day Paralegal's training on the 15th and 16th of March, 2021 in Shaheed Benazirabad and on 18th and 19th of March, 2021 in Larkana to train 26 female Paralegals in each session. The trainings were led by **Ms. Angbeen Mirza** (Certified Paralegal trainer), **Ms. Hira Saleem** (Program Manager LAS) and **Ms. Umaiya Zahid** (Legal Analyst - SLACC) who highlighted the significant role that the paralegals will be able to play in their communities



These trainings aimed to spread awareness and legally equip women with the knowledge to maneuver through the justice sector to claim their legal property rights. The trainers covered inheritance laws in Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity, dowry, divorce, khulla, and rights in the Nikkahnama. They also focused on making participants aware of the various ways in which women (and transgender individuals) can legally acquire property through inheritance, gifts, and wills. Shares of inheritance, procedural information about registering cases in the court, and administrative hurdles in obtaining documents and other legal processes were also

discussed. Group activities relating to the roles and responsibilities of paralegals were also conducted. Facilitators shared the problems which women face when attaining their legal rights and how paralegals can facilitate fellow women in tackling these problems.

We hope that this training will bring substantial learnings to the paralegals, and would help them pass on the torch of knowledge to hundreds more and move us towards our ultimate goal of increased legal empowerment and gender equality in Pakistan.

WORKING FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE and the implementation of Juvenile Laws

COLLABORATING WITH THE SINDH CHILD PROTECTION AUTHORITY

The Legal Aid Society met **Ms. Shamim Mumtaz**, (Chairperson of SCPA), **Mr. Azeem-ur-Rehman** (Director General SCPA), and other representatives from the Sindh Child Protection Authority (SCPA) on March 25, 2021. The meeting helped both parties understand the nature of the work that they perform, and discuss ways in which they can assist each other. Both the parties discussed in detail the importance of the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders, along with the role that the Juvenile Justice System Act (2018) will play in Sindh.



RESEARCH STUDY FOR CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH LAW

LAS organized a 3-day presentation session on the mentioned subject at the request of **Mr. Naeem Ahmad Shaikh** (DIG Training) for the Sindh Police. The "Children in Conflict with Law" study was conducted in 2019 to better understand the juvenile population in Sindh to assist the Sindh Government to further the progressive goals of the JJSA 2018. Each session was attended by Station House Officers, SIOs, Police officials from each of the Karachi Ranges, and officers from relevant women and children desks from each range. The sessions were held on February 4, 9 & 10, 2021 at the Central Police Office, Karachi. During the cases of child marriage, experiences of the victims, along with adequate responses & feedback were also discussed with the participants.

HELPING TO IMPROVE COORDINATION & FUNCTIONING OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM ACTORS

During the reporting quarter, LAS continued to monitor the knowledge and awareness of the Juvenile Justice System Act (JJSA) 2018 through various advocacy initiatives.

- ▶ LAS actively participated in coordination meetings with Chairpersons of Criminal Justice Coordination Committees (CJCCs) for District East and South. LAS met with the Chair of CJCC East on February 25, 2021, and South on March 4, 2021. Apart from this, the LAS team met the Chairperson of Juvenile Justice Committee West Karachi on January 14, 2021.
- ▶ LAS also conducted a meeting with the Honourable MIT-2 representative of the Sindh High Court to discuss the progress of JCCs and how to assist.

REDUCING EARLY CHILD MARRIAGES in Pakistan



CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP ON CHILD MARRIAGES

A one-day training Workshop on Child Marriage Restraint Act 2013 and Rules 2016 was organized on March 25, 2021, at Police Training School Garden Karachi. The training was conducted by **Ms. Palvasha Shahab** (Gender, Child Rights & Litigation specialist, LAS) and **Ms. Tayba Khalid** (Programme Coordinator, LAS). The workshop was attended by 15 participants of the Police from the South Zone of Karachi and served as a two-way discussion regarding the procedures of FIR, cases, and reporting mechanisms of child marriage cases.

COLLABORATING WITH AAHUNG:

The Legal Aid Society carried out talk shows on radio channels in collaboration with Aahung in Karachi, Larkana, and Shaheed Benazirabad. (Aahung's Senior Trainer) appeared on FM 105 in the Shireen Akhter show on March 17 & 24, 2021, to talk about Children's Early & Forced Marriages in Pakistan.

In addition to which earlier developed audio stories were also played. These stories have been running as advertisements throughout the day on the FM channel since March 22, 2021, and shall continue to run till April 20,

2021. Similarly, **Nazo Pirzada** (Aahung's Senior Trainer) appeared on FM 107 on two different talk shows on March 17 & 18, 2021, to talk about Children's Early & Forced Marriages in Pakistan.

ENSURING EQUALITY amongst Citizens of Pakistan

LAS lawyers are providing free legal aid and assistance to various members of religious minority communities in securing their rights. In the last five months, our field advocates have identified and taken on 89 such legal cases. Of those, proceedings have been initiated in 31 cases, while 7 have been resolved successfully.

Here are some of the success that the team was able to achieve on the course of providing justice to minorities in Pakistan:

RUBY MASIH (LARKANA)

The complainant, Ms. Masih, after three years of an abusive wed-lock, took assistance from the Legal Aid Society for attaining maintenance from her husband under the Christian Divorce Act, 1869. Our field advocate swiftly provided her with legal advice and filed a legal claim before the Larkana Family Court, as a result of which Ms. Masih was awarded maintenance within three months by the Court.



NAROO BHUNRO (SHAHEED BENAZAIRABAD)

Naroo came in as a complainant to the Legal Aid Society, as he was encountering issues with NADRA. Earlier the NADRA authorities were not declaring him 'disabled' even though he had visited their office multiple times with a disability certificate. The case itself was a blockage for him for the attainment of a disability compensation on behalf of the government. The LAS field advocate in SBA filed a complaint with the Federal Ombudsman detailing the issue, leading to which the matter was resolved successfully within 15 days.

PHUL CHAND (SUKKUR)

The WAPDA officials had been illegally charging Mr. Chand, who despite having solar panels installed years ago was being overbilled. He requested WAPDA to discontinue his electricity connection. But to no avail. The LAS field advocate submitted a complaint with the Federal Ombudsman, leading to which an order was granted in favor of Mr. Phul Chand within a week.



DEVI - KARACHI:

Ms. Devi, approached the Legal Aid Society seeking legal advice when her husband turned abusive and started to cheat on her after 15 years of marriage. She was earlier advised of one last attempt at reconciliation, failing which would lead to filing for judicial separation. A case for judicial separation was later filed in the Karachi Family Court and was disposed of in nearly two months based on mutual consent by both parties while an attempt for reconciliation was also done by LAS project advocates.

LAS aims to identify the barriers to justice faced by religious minorities in Pakistan, and strives to legally empower religious minority communities through education and provision of legal aid and support and to assess the effectiveness of the justice system in responding to legal needs and protecting the legal rights of minority communities.

To achieve this, the LAS team conducted two field visits in the reporting quarter to meet various Hindu, Sikh, and Christian Community stakeholders to discuss the issues and challenges that they face regularly, and which arise only due to their religious identity. The team learned that the issues are wide and far-ranging, from violations of consumer rights to improper status as citizens due to incorrect National Identity Cards, to lack of proper prayer areas and burial grounds.



Meeting with AHPH

LAS team had a follow-up meeting with **Mr. Ravi Dawani** (General Secretary, All Pakistan Hindu Panchayat) on February 11, 2021. The objectives of the meeting were to sustain an existing working relationship, to continue last meetings' discussion on the issues that the religious minorities face in Sindh commonly, to locate case files of AHPH's previous cases, and to identify and collaborate on new cases that may come up.

Meeting with National Commission for Justice & Peace



The LAS team met **Mr. Kashif Anthony** and **Mr. Noman Peter** from NCJP (National Commission for Justice & Peace) on February 25, 2021. The meeting allowed LAS to understand the work of the NCJP and to learn about the legal issues and challenges that Catholic Christians encounter in Pakistan. As part of a coordination agreement between NCJP and LAS, it was agreed that the NCJP shall refer legal cases that it cannot litigate as part of its mandate to LAS in addition to the case files of their previously resolved cases. NCJP is optimistic regarding the reach of the work that LAS does and continues to be a valuable asset for increasing legal empowerment in Pakistan.

Meeting with APHC

LAS team met with **Ms. Roop Mala Singh** (Member Managing Committee, All Pakistan Hindu Council) on January 19, 2021, at their Program Office. During the meeting, various incidents of forced conversions and judicial bias in such cases were discussed, along with the reasons why a majority of the Hindu population in Sindh prefers not to go to Court, along with the common legal issues that haunt the community. In addition to this, Ms. Singh agreed to refer on-going cases or new incidents to LAS for the resolution of issues faced by the religious minorities in Pakistan.

Speak to a qualified & high-court registered lawyer - TOLL FREE number:

0800 - 70806



DECONGESTING COURT DOCKETS

with ADR

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION: PERFORMANCE OVER THE QUARTER



Cases diverted

(106 male, 95 female) were diverted towards ADR Mechanisms to provide speedy and cost-effective justice to citizens this quarter.

Successfully resolved

(23 male, 13 female) cases have been resolved through Federal and Provincial Ombudsman and Court Annexed and private mediation

This initiative will help in promoting the ADR mechanism and reducing the burden on courts. Multiple issues have been resolved through the ADR mechanism including overdetection in electricity and gas billing, new gas and electricity connection, legal identification document, etc.

150 stakeholders

were identified during this quarter to conduct legal clinics to create awareness on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). The stakeholders consist of 84 male and 66 female groups and organizations. The representatives narrated multiple issues which need attention to resolve through ADR mechanisms, which included land disputes, overdetection in electricity, disconnection of gas and electricity connections, correction in legal identification documentation, women's property rights issues, low-gas pressure, family disputes, errors in birth certificates and rent matters and the like.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) instruments are universally accepted time and cost-effective support mechanisms in any justice system. There is a dire need for greater ADR in Pakistan since the justice system is overwhelmed with numerous delays resulting in a lack of access to justice for all, particularly due to the situation of the pandemic, leaving many (including many groups deprived of justice - women & children) vulnerable.

SOME FURTHER HIGHLIGHTS ON SUPPORTING ADR INCLUDE

29 Law schools engaged to promote ADR in their institutions and amongst the law students.

13 Salis members re-engaged in Sindh to whom it continues to refer cases

40 Awareness clinics held in 8 districts of Sindh, attended by 1,144 community members (617 male, 527 female)

1M People reached through SMS campaigns to support and promote ADR



JUSTICE SUCCESS **STORY**

LAS is working with the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) to provide legal assistance to victims of human rights violations. Our services are available in the districts of Karachi, Nawabshah, Larkana, and Sanghar. Our focus is on socio-economically impoverished persons, vulnerable groups, women, children, aged persons, and transgender individuals.

Rozina, a resident of district Shadadpur, Sindh who is a mother of two, children aged 4 and 5 approached LAS for assistance. For several years, she had been subjected to physical violence by her husband. Her husband was abusive and was a habitual drug addict. In continuation of his mindless acts, he also kicked Rozina out of her own house one day along with her minor children. Rozina was left with no other option but to file for a Khula (divorce on behalf of the wife) to secure a stable life for herself, as well as for her children. Rozina approached the LAS district office in Sanghar seeking legal assistance and guidance. Coming from a financially weak background, Rozina was in urgent need of legal support to file for Khula and escape the torture inflicted on her and her children by her husband.

With the LAS lawyer's assistance, Rozina obtained a divorce from her husband and started to live with her parents in peace, along with her children until one day when her ex-husband came to her parent's home and snatched the minors and took them away from her. He also threatened Rozina to sell the children in case she tried to approach them or complained to a higher authority. Soon after this incident, Rozina sought help from the relatives of her ex-husband to resolve the matter peacefully. However, all her efforts were in vain

HELPING A MOTHER to obtain Justice and quick Recovery of her Minor Children

as Rozina received nothing but abuse, particularly from her relatives. Rozina was not only away from her children, but was also completely unaware of their condition and well-being.

Facing severe anxiety and depression, Rozina contacted LAS and pursued help to recover her children. LAS lawyer Advocate Mr. Housh Muhammad immediately took her case and filed a criminal petition (application no 03/2021) as Habeas Corpus under section 491 on her behalf before the Sessions Court in Sanghar on **January 7, 2021**. Under this section of the law, mothers are allocated the custody of their children if they are minors (under seven years old). Following the lodged case, the Session Judge directed the relevant Station House Officer (SHO) to recover the minors and bring them forward before the court within two days.

After two days of active coordination amongst various justice sector professionals and the district Police, the minors were brought before the Judge on **January 9, 2021**. After hearing the arguments from both parties, the Judge passed the order in favor of Rozina and directed her ex-husband to hand over the custody of the minors to their mother.

LAS lawyer Advocate **Housh Muhammad** ensured that the court orders were followed, and Rozina received the custody of her children. Rozina is now living in peace with her children and is now dedicate her full attention to their upbringing and education. She is highly thankful to LAS for its legal assistance, without which she would not have been able to secure her children.



Rozina (left) with her children, along side LAS lawyer **Advocate Housh Muhammad** after gaining justice from the Session court on January 9, 2021

JUSTICE SUCCESS **STORIES**

Legal Aid Society’s mission is to connect vulnerable and disempowered end-users of justice with effective and expedient services for the delivery of justice. To achieve its mission, LAS has collaborated with the Sindh Police to pilot Legal Empowerment Desks (LEDs) in selected police stations of Karachi. The objective of the LEDs is to provide immediate legal assistance and information regarding their basic legal rights to juveniles and women who visit local police stations.

Here are some of the successes that the LAS LED desk achieved within a short span of time. Scan or click (if you receive a soft copy of the newsletter) the respective QR codes to see the video.



AREESHA (20-YEARS)

LAS & Sindh Police went beyond their line of duties to make a young girl safe during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Had it not been for this framework & coordination amongst the stakeholders, the victim could have potentially ended up in the wrong hands. Again.



ZAINAB (10-YEARS)

A 10 year-old Zainab landed up in a police station. Representatives from LAS, Police, SCSW, Darul-Atfal coordinated not only to make the homeless girl safe, but also to provide shelter to her.

If it had not been for this joint coordination and the LAS LED desk, this little angel could have ended up in worse conditions.



We are grateful to the hardworking staff of Sindh Police, Sindh Commission on the Status of Women, Darul-Atfal, along with all the stakeholders who extended support not only to this desk but also made Pakistani citizens feel safe by offering their services beyond the call of duty. We look forward to continuing work with all relevant stakeholders so that citizens of Pakistan (specially women & children) are provided with timely access to justice.



communications@las.org.pk



+92 21-9266011-4



www.las.org.pk



[/LegalAidSocietyPakistan](https://www.facebook.com/LegalAidSocietyPakistan)



Suite 212, 2nd Floor, The Doctor’s Plaza, Block 9, Clifton, Karachi



[youtube.com/LegalAid](https://www.youtube.com/LegalAid)