

## NEWSLETTER

July - September 2023



RESHAPING SOLUTIONS FOR  
ACCESSING JUSTICE  
IN PAKISTAN



## EDITORIAL SECTION: from the desk of Advocate Maliha Zia Lari (Associate Director, LAS)

### THE LANDSCAPE OF MUSLIM FAMILY LAWS IN PAKISTAN



Family laws and practices are connected with all aspects of our lives, particularly in Pakistan where the family is the core social unit. Injustices within the family affect women in many other areas, including dignity, personal security, mobility, property, citizenship, nationality, employment, criminal laws, and political participation.

In Pakistan, Muslim Family Laws (MFL) are a blend of codified law and customary law based on religious norms, also termed as 'Personal Law'. They consist, on the one hand, of civil law, which is indebted to Western legal systems, and on the

other hand, of family or personal status law, which is mainly built upon Sharia, Islamic religious-based law. However, it is important to note that the majority of contemporary Muslim family laws are based on classical fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) rulings, which are interpretations of Muslim jurists decades after the time of the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH). These interpretations were based on vastly different historical, social, and economic contexts and times. All the interpretations have been done by men who continue to hold the monopoly over ijtihad (legal reasoning). This is apparent not only from the fact that all Islamic leaders have been men but all major schools of thought that form the framework within which jurists interpret Islam today were men. Little space has been historically given to women, women's voices, and realities, despite the progressive rights given to women under Islam.

In a patriarchal culture such as Pakistan, religion and religious interpretations have been merged with a deep-rooted patriarchal culture, trends, and mindsets, making it difficult to differentiate where religion ends and culture begins. With the 'stamp' of Islam, it becomes exceedingly difficult to challenge 'religious laws' without the backlash of the religious right lobby. Legal Aid Society (LAS) is working on

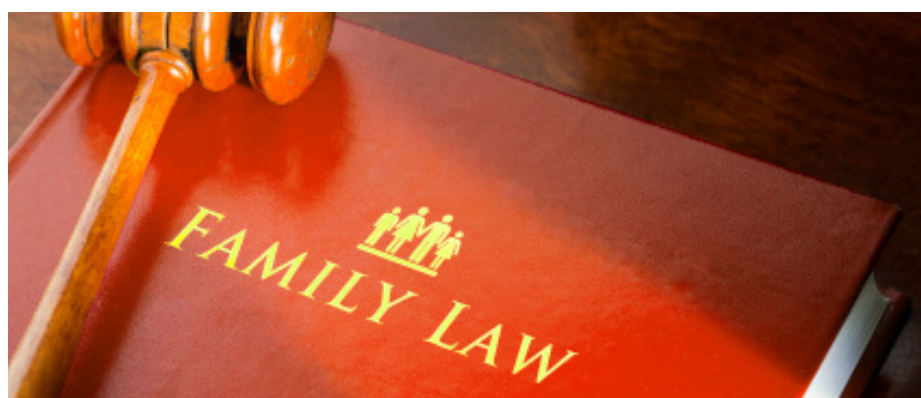
world, and human rights, which are believed to be intrinsic and synonymous with Islamic principles: Islam and the international human rights framework are both based on principles of justice ('adl), equality (musawah), equity (insaf), human dignity (karamah), love and compassion (mawaddah wa rahmah). This approach is based on the Musawah Framework for Action<sup>1</sup>.

It believes that our family laws—as well as practices that have not been codified into law—must evolve to reflect the Islamic values of equality and justice, reinforce universal human rights standards, and address the lived realities of families in the twenty-first century.

**Legal Aid Society's work is based on the following salient points emerging from the framework of action<sup>2</sup>:**

**1** Appreciating the distinction between 'Shari'ah' (the divine message): the sum total of religious values and principles as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad to direct human life, and 'fiqh' i.e., the human process by which humans attempt to derive concrete legal rules from the two primary sources of Islamic thought and practice: the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Fiqh, therefore is human-made, fallible and changeable.

**2** Recognising that the term "Islamic law" is not Shari'ah, but rather a body of human-made interpretations of Islam's sacred texts. These have been developed over the centuries by jurists, courts, and leaders across the world.



reform of the interpretation of MFL and law based on core principles of Islam, understood within the context of the modern-day current

other hand, of family or personal status law, which is mainly built upon Sharia, Islamic religious-based law. However, it is important to note

1. <https://www.musawah.org/resources/musawah-framework-for-action/>  
2. Ibid





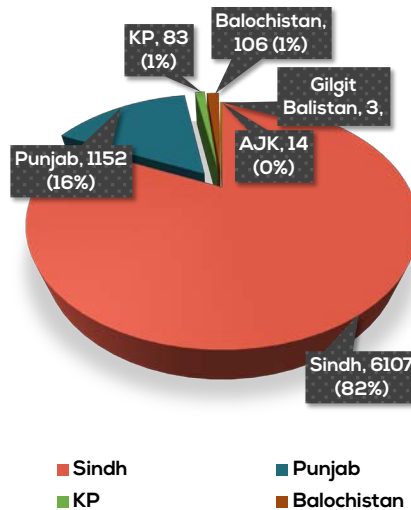
## EMPOWERING CITIZENS AT THEIR CONVENIENCE through its Toll-free number: 0800-70806

The Sindh Legal Advisory Call Center (SLACC) is a flagship project of the Legal Aid Society and the Government of Sindh. SLACC is Pakistan's first and one-of-a-kind toll-free helpline, which through its Interactive Voice Recording (IVRT) system has amassed an impressive record of 430,379 calls during the reporting quarter, encompassing a diverse range of 222,377 queries registered from more than 450 cities across Pakistan, all successfully addressed and resolved.

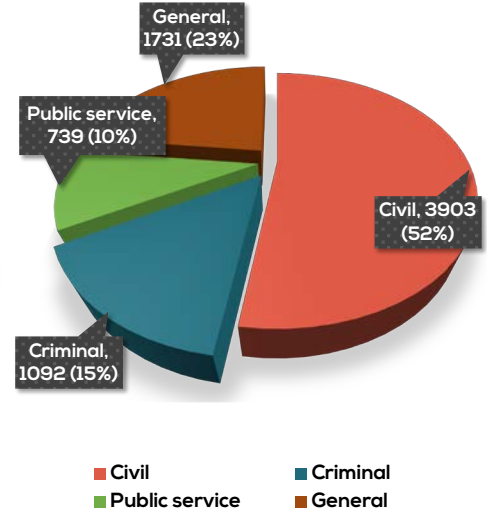
During this last quarter, SLACC registered 7,465 queries. This quarter's statistics reveal that 73% of queries originated from male callers, while 27% came from female callers, with an additional 6 calls from individuals who identified their gender as 'Other.'

The SLACC continues to maintain the highest service quality and efficiency levels, recently undergoing a hardware and software upgrade with the Avaya system. Furthermore, SLACC ensures that advocates are engaged with on a regular basis through capacity-building sessions aimed at ensuring the provision of optimum legal support to callers.

Provincial Breakdown of SLACC Callers



Legal query categories



## PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

### Airing of TELEVISION COMMERCIAL



With the generous support of the Law Department and **Mr. Aziz Ahmad** (Director Information & Advertising), the SLACC Television Commercial (TVC) was aired on August 2023. With a total of 1,340 minutes of airtime over 36 different national TV channels, the TVC resulted in a

significant increase in legal queries (an average of 35%) from the masses, which originated only from the TVC in the following week of its airing.

The SLACC team is grateful to Mr. Aziz Ahmad and the Law & Prosecution Department GoS, for

their continuous support. We hope to maintain such coordination in upcoming times and serve the nation together, as we build to ensuring access to legal information and support to citizens across the country.



## FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS with key stakeholders

### MoU with SINDH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (SHRC)



SLACC firmly believes in the significance of collaborations with other organizations working for the cause of human security. With this approach, we joined hands with SHRC to work for the socio-legal empowerment of marginalized segments of our society.

SLACC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC) on July 31, 2023, vowing to join hands to work against human rights violations for marginalized communities (especially religious minorities). **Justice Arif Hussain Khilji** (Chief Legal Advisor, LAS) and **Mr. Iqbal Ahmed Detho**

(Honorable Chairperson, SHRC) sealed the agreement by affixing their signatures. Through this partnership, SHRC shall play an integral role through referring the SLACC helpline during engagements with government authorities, institutions, and civil society to support extended outreach.

## Exposure Visits at SLACC

### Hosting Member of the SINDH PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY

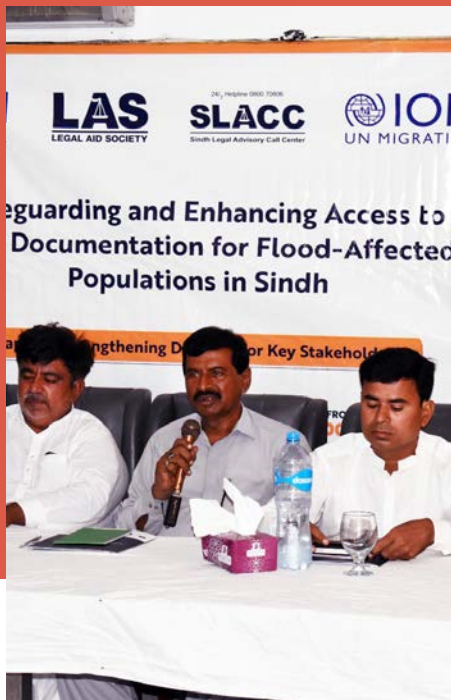


We were honored to host **Ms. Tanzila Um e Habiba** (Special Assistant to Chief Minister on Information Science & Technology, and Honorable Member of the Sindh Provincial Assembly), who visited SLACC on August 02, 2023. She was provided with a tour of the call center by **Justice Arif Hussain Khilji** (Chief Legal Advisor, LAS) and **Barrister Haya Emaan**

**Zahid** (CEO, LAS), as well as an overview of the workflow process of how our on-call advocates at the center receive and resolve queries. She was briefed on how the SLACC, a one-of-its-kind free legal helpline in Pakistan, has resolved over 200,000 legal queries since 2014.

Ms. Tanzila highly appreciated the research products produced by the

SLACC and how it has contributed to society by highlighting legal and societal issues, such as the gap in law regarding the maintenance of parents. She also showed her gratitude for the legal support offered by SLACC across a wide range of issues, and vowed to work together in the near future to help further promote SLACC to citizens.



## ONE-DAY CAPACITY STRENGTHENING DIALOGUES

A series of one-day Capacity Strengthening Dialogues were organized in all five targeted districts (as mentioned above) for the district-level stakeholders, with the aim of apprising them of LAS's work in the region, and engaging in conversation surrounding the development of a coordinated response mechanism to ensure provision of adequate and timely support to flood-affectedees.

These sessions were attended by key NGOs and INGOs representatives, local government officials (including the Assistant Commissioners), heads of departments from the NADRA and BISP offices, along several other representatives working at the grassroots level. Through this platform, all stakeholders expressed a keen interest in collaborating with the government in developing a standardized mechanism that safeguards civil documentation during disasters and emergencies.

## PROTECTING CIVIL DOCUMENTATION

Following the catastrophic floods of 2022, the Government of Pakistan, in collaboration with the Sindh Government, implemented cash assistance programs to offer relief to the affected population. However, these social protection schemes are only accessible via a national ID card, which several people lost during floods.



## Provision of LEGAL AWARENESS & ASSISTANCE



International Organization for Migration's (IOM) collaboration with LAS aims to bridge the documentation gap by providing legal awareness and guidance regarding the recovery of key civil documents through its legal awareness clinics in five targeted districts of Dadu, Khairpur, Sanghar, Shaheed Benazirabad, and Umerkot.

Alongside the provision of legal awareness, legal guidance was also provided to people who expressed a desire to take their cases forward pertaining to lost CNICs and other civil documentation. A total of 5,000+ beneficiaries have benefited from the sessions thus far, while

more sessions are scheduled to take place in the upcoming quarter.

In July, a service delivery phase was also initiated in which LAS aimed at undertaking the cases of the most vulnerable individuals and having them resolved with the respective institutions/offices such as NADRA / Benazir Income Support Programme, and the like. Through LAS's initiative, cases of over 300 individuals have already been taken up thus far, while more cases will also be taken up to the relevant offices in the next quarter, enabling the people to exercise their citizenship rights and access state-sponsored financial assistance if they are eligible.



## DEVELOPING ROADMAPS to end Child Marriages

In 2013, under the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act (SCMRA), the marriage of any male or female under the age of 18 was prohibited. The act states:

“Whoever, being a male above eighteen years of age, contracts a child marriage shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment which may extend to three years but shall not be less than two years and shall be liable to fine.”



Therefore, it is imperative that awareness on early child marriages and their devastating impact on society is created, and mitigation actions are implemented. To cater to this situation, LAS aims to improve the implementation of the SCMRA by developing roadmaps for the Law, Health, Education, and Social Welfare Department to implement the Act 2013. In this regard, a meeting with the Sindh Human Rights Commission to present the first draft of Roadmaps to End Child Marriage in Sindh.

These roadmaps will serve as an action plan, meticulously curated to create collaborative mechanisms among efforts being carried out by the identified stakeholders.

## STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE to Sexual Violence in KPK and Punjab



LAS held two consultations on 'Guidelines for Anti-Rape Crisis Cells' with key stakeholders from the KPK Government in Peshawar on August 9, 2023, and with the Punjab Government in Lahore on August 16, 2023. The consultation sessions were led by **Dr. Summaiya Syed Tariq** (Chief Police Surgeon, Karachi) and **Advocate Maliha Zia Lari** (Associate Director, LAS). They were attended by senior representatives from

provincial police, prosecution, and health departments and by representatives of the implementation partner, UNFPA.

During these events, the mandate of the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021 and the accompanying rules, the lacunae, implementation challenges, and the provincial criminal justice system contexts were discussed at great length, as well as the

most sustainable approach vis-a-vis improving the response to sexual and gender-based violence. On these occasions, Dr. Summaiya presented the ARCC guidelines under development in an interactive session. At the same time, crucial feedback was received from the government stakeholders in attendance, which shall pave the way for further engagements on the subject matter.

## STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE to Sexual Violence in Sindh

**L**AS is striving to enhance access to justice for survivors and victims of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) by strengthening the capacity of critical actors within the Criminal Justice System (CJS) to address and appropriately respond to sexual violence across the country.

To increase access to justice for survivors of SGBV, LAS continues to provide free legal aid and advice through its call centers and legal representation. To ensure that LAS and government stakeholders are capacitated to better respond to survivors of SGBV, LAS continues to conduct training sessions on various thematic areas.

### TRAINING THE HEALTH SECTOR on GBV Guidelines in QS Kot

Pakistan is categorized as one of those countries with "little or no response" to Gender-based Violence (GBV) through the health sector. In such a scenario, integrating GBV protocols in providing routine healthcare is necessary to deliver immediate medical treatment to a victim of violence when she enters the health system.

For the same purpose, LAS is now training doctors, nurses, and hospital administration staff on GBV Guidelines to build their capacity regarding identifying, responding to, and referring GBV cases. One such training was held in Qambar Shahdadkot, where participants reported a 47% increase in knowledge post-training on protocols related to identification and response to victims of GBV.



### Meeting of Technical Working II: CREATION OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

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Performance Management Framework is crucial to SGBV case management because it helps in setting strategic individual and team goals as well as reviewing and assessing progress and developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of people.

This quarter's meeting for the TWG discussed the significant

progress after the implementation of LAS developed Sexual Violence Responsive Framework (SVRF). The Deputy Public Prosecutor shared striking figures regarding the acquittal and conviction rates. Before the SVRF was adopted in 2019, the acquittal rates were quite high (almost 91%), and the conviction rate was quite low (10%). This was due to a number of reasons, such

as the non-cooperation of victims during the initial and later stages of investigation and trial, lack of digital forensic evidence, lack of appropriate professional handling of evidence during the initial stages of investigation by first responder, untimely advice from prosecutors, delayed issuance of medicolegal certificate, and shortage of women medicolegal officers (WMLOs).



However, in the aftermath of SVRF, with the nomination of special prosecutors, special sexual investigation units, and GBV courts, there was a marked decrease in acquittal rates and an increase in conviction rates.



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**0800 - 70806**



## Meeting of Technical Working Group III - **ASSESSMENT OF SEXUAL & GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PROCESSES**



The Multi-Sectoral Coordination Committee (MSCC) was earlier formed to strengthen coordination between key actors in responding to SGBV. One of the Technical Working Groups (TWGs) formed within the MSCC is assessing SGBV processes to highlight gaps and recommend policies that reduce delays.

A meeting for this TWG was held this quarter, where

discussions regarding pre and post-medicolegal guidelines took place. At the same time, challenges for newly appointed officers to familiarize themselves with the investigation process on SGBV cases were also discussed. On this platform, LAS took the initiative to design an infographic containing step-by-step pre and post-medicolegal guidelines for Investigation Officers (IOs) to deal with GBV cases with all referral pathways and contacts.

## EMPOWERING THROUGH THEATRE:

### Unveiling Women's Rights under Muslim Family Laws

The Legal Aid Society collaborated with Tehrik-e-Niswan to conduct impactful theatrical performances addressing women's rights in the framework of Muslim Family Laws. These plays aimed to raise awareness on women's rights and privileges in the Nikahnama (marriage contract) under the Muslim Family Law, highlighting the consequences women face when these rights are curtailed.



Six theatre plays were organized during the reporting quarter with the below-mentioned details:

#	Venue	Date
1	Village Shahabad, Pir Jo Goth, Larkana	July 15, 2023
2	Village Hakeem Sandeelo, Larkana	July 16, 2023
3	Adbi Hall, Larkana	July 17, 2023
4	Habib University, Karachi	September 14, 2023
5	Lyari Community Development Project Hall, Lyari, Karachi	September 15, 2023
6	Al Haq Public School, Bhitaiabad, Karachi	September 16, 2023

The theatre performances were attended by diverse audiences, including male and female community members, students, Nikahkhwas, government stakeholders, and civil society members. One of the most prominent theatres was held in collaboration with Habib University,

during which many prominent stakeholders, policymakers, and government officials, including the likes of **Mr. Abdul Sattar** (Assistant Commissioner East), **Mr. Bashir Khaskeli** (Union Council Chairman), professors from multiple universities, and human rights activists appeared.

Drawing inspiration from real-life scenarios and personal anecdotes, the plays received noteworthy gratitude from the attendees.



You can catch the highlights of the day by clicking (in case of a softcopy) or scanning this QR code.



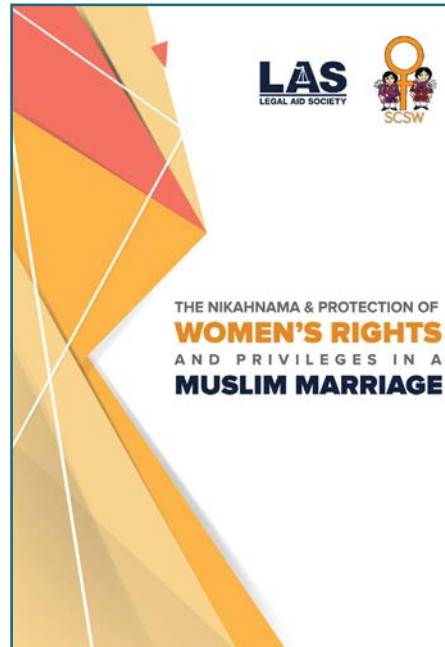


## EMPIRICAL STUDY ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES under the Muslim Family Law

The Legal Aid Society collaborated with the Sindh Commission on the Status of Women to conduct an empirical study by analyzing 185 Nikahnamas across three districts of Sindh: Karachi, Larkana, and Shaheed Benazirabad. The research methodology for this study used a Mixed Method Approach to inform, enhance, and triangulate findings.

Along with analyzing 185 Nikahnamas, Focus Group Discussions in all three districts were held with four distinct groups: Nikah Registrars, Stakeholders, Male Community Members, and Female Community Members. Additionally, the study featured Key Informant Interviews with **Ms. Fauzia Viqar** (Honorable Chairperson, Punjab Commission on the Status of Women), **Kate Vyborny**, PhD, and the Associate Director of DevLab at Duke. documentation of consent acquired for a second marriage, and the like.

**The major findings from this study depicted that clauses 16 to 22 were left completely blank/struck out or failed to extend the stipulated rights to the bride out of the 90% of the Nikahnamas analyzed.**



Clauses that were struck out consisted of the wife's right to divorce, restrictions on the husband's right to divorce, special conditions,

The study was launched in August with the presence of the Law Committee and members of the Sindh Commission on the Status of Women.

You can read/download the research study by clicking (in case of a softcopy) or scanning this QR code.



## LEGAL ASSISTANCE AND AWARENESS for vulnerable communities across Sindh

LAS is collaborating with the Human Rights Department (HRD), Government of Sindh, to provide free legal aid and assistance to victims of human rights violations in Sindh who face barriers to accessing justice.

The collaboration aims to address the specific needs of individuals with limited means and deprived

socio-economic circumstances, who often struggle to cover the costs associated with litigation and legal proceedings. Through this project, LAS is working diligently to offer free legal assistance across 15 districts in Sindh, including Karachi East, Karachi West, Karachi South, Karachi Central, Karachi Malir, Sanghar, Dadu, Shaheed Benazirabad, Hyderabad, Tando

Muhammad Khan, Tando Allahyar, Kamber Shahdadkot, Sukkur, Khairpur, and Larkana.

**Since the inception of this collaboration, 309 cases have been filed in court thus far. And it is our pleasure to inform that 204 cases have been successfully resolved through court orders - bringing justice and relief to those in need.**

## Introducing the LEGAL EMPOWERMENT DESK

As part of the collaboration mentioned above, a "Legal Empowerment Desk" has been established at the office of the Human Rights Department, Government of Sindh. LAS has deployed **Advocate Nafees Khattak** (a highly experienced senior lawyer) at this facilitation desk as a vital resource for individuals seeking legal

assistance and guidance.

Advocate Nafees will provide expert advice and refer the matter to LAS for legal representation in court. This collaborative effort of HRD and LAS (by the grace of the Almighty) shall empower the vulnerable communities and ensure their access to justice.



## Closing the Gap between LAW, POLICY, AND PRACTICE ON WOMEN'S RIGHT TO PROPERTY

In Pakistan, vulnerable groups such as women, especially those who belong to a religious or gender minority group, continue to be at risk of being unlawfully deprived of their legal property rights. LAS has been working considerably to empower these vulnerable groups socio-economically at a grassroots level by:

1. Strengthening their capacity to acquire and protect their legal property,
2. Mobilizing the stakeholders within the government and the legal fraternity.



### LEGAL AWARENESS CLINICS

As we reflect on the reporting quarter, the community awareness sessions remained pivotal in providing community members with vital information and education on women's rights issues that resonate

with their daily lives. Through these sessions, our paralegals dispensed crucial legal information, and acted as active channels for relaying data and community concerns back to LAS.

**1,608** individuals benefitted from our legal awareness sessions during the reporting quarter. These sessions have served as essential platforms for educating and raising awareness among community members.

### Partnership with KP OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON

LAS is delighted to announce a significant partnership with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Office of Ombudsperson (KPO). This partnership shall represent a pivotal step in our ongoing commitment to advancing women's rights, particularly in the realm of legal and marital property rights in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) region.

Over the next year, we will embark on a comprehensive engagement strategy designed to strengthen and support the existing structures within KPO. Aiming to capacitate the supply side, we will train groups of lawyers and KPO officials. This training will empower them to advocate for gender equality in women's rights to legal and matrimonial property in Pakistan. Furthermore, we are committed to improving communal awareness by engaging directly with women and girls across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through informative sessions.

**As we embark on this transformative journey, we look forward to working closely with the KPO and the women and girls of KP. Together, we strive to create lasting change and ensure that every woman's right to legal and marital property is upheld and protected.**





# ENSURING RIGHTS & ACCESS TO JUSTICE for Religious Minorities in Pakistan

**L**egal Aid Society (LAS) strives for the sociolegal empowerment of marginalized communities in the vibrant province of Sindh. Committed to providing access to justice and legal support to those who need it most, we embarked on our journey of unwavering support to the marginalized communities of Sindh. This support is achieved through the provision of free-of-cost litigation services, arranging awareness sessions, and holding mobilization meetings across eight districts of Sindh, namely Karachi, Hyderabad, Larkana, Dadu, Sukkur, Sanghar, Khairpur, and Shaheed Benazir Abad.

## EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES at the Grassroots

LAS remains steadfast in its commitment to upholding justice, protecting the rights of religious minorities, and fostering interfaith harmony.



**1,325**

**BENEFICIARIES EMPOWERED**  
through the provision of legal assistance

**62**

**CLINICS ORGANIZED**  
during the reporting quarter across 8  
Districts of Sindh

The beneficiaries during the clinics included **346** members of the Christian community and **979** individuals from the Hindu community.

## EMPOWERING WITH TOPICS THAT MATTER

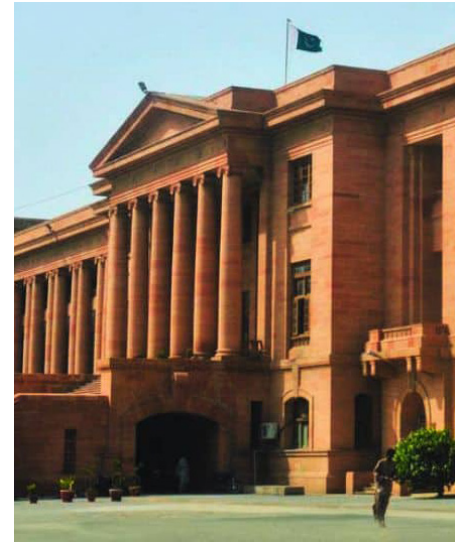
**O**ur legal aid clinics have revolved around crucial topics that sincerely matter to non-Muslim communities as we work towards further empowering members from these communities. We've shed light on personal laws and property rights, empowering individuals to understand and assert their legal rights. Because at LAS, we're not just working for change; we're working with and through the communities we serve.





## LAS TAKES BOLD STEPS to protect Religious Minority communities and uphold justice

In the wake of the tragic events in Jaranwala, where approximately 20 churches were set ablaze and the homes of the Christian community were targeted in the aftermath of alleged blasphemy accusations, LAS took a firm stance for safeguarding justice and religious freedom.



## FROM ADVOCACY TO ACTION

In light of the unacceptable incident, LAS wasted no time and immediately penned advocacy letters to key figures in Pakistan's interim government, including the **Interim Prime Minister, Chief Justice of Pakistan, Interim Chief Minister of Sindh, and Interim Home Minister of Sindh**, calling for urgent action to provide protection to religious minorities and ensure strict adherence to the Tassaduq Hussain

Jillani judgment, which underscores the importance of safeguarding the rights of religious minorities.

In pursuit of providing justice, LAS was invited to participate in proceedings before the Supreme Court Special Bench, which is currently adjudicating upon the non-compliance of the Tassaduq Hussain Jilani Judgment.

In a significant development, the Supreme Court has granted LAS the status of a party to the proceedings. This status allows LAS to actively participate in all proceedings and collaborate closely with the apex court in this critical case.

Do you want us to arrange a legal aid clinic in a non-Muslim community?



Let us know through  
**0800-70806**

Join us on this transformative journey, where every legal aid clinic, every forum, and every individual empowered is a testament to the power of change from within.



## Acknowledging the white part of our flag: CELEBRATING MINORITY DAY

LAS' team executed a social media campaign to recognize the contributions and significance of our non-Muslim communities in the development of Pakistan. As part of this campaign, we highlighted the contributions of different community leaders, philanthropists, surgeons, and true warriors who spent their entire lives making Pakistan a better place.

We also acknowledged the contributions of our non-Muslim co-workers who are working selflessly to the cause of increasing legal empowerment in Pakistan. Later in



the day, the LAS team also participated in a minority day march held at the Frere Hall in Karachi, where the team raised the voices of our non-Muslim brothers and sisters and their concerns in Pakistan.

## BUILDING BRIDGES: LAS Engages with Non-Muslim Communities

LAS extends the importance of engaging diverse stakeholders to foster collaborations for serving underprivileged communities. In this spirit, LAS recently held meetings with prominent representatives to assist the community promptly.



**Representatives of  
Rama Pir Mandir**

LAS continued its dialogue with the representatives of Rama Pir Mandir in Tando Allahyar. The meeting sought input and ideas for the benefit of all communities and attaining support for LAS' legal awareness clinics in neighboring Hindu-majority communities, striving to make legal aid accessible to all.

**Mr. Ram Nath  
Maharaj - World  
Hindu Federation**



In another productive meeting, LAS was honored to meet Mr. Ram Nath Mishra (General Secretary, World Hindu Federation) on September 13, 2023. The meeting aimed to explore collaborative opportunities in strategic litigation, leveraging his expertise and insights to advance justice and equality.



**Mr. Anand Ram -  
Sri Swami Narayan  
Mandir Trust**

LAS met Mr. Anand Ram (General Secretary of the trust, Sri Swami Narayan Mandir) on September 13, 2023. The agenda for this meeting was to seek Google Scholarship Program Nominations, Strategic Litigation Insights, and Support for Legal Aid Clinics.

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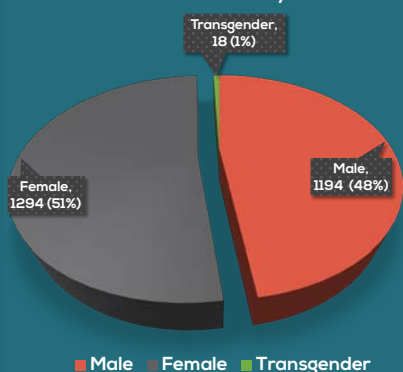


## LEGAL AWARENESS CLINICS on ADR

At LAS, we are diligently working to raise awareness and promote legal understanding within communities across Sindh. Our trained paralegals, who play an essential role, are at the heart of this transformative initiative. 192 paralegals were earlier mobilized to ensure the sustainability of the program.

Through a strategic partnership with the Community ADR Network (CAN), these dedicated paralegals assisted to organize a series of **96** clinics in eight districts of Sindh during the reporting quarter. Their invaluable contributions went beyond organizing events, as these paralegals worked hand in hand with our field teams, actively facilitating the mapping and organization of ADR sessions within their respective communities. The impact of their efforts extended far and wide, reaching a total of **2,506** beneficiaries.

Participants of Legal Awareness Clinics: Breakdown by Gender



## RESTORING FAITH IN JUSTICE: by institutionalizing ADR in Pakistan

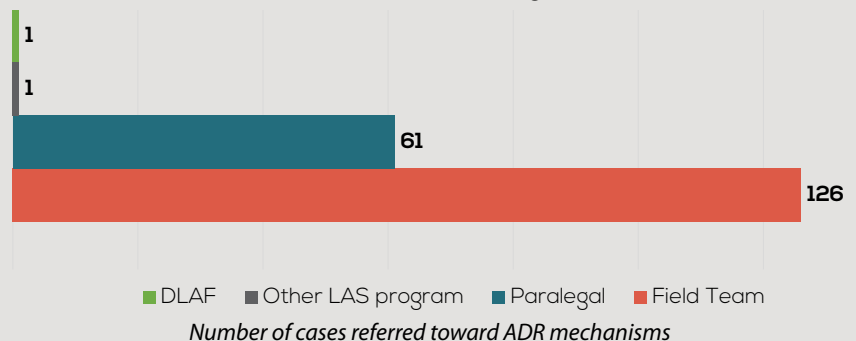
Vulnerable communities in Pakistan often face difficulties in getting fair justice and receiving their fundamental rights. It is imperative to empower vulnerable communities so that they can find potential pathways to seek a cost-effective and speedy solution for disputes and conflict resolutions.

LAS is actively working in these communities to spread legal awareness, along with methods like ADR through which they can quickly and economically resolve their legal issues. As LAS aims to make the lives of the common people easier by informing them about the platforms they can pursue, it is also looking to restore their trust in the justice system.



## DIVERSION OF CASES toward ADR Mechanisms

During the reporting quarter, **189** cases in eight targeted districts were successfully diverted toward ADR mechanisms. Among these cases, the highest number was reported by females 113 cases (60%), while males accounted for 76 cases (40%). Most of these cases were categorized as Federal Ombudsman cases, with 173 instances, followed by provincial ombudsman with 5 cases, court-annexed mediation with 3 cases, and 8 cases of private mediation. This highlights ADR's effectiveness and growing acceptance to resolve disputes in our targeted districts.



Our field teams are dedicated to empowering communities by disseminating knowledge about alternative dispute resolution (ADR) and conducting awareness sessions on accessible channels. During the reporting quarter, our field advocates reported the highest number of cases at 126, while our paralegals reported 61 cases, accounting for a total of 189 cases.

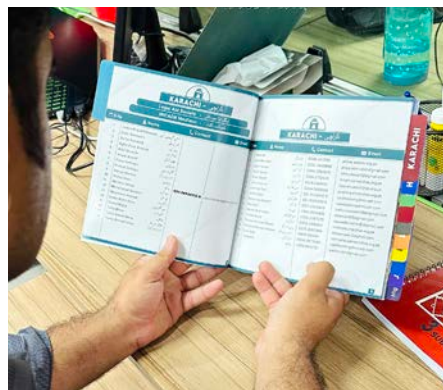
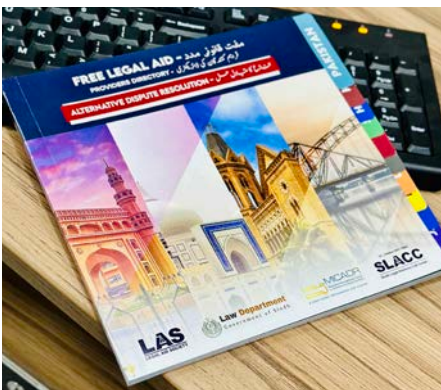


## ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY EFFORTS to increase public awareness of ADR

**L**AS has been continuously bringing awareness among the general public, legal fraternity, and government institutions on ADR using different approaches, including awareness sessions, conferences, and different campaigns through print and electronic media.



## MAKING PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO JUSTICE INSTITUTIONS AND ADR MECHANISMS EASIER through ADR Directory



**T**he ADR Directory is another effort by LAS to increase citizen's access to justice institutions easier. The ADR Directory comprises of a comprehensive database of ADR Practitioners, including High Court Notified Accredited Mediators of MICADR, High Court Notified Sails Members operating under the Small Claims and Minor Offences Ordinance 2002, paralegals from different cities across Sindh, and contact information for High Court Recognized ADR Centers. Additionally, it also features the contact details of Provincial and Federal Ombudsman offices, serving as a guide for the people who can now easily reach out to an

ADR provider or institution.

These directories will be provided to ADR paralegals and strategically placed in different communities across Pakistan for the citizens to access easily. Furthermore, digital versions of the ADR directory will also be installed on tablets made available to paralegals. This digital version will also be linked to other databases to facilitate the citizens.

You can download the directory by clicking (in case of a softcopy) or scanning this QR code.



## SMS and RICKSHAW CAMPAIGNS

**L**ack of access to information about the redressal mechanisms to address the issues of maladministration by the state hinders the community's access to justice institutions. In this regard, LAS is administering a comprehensive SMS and Rickshaw campaign across Sindh to create awareness among citizens on interventions such as court-annexed Mediation, alongside the forums through which the citizens can attain justice, including the offices of the Provincial and Federal Ombudsmen.

During the current reporting quarter, 1,000 rickshaws carried out LAS messages, and the campaign reached around 0.9 million people. As a result, people approached LAS for legal advice, mediation, and for filing complaints about the maladministration of the Provincial and Federal Government entities.



## IMPROVING THE SUPPLY of State-Recognized ADR across Pakistan

### PREPARING THE FIRST-EVER MEDIATION BILL 2023 for submission in GBLA



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.

**Mr. Rahim Gul** (Secretary Law and Prosecution, Gilgit Baltistan) paid a visit to the LAS head office in Karachi before submitting the bill to 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 reducing case pendency and attracting investment to the region.

## INSPIRING LAW STUDENTS to become future ambassadors of ADR

LAS had earlier designed an experiential learning program for 100 ADR Street Law Change Makers through internships and field visits. These internships aimed to provide the Change Makers with valuable experiences and practical knowledge in the field of alternative dispute resolution (ADR). Moreover, these internships at LAS played a vital role in shaping the students' professional skills.

Using a hands-on approach to ADR, the change makers gained exposure to real-life scenarios and learned to navigate the challenges of dispute resolution processes. This experience proved to be a perfect platform for the students to apply their theoretical knowledge in practical settings.

Out of 100 students, 79 (43 boys and 36 girls) have completed their internships. During their internships,



the law students were also provided with exposure visits to the offices of the Provincial and Federal Ombudsman and met with the High Court notified Salis Members. Additionally, the students were provided an opportunity to witness and participate in the ADR legal clinics alongside our field teams. Furthermore, the interns also visited SLACC, where it was demonstrated to them how this one-of-a-kind call

center empowers the citizens on a daily basis.

**This internship program will be an inspiration for young law students to become the future ambassadors of ADR and make a long-term impact by serving as mediators, future Judges, and Lawyers, thus shaping the future of ADR in Pakistan.**



## JUSTICE SUCCESS STORIES

### Inheritance Reclaimed: Journey to Justice through Mediation

**S**hams Ali Shah, a 52-year-old man from Sukkur district, was fighting to claim his rightful share from his father's property. He shared this property with five brothers and four sisters, and wished to sell it to create a separate living space for his family. Being unemployed for the past 2.5 years, Mr. Shams was unable to provide for his wife and four children. His wife was bearing the household expenses by working in a food manufacturing company, while her elder daughter was also helping the family financially by providing home tuition.

Due to harsh financial conditions and congested living space for his family, Shams wanted to move out to a rented apartment by getting his share in his father's property. Despite repeatedly requesting his fair share in the house inherited by their father, his brothers and sisters were

unwilling to sell the property and distribute it. Mr. Shams's frustration led him to file a complaint at the Sukkur Police Station and then at the Women Protection Cell (WPC) in Sukkur. WPC is part of District Level ADR Forums (DLAF) formed by the Legal Aid Society, which refers ADR-related complaints to our field teams.

WPC referred this matter to our team in Sukkur, who heard his matter and proposed an out-of-court settlement through mediation. The same was briefed to opposite parties, after which all parties agreed and signed an agreement to mediate. Our Accredited Mediator **Ms. Afreen Kanwal** facilitated both parties for successful mediation, where both parties mutually reached to a settlement. In conclusion, from the entire process, Mr. Shams was relieved to get his rightful share in the inheritance



**Ms. Afreen Kanwal**  
(Accredited Mediator)

property within a short span of time rather than battling for it in court.

## JUSTICE SUCCESS STORIES

### Protecting a minor from abduction

**M**s. Zareena, a differently abled woman from Khairpur, exemplifies unwavering determination and resilience when her 16-year-old daughter faced a harrowing abduction attempt. Instead of faltering away, She sought justice for her daughter.

Ms. Zareena visited the Khairpur LAS office, discussed the issue with LAS advocates, and took the matter to court. The Additional District and Sessions Judge

in Gambat District, Khairpur, allowed the Application for the registration of FIR against the culprits, marking a significant step towards accountability. Additional District and Sessions Judge also directed the concerned SHO to provide legal protection to Ms. Zareena and her daughter. Ms. Zareena's resolute pursuit of justice not only protected her daughter but also set an inspiring example for others facing adversity.



# JUSTICE SUCCESS STORIES

## Helping a woman with the recovery of her dowry items & maintenance

**M**s. Noshaba, who hails from Karachi, faced formidable challenges in her marital life, enduring a troubled relationship and domestic violence. In July 2022, she and her two children sought refuge with her parents as the living conditions of her house were made miserable. Noshaba soon approached the Legal Aid Society, for the dissolution of her marriage, maintenance, and recovery of the dowry articles. LAS promptly responded, meticulously amassed evidence, and constructed a compelling case for the impending legal battle.

Despite the absence of the opposing party, **Advocate Rashid Mahar** (Field Advocate, LAS) expeditiously presented Noshaba's case, and based on the evidence, an ex-parte decision was rendered in her favor.

The court decreed the dissolution of plaintiff Noshaba's marriage on August 12, 2022. The court also granted monthly maintenance of PKR 5,000 to Noshaba during the Iddat period, while her minors received monthly maintenance of PKR 6,500. The court judiciously ensured an annual increment for her daughter's maintenance until her marriage and maintenance for her son until he reached 18. In addition to the above, the court directed the defendant to return Noshaba's dowry articles.

This victory for Noshaba was a personal triumph and a testament to the invaluable work of LAS. It underscored how legal support and empowerment can herald transformative change, enabling individuals to break free from oppression and rebuild their lives with dignity and optimism for a brighter future.



**Advocate Rashid Mahar** (Field Advocate, LAS) with Ms. Noshaba after receiving the maintenance cheque

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

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