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COMMITTEE FOR THE WELFARE OF PRISONERS

LEGAL AID OFFICE PROJECT



LEGAL
AID
OFFICE



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners (CWP) is a successful example of a public-private partnership in Sindh. The CWP was notified by the Government of Sindh in 2004 by appointing Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid as Chairperson to provide legal aid to underprivileged adult female and juvenile prisoners. Its scope was expanded in 2011 to include prisons accommodating adult male prisoners, and in 2017 to allow for a greater focus on rehabilitation processes and legal empowerment of prisoners to discourage recidivism. The CWP works through its Legal Aid Office project (CWP-LAO) to provide free legal aid and representation to underprivileged prisoners, irrespective of their age, sex, ethnicity or religious belief in the province of Sindh. The objective of the CWP is to improve access to justice for prisoners and is built around the belief that free legal aid is a fundamental right, as well as the right to fair trial and representation before the court.

The CWP also seeks to support Sindh's criminal justice system by advocating for speedy trials and case resolutions on behalf of clients. This in turn reduces the burden on and de-congests the overly crowded and under-resourced prison system. At present, the CWP provides its services to prisoners in 25 prisons.



TERMS OF REFERENCE

01

To provide legal awareness and legal empowerment to prisoners.

02

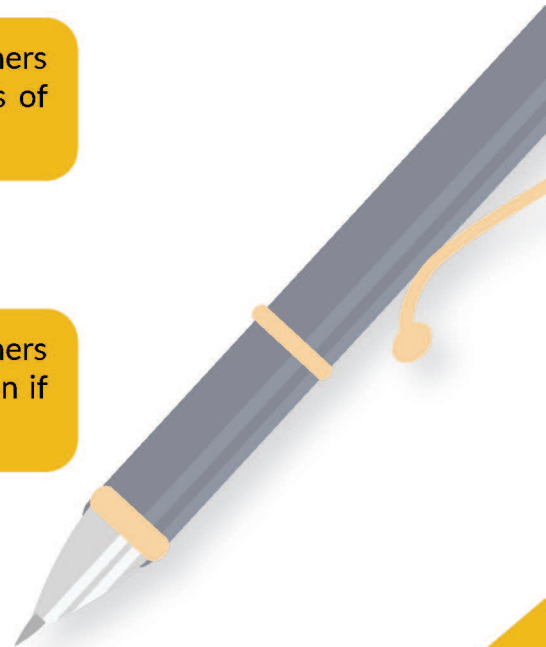
To provide free legal aid, advice and assistance to prisoners.

03

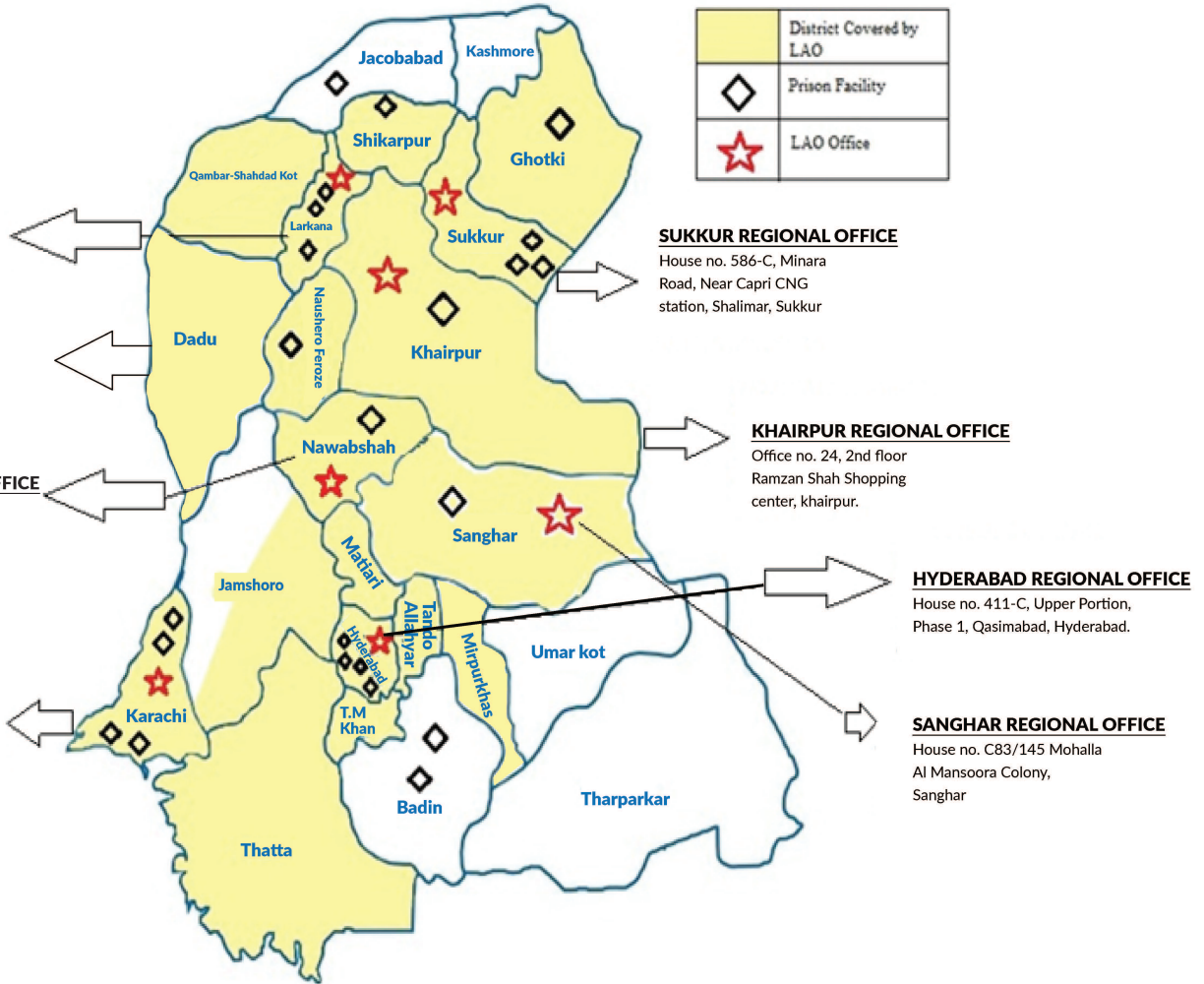
To work for the welfare of juvenile prisoners, women prisoners and children living with their mothers in prisons in the areas of education, health rehabilitation and livelihood support.

04

To review laws, rules, regulations and policies related to prisoners and prisons and suggest repeal, amendment or new legislation if needed.



GEOGRAPHIC FOOTPRINT



WE ARE WORKING IN 25 PRISONS

1. LEGAL AWARENESS AND LEGAL EMPOWERMENT

PRISON PARALEGAL PROGRAMME

The first of its kinds in Pakistan, CWP-LAO runs a Paralegal Program with the inmates within the prisons in Sindh. Convicts are trained in a wide range of topics covering constitutional and legal rights who further continue to disseminate this information to other prisoners. This sustainable initiative is grounded in our premise that Access to Justice Paradigm includes, inter alia, proper access to information including knowledge about available remedies and rights of the common citizens as well as the prisoners.

Our experience shows that most of the inmates come to prison with little to no knowledge about the due process of law including the procedures governing bail, prison decorum, types of crimes and their corresponding punishments. Thus, it become essential to make the prisoners aware of these procedures and codes. This helps them utilize available remedies and also helps them to frame their conduct according to the prison rules and other concerned codes of conducts.

The pilot programme is being conducted in Women's Prison, Karachi, and in Central Prison Karachi, Central Prison Hyderabad and Central Prison Sukkur.

The convicts are provided training and resources for this purpose, and in turn are rewarded by remissions and the sense of purpose and fulfillment. For prisoners, there is a readily available resource within the prison to provide them with basic legal information.

A total of 78 inmates were trained as Paralegals in the above-mentioned prisons and they have trained 1310 prisoners so far.

These paralegals conduct awareness sessions for all new entrants in to the prison. All new arrivals attend a 2-hour legal awareness session that covers fundamental rights, criminal trial and sentencing and prison rules. Paralegals also connect prison inmates with legal advice and legal aid providers and other state and non-state service providers.

Currently, these selected paralegals are engaged in organizing weekly session with old and new inmates at Central Prison Karachi, Sukkur and Hyderabad under the supervision of CWP-LAO advocates.



ADULT LITERACY AND LEGAL LITERACY

The CWP-LAO provides an adult literacy program in the Women's Prison in collaboration with Society for the Advancement of Health, Education, and the Environment (SAHEE). The purpose for these classes is to impart basic education among prisoners so that they are able to learn basic words and language concepts that build and support their communication and information exchange. This also supports laying down the foundations for their empowerment and can help in reducing poverty and crime.



2. FREE LEGAL AID, ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

5,912

Legal aid clinics conducted.



4,108

Bail orders granted to inmates.



Right to fair trial and due process is a fundamental human right that is ensured in Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and in Article 10A of the constitution of Pakistan. However, a large number of under trial prisoners in Pakistan remain deprived of such rights which is largely on account of lack of free legal aid services and lack of legal awareness at the end of those who are under trial.

In this backdrop, CWP-LAO provides legal aid and advice to the UTPs across 21 prisons in Sindh.

Progress from 2004 - 30th June 2018:

14,363

Vakalatname assigned and filed in courts.



21,852

Interviews conducted with inmates, including the provision of on the spot legal advice.



15,670

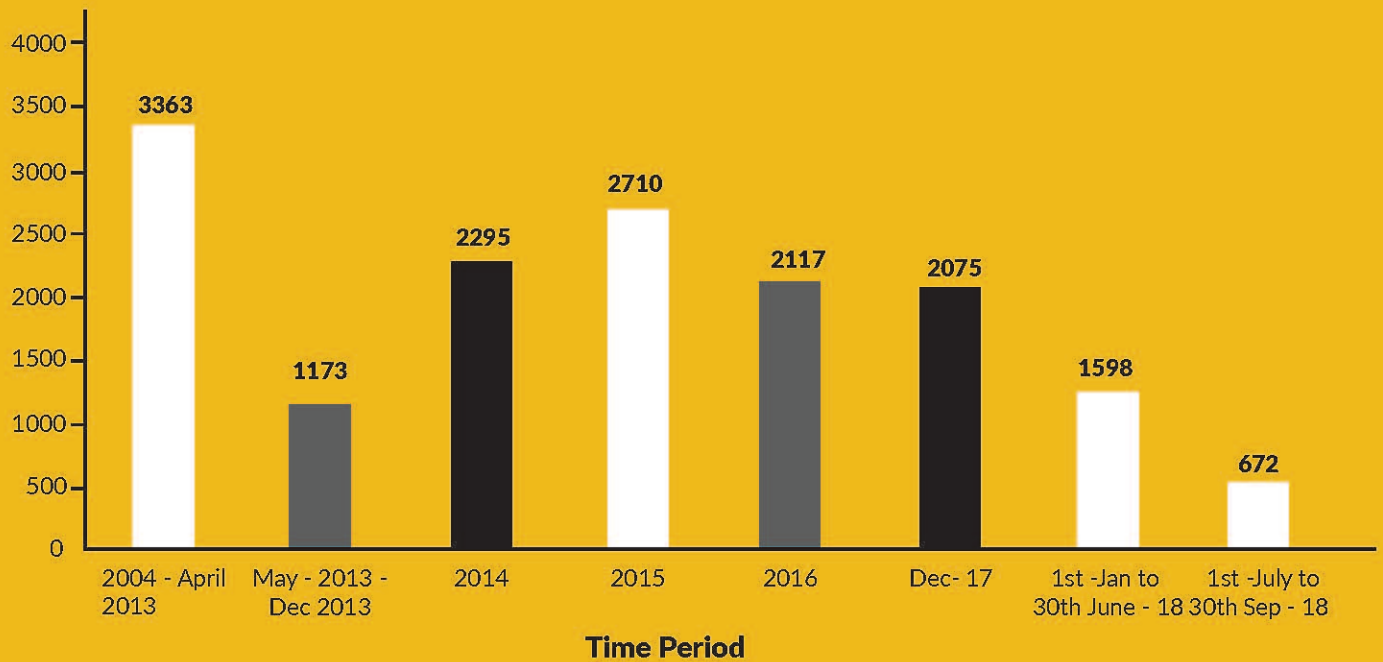
Cases disposed of.



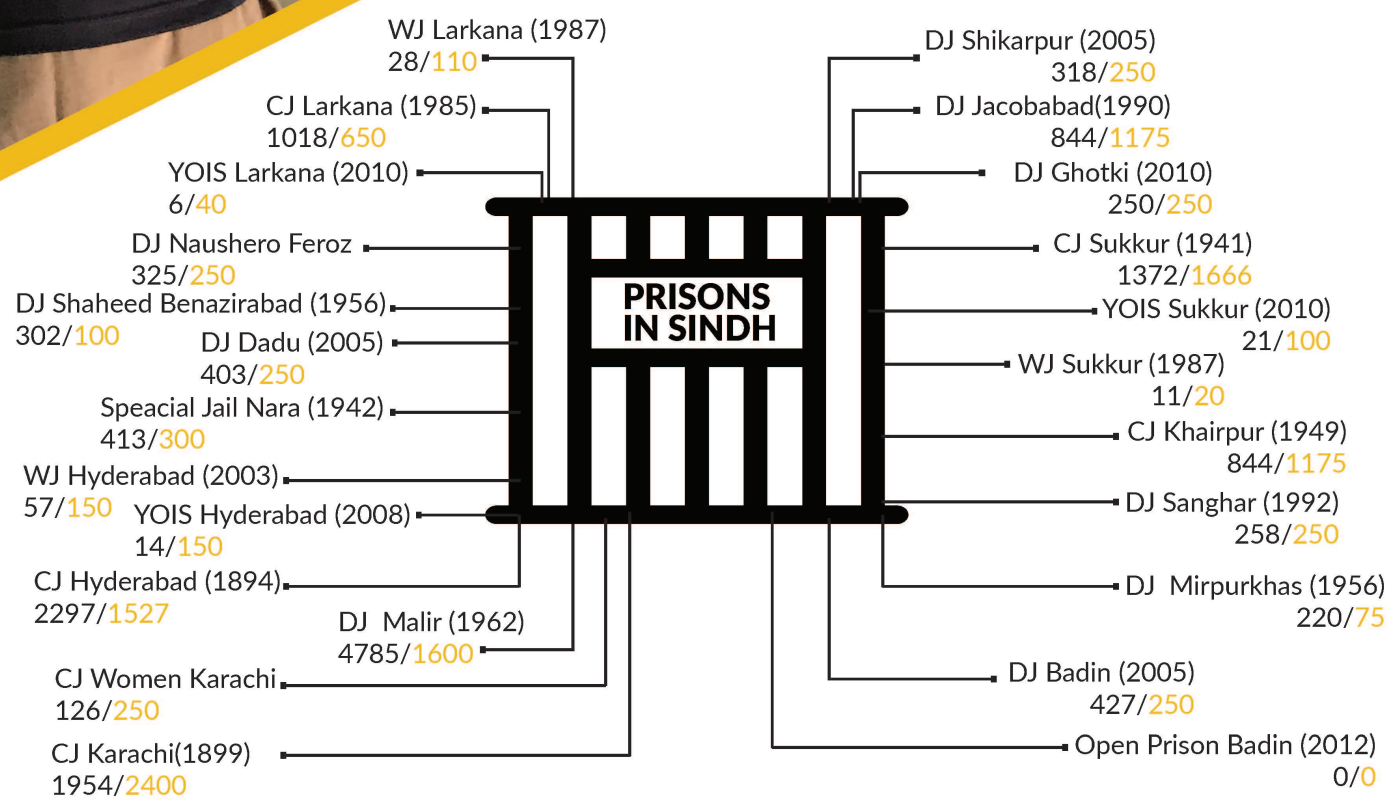
PROGRESS FROM 2004 - SEP 2018

15,670 CASES RESOLVED

No. Of Cases



PRISONS IN SINDH



CJ= Central Jail
 DJ=District Jail
 WJ= Women's Jail
 YOIS=young Offender Industrial School

*Name of Person (Year of Construction)
 *Number Of Prisoners/ Prisoners Capacity



3. WELFARE OF JUVENILE PRISONERS, WOMEN PRISONERS AND CHILDREN LIVING WITH THEIR MOTHERS IN PRISONS (EDUCATION, HEALTH, REHABILITATION AND LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT.)



THE EARLY LEARNING CENTRE (ELC)

The interventions of the CWP – LAO's Early Learning Centers (ELC) in the Women's Prisons in Karachi and Hyderabad aim to neutralize the prison environment, normalize the living experiences of children incarcerated with their mothers in prisons, and help them to re-integrate with society after their release. Imparting education among children through learning methods customized to the prison context, the ELC provides its services to children between the ages of 2 to 9 who are currently studying or studied at the pre-primary level. During 2017 -2018 a total of 35 children attended the ELCs in Karachi and Hyderabad. Currently, 20 children (13 ELC Karachi and 07 ELC Hyderabad) are receiving basic pre-primary education.

The ELC holds quarterly meetings with the mothers of the children. The objective of the parent-teacher meeting is to share the learning progress of the children, and to discuss the factors which can affect learnings of children, such as behavioral and social development.

CHILDREN'S PLAY ROOMS

Children under the age of 9 years, residing inside the prison with their incarcerated mothers are deprived of basic necessities. The children populations in Karachi and Hyderabad required a full-time ELC. In Sukkur and Larkana, where the population of children has been extremely low, it was decided that safe spaces be created in the form of Children's Play Rooms to allow space and toys for children's recreation.

FOOTBALL

The CWP - LAO in the partnership with Karachi United Football Club (KU) has continued football training camps for juveniles in YOIS Karachi. The camps are organized twice a week to engage juveniles in a healthy recreational activity and allow them to learn essential life skills such as team building, leadership, sportsmanship, discipline and hard work. Released juveniles from the YOIS are connected with KUs regular training camps organized in Centers of Excellence spread across the city. These classes have been successfully running for one year. A total of 55 juveniles enrolled in football camps during 2017 - 30th June 2018. Currently 29 participants are enrolled in the YIOS camp.

MENTAL HEALTH SOLUTIONS

Studies provide that those that are incarcerated are two to four times more likely to suffer from depression and serious illness such as bipolar disorders, schizophrenia etc. in contrast to the general public.

There are many reasons for disproportionately higher rate of mental disorders in prisons and many disorders may be present before admission and may only be exacerbated by the stress of imprisonment and poor living conditions.

In this backdrop, CWP-LAO, in partnership with Sehat Kahani (SK), an NGO that provides healthcare to inaccessible and underserved communities women inmates in Women Prison Karachi provide counselling to prisoners in the Women's Prison in Karachi. Visits are conducted twice a week for the counselling and a psychiatrist also visits twice a month, or as and when necessary.

SEWING

Keeping rehabilitation needs and economic empowerment of women in consideration, LAO runs sewing classes for female prisoners in the Women's Prison Karachi and the Women's Prison Hyderabad. In addition to enhancing vocational skills, the activity provides constructive recreational avenues for women inmates. At present, 60 women are engaged in weekly classes.

GYMNASIUM

CWP-LAO has recently established a gymnasium in the Women's Prison in Karachi. It is one of the key rehabilitation steps that not only improves the physical health conditions of women inmates but can also provide an additional measure of reducing stress and anxiety among women inmates. An experienced gym instructor runs classes twice a week.

COMPUTER LAB AND GAME ROOMS

A computer lab was established in the juvenile detention facility in Hyderabad in October 2017. Through this initiative juveniles are assisted by providing them with IT skills so that they are able to use the internet and other computer and technical skills to potentially enhance their professional capacity post incarceration.





4. REVIEWING LAWS, RULES, REGULATIONS AND

POLICIES RELATED TO PRISONERS AND PRISONS

PRISON CONDITIONS SURVEY



CWP-LAO conducted a prisons condition survey in 20 prisons across Sindh. The research provides an evidence-based review of the current status of prisons in Sindh in order to create a baseline to allow for more informed policy, administrative and legal reform and development.

PARALEGAL BASELINE SURVEY

CWP - LAO conducted a baseline survey in 5 adult male prisons and 1 adult female prison in Sindh prisons in Sindh. The study identifies current levels of situational and legal awareness, empowerment and access to legal representation and legal aid for prison inmates in Sindh. The study also provides the opportunity to poll prison inmates on rehabilitation needs including vocational and skills based training and medical and psycho-social services. And finally, the study allows for an evaluation of the satisfaction of under trial prisoners with the legal representation that they currently have and the awareness of the legal aid service.

This baseline can also be as a benchmark to evaluate the Prison Paralegal Program and other activities conducted by the CWP - Legal Aid Office (LAO).



REHABILITATION FRAME WORK AND POLICY

This paper describes and assesses the rehabilitation framework within Sindh's adult male prisons to provide a contextual understanding of the applicability of prevailing criminological rehabilitation models. This paper also provides an analysis of this framework, with recommendations for the Prison Department on how to create a sustainable rehabilitation programme in Sindh.



PRISON LAW REFORM



The process of analysing the existing prison law and rules and international laws was completed. CWP-LAO is part of the Government Committee along with the Prison Department and Sindh Judicial Academy which is in process of re-drafting the Prison law and Rules.