**AN INTRODUCTION TO CENTRE’S INTERVENTIONS EXPANDING ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

As an organisation that uses law to bring about systemic changes to remove barriers in accessing justice, especially for the marginalized communities; the Centre has worked to expand the reach of access to justice mechanisms in place and has advocated for formation of platforms that will further the reach by making the legal processes and mechanisms more responsive to the needs of the communities.

**CSJs profile in expanding the reach of access to justice:**

1. **STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS**

**1.1 Asil Manch**

Asil Manch was created to ensure that the justice delivery mechanisms are just and accessible to the people. It is a forum, where litigants come together to generate awareness about the rights of litigants, provide legal support and raise issues of efficiency, transparency and accountability of the judiciary. Currently, the Asil Manch has a membership of over 2000 litigants.

Resource:

Asil Manch Note

**1.2 Rehnuma Entitlement Centres in MCDs**

Operationalising the law centre model in minority concentrated districts to facilitate the implementation of Prime Minister’s 15 Point Programme for Religious Minorities and MSDP and expand access to litigation and service delivery to religious minorities in the country. The entitlement Centres were set up in six different states.

Resources:

Rehnuma Concept Note

**1.2 Evaluation study of Nari Adalats**

The centre in its efforts to legitimise alternative dispute resolution mechanisms conducted an evaluation study on NARI ADALATS to understand its best practices for replicating the successful model. For understanding the phenomenon of nari adalats and its impact read Sushma Iyengar's Study on Nari Adalat, which acknowledges CSJ's contribution.

Resources

Nari Adalats Concept Note

**1.3 Institutionalizing role of Paralegals**

CSJ has been at the centre of the discussions and efforts directed towards institutionalizing the role of paralegals in the country. The centre works on the law centre model and paralegals are a critical unit of the said model, additionally the centre encourages participation of paralegals which belong to vulnerable communities so that the issues that are chosen by the Centre have an organic relationship with such communities. The Centre has influenced curriculum by designing a diploma course for paralegals and been essential to the establishment of IIPLS (Indian Institute of Paralegal Studies)

**1.4 Legitimising the role of Kayda Sahayaks**

The intervention was targeted at prisoner’s rights, it was a targeted capacity building effort directed at the eligible prisoners to operationalise the role of paralegal volunteers from the prison community. The location of the intervention was Gujarat, spread across seven districts.

Additionally the intervention also resulted in the release of prisoner’s undergoing trials.

Resources:

Booklet documenting the impact of CSJs Prisoner’s Rights Intervention

* 1. **Setting up Worker Facilitation Centres in Bharuch**

Worker facilitation Centres (Kaamgaar Sahayak Kendras) were set up in five Talukas of Bharuch district. The centres were an outcome of a five day campaign in the said talukas which was focused on labour rights. The members of the centres were also provided training by the Centre, on labourers rights. Through the centre camps were organized which facilitated registration of unorganized labourers and more than eleven thousand applications for wages were filed at the Labour commissioner’s office.

1. **RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE CREATION**

**2.1 Study of Implementation of National Legal Services Act in the State of Gujarat Submitted to SLSA**

The Indian Institute of Paralegal Studies run by the Centre advocated for institutionalising the role of paralegals, it studied the implementation of the National Legal Services Act by using the right to information and observation guidelines for *lok adalats* to assess the factors influencing the quality of service delivery.

**2.2 UNDP survey for Identifying Gaps in Legal Empowerment**

CSJ had carried out research across seven states, with the financial support from UNDP, for "Situation analysis of institutional barriers that exist in the legal system”

Resource:

Survey Report to identify gaps in legal empowerment

**2.3 Study on Access to Justice and Socio-Economic Rights**

From 2010 to 2012, a team of academic and civil society researchers from CSJ, National Centre for Advocacy Studies, Jagori Grameen and Indiana University conducted extensive ethnographies of litigants, judges lawyers and courtroom personnel within multiple districts in three states: Maharashtra, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh. The findings illustrate a complex matrix pf variables- including infrastructure, staffing, judicial training and legal awareness, costs and continuances, gender and caste discrimination, power imbalances, intimidation and corruption, miscellaneous delays and challenges with specialized forums- and how they impact access to justice in the lower tier.

1. **RESPONDING TO CONFLICT**

**3.1 Assam Intervention**

CSJ's work in Assam started as a response to assist flood affected families in April 2012, with the objective of engage with the ground realities in order to formulate a national strategy to respond to disaster situations. During this engagement, Assam experienced one of the worst riots in its history. In 2012, clashes broke out between BODO community and the Muslim community in the three districts of Assam-- *Chirang*, *Kokrajhar* and *Dhubri--* the riots saw displacement of close to 4 lakh people from their homes, almost twice as much as that during the Gujarat carnage in 2002. Responding to the situation and providing assistance to the victims became one of the core tasks since July 2012.

1. **TARGETED INTERVENTIONS**

**4.1 Law Society and Culture, Dang**

The Law Society and Culture intervention of the Centre is based in South Gujarat, and looks at the intersection of law society and culture experienced by Adivasi communities settled in the region. The overall objective of the intervention is to ensure access to justice for Adivasi communities in the context of socio-legal issues which are central to the relationship between law, society and culture in the region. The said intervention spans across three districts in South Gujarat namely *Dang, Navsari* and *Narmada*.

**4.2 Coastal Gujarat Intervention**

This intervention is based in *Girsomanath, Amreli, Bhavnagar, Junagadh* and *Porbandar* regions and is targeted at the socio-economic rights of the people living on the coastal belt. The intervention is contextulised at the peoples belonging to the fishing community. The intervention partly related to service delivery, i.e. looking at the basic entitlements of the community and implementing government schemes specially introduced for the fishing community and also an intervention which looks at research and advocacy opportunities that present themselves at the intersection of law and lifestyles, that is making laws and policies correspond with the needs of the fishing community.

**4.3 Introducing Human Rights Education in school curriculums**

Post 2002 communal riots between Hindus and Muslims in Gujarat, the Centre carried out a formal school-based “Education for Human Rights” program. It placed emphasis on the principles of diversity, dignity equality and justice. It was operationalised in 110 schools in the fifth, sixth and seventh grades in eight district of Gujarat.