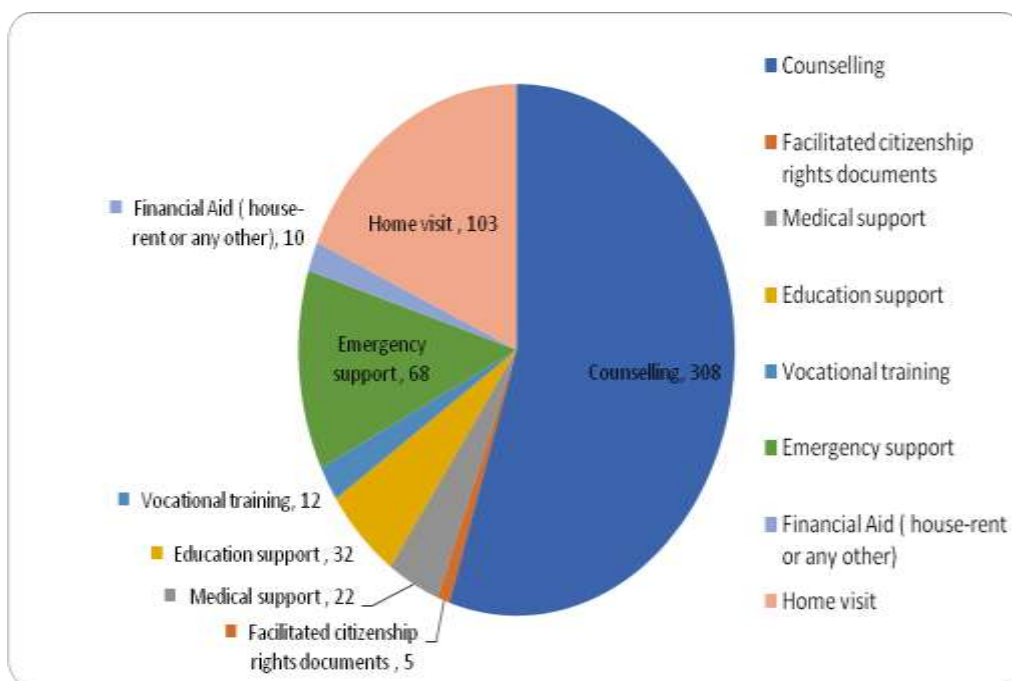


## Social Work in Criminal Justice

Newsletter – Volume 2.1 – January–March 2021

Prayas is a social work demonstration project of the Centre for Criminology and Justice, School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, established in 1990.



**Interventions**

### CONSULTATION / WEBINAR

Prayas along with various institutes and organizations conducted consultations and webinars during January to March. These included **4** consultations on Social and Economic Impact of Covid-19 on Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation with **70** women and transgenders currently and formerly exploited for commercial sex. This was done in collaboration with ARZ (AnyayRahitZindagi) Goa. Prayas, in another initiative along with Gujarat Institute of Prisons and Correctional Administration, Ahmedabad jointly organized “Prison as a centre for rehabilitation” for prison officers - superintendents and jailors of Gujarat prison.

**44** prison officers participated in the webinar. Lastly meeting with members of Divisional Deputy Commissioner, Women and Child Development Department, Konkan Division; District Officer, Mumbai Suburban and Staff from the Govt. State and protective homes in Konkan Division **to highlight the situation of shelter home (COVID -19) – problems faced by the staff in managing home and inmates and to understand problems faced by released victims from shelter home during the lockdown.**

## LEGAL INTERVENTIONS

**Prayas** Legal team represented the trial, cross examination, arguments before court along with Supreme Court citations, thus resulting in **acquittal of woman prisoner**. The team plans to seek for compensation as she spent 1 and half years in prison and also to seek her pending payment from her employer. In said case, post her interim bail in November 2020, the social worker arranged shelter support for her, and facilitated her employment as a cook in the shelter home under Prayas NGO placement program. She was also enrolled into a nursing course through Pratham organization. Alongside the team facilitated home visit in her home town, Jharkhand and provided ration support to her family.

**Despite lockdown, the legal team put in relentless efforts (since October 2019) and innovative strategies to bail out a woman prisoner in March 2021:** Legal team filed multiple bail applications; moved from sessions to Bombay high court to vacation bench, from offline bail applications to online mode of applications following new procedure during lockdown (re-starting fresh applications), to J.J hospital visits for diagnosis and treatment. Initially the team attempted bail on medical grounds (as client suffered from convulsions, vomiting of blood). However, the court refused to grant her bail on medical grounds citing she is getting the required treatment from the State. The online process delayed the bail application as well as rejected to hear the matter. Post numerous efforts eventually got hearing in January 2021 (around one year since filed in high court). Court asked for fresh medical reports and it was known that she suffered from tuberculosis (TB). Team even attempted to transfer her to TB hospital for treatment; however, court found her fit based on the State report. The team did not lose any hope and continued strategizing the case. The team studied bail orders of other co-accused's wherein two co-accused were granted bail and one co-accused was rejected bail on technical grounds. Finally, the team argued on merits i.e. technical grounds - lack of chemical analysis report during arrest (as per law) and thus the court granted bail to her in **March 2021**. It was a learning experience for the legal team, as it helped the team understand the legal lacuna which can be applied in future cases for seeking bail.

## WOMEN INSTITUTION UNIT AND AFTER CARE REHAB FEMALE

Under the women institution unit **15** women received the benefit of the financial assistance scheme for the women who are engaged in prostitution, as per the order in the criminal appeal No. 135/2010 (Budhadev Karmaskar v. State of West Bengal and others) filed in Supreme Court. As part of Women's Help Desk, a Prayas social worker posted at Chembur Police station.

## CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH LAW (CCL)

Prayas facilitated enrolment of 10<sup>th</sup> standard students in the Navneet top scorer app (Learning app which provides audio visual learning notes, easy to understand, doubt solving application). Prayas along with Arpan (NGO) facilitated counselling support inside Dongri Children Home for child sexual abuse cases. Prayas also coordinated with the government department for closure of police record of a CCL and provide no objection certificate (NOC) for a client who lost his job due to non-closure of his case.

## INCOME GENERATION ACTIVITY

The income generation unit upgraded its production. The unit produced **5000 masks and 1000 bags in this period**. The activity provided income to released Prayas clients across Mumbai and Thane districts and also inmates of Navjeevan Mahila Vastigruha (government home) on per piece rate basis.

**As part of the income generation activities, two self-help group** (11 members each) was also initiated by released women clients from Mumbai (Himmat group) and Thane (Ekta group) districts.

## AWARENESS AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES

Prayas along with **15** of its clients (released women prisoners) celebrated International Women day programme at its office. It also celebrated Women Day programme with **30** residents of Kasturba Mahila Vastigruha Chembur.

An awareness programme on de-addiction was organised for **60** inmates and **25** staff of Bharuch district prison. Recreational activity was also organised in the Bharuch district prison for **11** female inmates.

### **INITIATED DIALOGUE FOR TOYS INSIDE LATUR PRISON**

Prayas approached DPO, Latur to arrange for toys for children in Latur prison. DPO further approached Rotary Club, however due to lockdown the request is yet to be implemented.

### **FUNDRAISING**

Prayas was able to mediate and facilitate cash surety of Rs 10,000 for a male prisoner through Samta Foundation, resulting in his release within two days from Latur prison. Prayas also raised travel expenses to send a child in conflict with law (CCL) to her home in Jharkhand. Prayas also helped clients raise money for education, and in buying a laptop for online study.

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