Impact on Field, Policy, Law and Procedure

Prayas has been a field action project of the Centre for Criminology and Justice, School of Social Work, TISS, attempting to address the legal and rehabilitation needs of persons being processed within the Criminal Justice System (CJS) or those at the margins of crime, victimisation or destitution. Over the last twenty two years, Prayas has attempted intervention at two levels:

a) The field, through social work intervention within the CJS; and through effecting alteration in procedures within this system, which support legal protection and rehabilitation of vulnerable groups.

b) Out of this grew the need to influence policy and rules pertaining to custodial conditions, legal rights and rehabilitation of persons affected by crime or commercial sexual exploitation. A dedicated unit was established for this purpose. Departments specifically addressed include Prisons, Law and Judiciary, Police, and Women and Child Development.

Intervention at both levels has been in operation simultaneously since the beginning. This has resulted in a unique blend of intervention at the field and system level. Field services and initiatives at influencing policy and procedure have resulted in increased attention to neglected groups within the CJS. While the field suggests initiatives for policy and advocacy, the latter further strengthens field initiatives, besides widening the scope for services to affected populations within the CJS. Policy and procedures govern the processing of persons within the CJS and hence intervention at this level assumes importance. This unit acts as a medium between the field and the system, over the years gradually highlighting issues relevant to the processing of custodial populations in an attempt to realign and strengthen already existing systems while also introducing the need for change therein.

System level initiatives have been undertaken for the following purposes:

a) To create a platform for redressal of issues.

b) To realign procedures that protects the rights of affected populations and their families.

c) To introduce into law, policy and procedure elements that promotes increased access to rights and inclusion into social and economic (legal) structures.

The following indicators could assess initiatives attempted in this regard:

a) The extent to which issues in regard to processing of custodialised populations and their reintegration into mainstream society have been made visible to agencies in the government and the voluntary sector.

b) Fora created for addressing issues and deliberating change within the system, and Prayas membership in such fora.
c) Entry of other agencies into the CJS, as a result of Prayas’ attempts to facilitate the same.

d) Reviving, strengthening and alteration of existing law and procedure, to address the custodial and rehabilitation needs of custodial populations.

e) Inclusion of needs of affected groups in law, policy, procedure, schemes and services.

Initiatives made by this unit have been geared towards and have to an extent, built inroads for including affected persons into already existing structures while creating avenues (through alterations in law and procedure) for increased access to services within the system.

This document presents milestones towards achieving the aforesaid objectives. While some initiatives have borne tangible results, there are others that have been explored, informed future strategies and are still in the process of evolving towards demonstrating their relevance. The document has been classified into ten broad components:

1. Children of prisoners
2. Prison reform
3. Juveniles in conflict with law
4. Legal aid and courts
5. Co-ordination between sub-systems of the CJS and allied systems
   a. IDC for prisoners
   b. Issues relating to women in custody and institutions
   c. Probation services and schemes for prisoners and children
   d. Heath rights for persons in custody and institutions
   e. Activating prison libraries
   f. Department of Youth Affairs and Sports
   g. Municipal administration
6. Promoting new initiatives in the CJS
7. Training and capacity building
8. Police
9. Research and documentation
10 Bharuch Unit

1. Children of Prisoners
A research exercise undertaken by a student while pursuing her Masters Degree in Social Work at the TISS in 1992, highlighted the debilitating circumstances of children of prisoners. The need for social work intervention with this group of children was demonstrated and this resulted in Prayas commencing full-time field intervention for families of prisoners, with special focus on children.

Over the years, this intervention lent valuable knowledge and insight into their processing by the CJS, and the need for extending care and protection to these children became visible. Raising issues in regard to such children and highlighting their needs at various fora has resulted in increased visibility of this group to authorities concerned and NGOs alike.

**Milestones:**

**1993**

- **The Family Support Unit of Prayas starts** as a result of a study done by a student of Department of Criminology and Correctional Administration of TISS on the “Effect of Women’s Imprisonment on Their Children”. It was evident in the course of work in Mumbai Central Prison, that children of incarcerated women need support and assistance, both inside and those left outside.

- Through the work of Family Support Unit, Prayas is able to impact on the following aspects:
  - Service delivery: attempt made to address issues such as health, education, job placements, legal illiteracy, etc. of families of prisoners, especially children.
  - Identifying existing child welfare services in the city and match them with the needs of the target group, which involves networking and exploring existing suitable government and voluntary sector schemes and services available.
  - Providing support and alternatives to children who become vulnerable to deviance and destitution and may become delinquents or adult offenders at a later stage.
  - Developing insights and preparing documents in order to bring the problems of this group into focus and try to effect changes in government policies as well as services offered by various child welfare organisations.

**1995**

- **Action Research Study** on children of prisoners initiated to study the issue of children needing care and protection left outside prison with the objective to make this group visible and help set up services for this group.
1996

- Prayas receives permission to set up a Research and Documentation Unit inside Tihar Prisons. This unit works towards the study undertaken on the issue of children of prisoners.

1999

- Prayas social workers receive permission from the Juvenile Welfare Board to meet and interact with children in the Observation Home (during the course of their work with juveniles transferred from prison to the Observation home).

2000

- The Executive Health Officer of the Public Health Department, BMC, issues a circular to all Medical Officers of Municipal Hospitals making it mandatory to include the permanent address of the mother in the birth certificate of children of imprisoned mothers (and not the prison address).

2002

- The study initiated in 1995 results in the first publication of Prayas “Forced Separation: Children of Imprisoned Mothers”.

- Efforts to include this group of children in the list of children in especially difficult circumstances results in the inclusion of children of prisoners in the definition of vulnerable groups of children in need of care and protection, in the Maharashtra State Policy on Children and the National Plan of Action for Children 2005.

- The UNICEF Country Report for the National Plan of Action for 2003–2007 includes this group in the list of children in need of care and protection. The report was an outcome of the deliberations in a regional workshop organised by UNICEF at TISS, where Prayas made a presentation on the situation of children of prisoners.

2003-2005

- I.G. (Prisons), Maharashtra State, issues a circular to Byculla and Kalyan District Prisons for construction of balwadis outside the prison premises.

- A Writ Petition filed by PUCL about the situation of women prisoners at Byculla District Prison in Mumbai High Court, leads to the formation of a Committee which gave several far reaching recommendations to improve the situation of women prisoners and their children. Prayas was a member of this committee appointed by the Hon’ble High Court. Based on the report of the Committee, the Hon’ble High Court passed the following directions:
Setting up of a balwadi outside the prison premises for children inside prison, to be run by Pratham, to be funded by the Government of Maharashtra.

Up scaling the diet of pregnant and nursing mothers and children inside prison, based on the recommendations of a Diet Committee set up by the Hon’ble HC.

Up scaling articles of personal hygiene for prisoners and their children like soap, oil, sanitary napkins, etc.

Appointment of welfare officers to look into the needs of women prisoners and their children

Setting up of a panel of visiting doctors from JJ Hospital consisting of a gynecologist, a pediatrician, a skin specialist and psychiatrist to visit the prison once a week.

After the need to facilitate mulakats between mothers and children was brought up by Prayas, a G.R. is issued by the DWCD, directing Probation Officers to initiate meetings between imprisoned women and their children left outside and those residing in children’s homes in the state.

2006

Prayas intervenes in a Supreme Court PIL on under trial prisoners (R. D. Upadhyay Vs. State of A.P. and Others), by presenting the findings of the study on children of prisoners. Following this, the SC passed orders for implementation of suggestions made in the book, in regard to setting up of balwadis outside prisons, up scaling the diet of pregnant women, nursing mothers and children, special provisions for health care of children, provisions for visiting pediatrician, and psychiatrist inside prison; and provisions for special clothing and utensils for children. In addition, SC passed orders wherein the mother’s permanent address was to be declared in the birth certificates of the children (and not the prison address).

In the light of the orders passed by the SC in R.D. Upadhyay Vs State of A.P., I.G. (Prisons) issues a circular to all prisons in Maharashtra to implement orders passed in regard to children of prisoners. Some of the directions in the order have been implemented.

2008

To ensure the implementation of the Supreme Court orders for children of prisoners, Prayas organizes a State level Workshop in Pune in collaboration with the Office of the I.G. Prisons, Maharashtra, whereby the prison administration, probation department and NGOs working with children of prisoners were brought together to discuss the implementation of the judgment. The Workshop was also used to draw attention to the adverse situations of children who are temporarily orphaned when their parents are arrested and more so their need for services which is not as yet recognized. Prayas forwarded copies of the judgment to governmental and non-governmental agencies so as to generate awareness about the development among concerned parties.
The prison department issued guidelines to all prison superintendents in the State to take all necessary steps to implement the Supreme Court directions, as a result of the Workshop.

- Prayas identified the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) as a potential scheme to be applied within prison. A preliminary note was prepared for the ICDS Commissioner, Maharashtra. On further exploration, Prayas was informed that a process of extending anganwadis under the ICDS for children with their mothers in prison had already been initiated.

- Simultaneously, Prayas had an opportunity to meet the Chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) at TISS in December 2007, to highlight the need to initiate pro-active steps for protection, care and rehabilitation of children of prisoners. The Chairperson asked for a note outlining the issue, which was immediately forwarded to her. The NCPCR has issued directions to all states and UT governments to inform the Commission about the steps taken with regard to children of prisoners. The Commission has also asked the Centre for Criminology and Justice at TISS to maintain liaison with the states and UTs to ensure that effective steps are taken to address this issue.

- As a result of the continuous liaising with the Probation Superintendant, DWCD, GoM, a circular is issued asking female probation officers in all districts to make regular visits to women’s sections of prisons and look into the welfare and rehabilitation needs of women prisoners and their children left outside.

2009-2010

- In response to the letter written to states and UTs by the NCPCR about the status of children of prisoners, Prayas took the responsibility of collecting data in regard to the services provided by state governments for children of prisoners across the country. A format for data collection was drafted by CCJ, TISS and Prayas and the same was sent to Secretaries of the DWCD and Inspector General (Prisons) in fourteen States. Replies were received from Rajasthan, Haryana, Mizoram and Central Region in Maharashtra.
2. Prison Reform

- Prayas’ direct intervention in prisons has spread over the years, from one prison to a total of five prisons in Mumbai, Thane and Bharuch districts. Social workers of Prayas have also been visiting prisons across Maharashtra and Gujarat from time to time, to assess the situation of under trial and convicted prisoners and trying to promote developments with regard to their legal rights and rehabilitation through discussions and meetings with prison staff, police, judiciary, legal aid, probation, allied functionaries and NGOs at the field level. As a result of these efforts, Prayas regularly receives letters from prisoners from all over the State for legal guidance and family support, which are responded to by the Prison Unit, either by directly replying to them or by redirecting their problems to the authorities concerned – prison, legal aid or High Court.

- While attempting to create a forum for asserting the need for addressing the legal and rehabilitation needs of prisoners, Prayas intervened in a Suo Moto Writ Petition, Shabnam Minwala Vs. State of Maharashtra in 1993. Through this petition, Prayas raised issues such as inability of prisoners to understand the proceedings in court (due to the language of communication being in English), lack of legal aid facilities (due to poor honorarium paid to the legal aid lawyers), poor implementation of the Probation of Offenders Act, non-production of women prisoners on their court dates due to lack of police escort and lack of coordination between different wings of the CJS and related departments. In response to these issues raised by Prayas, the Mumbai High Court asked Prayas to give suggestions, based on which the High Court issued detailed directions and led to the following changes at the ground level:
  a. The lower judiciary was directed to use the local language i.e. Marathi as the language of communication in the courts.
  b. The honorarium paid to lawyers by the legal aid board was increased to Rs. 600/- and Rs. 900/- per case at the lower and Sessions courts respectively.
  c. Magistrates and judges were asked to use the various provisions of the Probation of Offenders Act on a regular basis.
  d. The Mumbai police formed a special squad to escort women prisoners to their courts.
  e. The State government was directed to constitute a State Level Inter Departmental Committee on Prisoners, headed by the Principal Secretary, Law and Judiciary, in which Prayas was given the status of an Invitee Member.

- Another landmark judgment of the Mumbai High Court in which Prayas was involved was PUCL Vs. State of Maharashtra in 2005, on the issue of prison conditions for women prisoners in Byculla District Prison. Prayas was a member of Committee constituted by the High Court to give suggestions to address the problems faced by women prisoners in the state. Besides highlighting the conditions of prisoners and suggesting changes therein, Prayas made a suggestion to create District level Inter Departmental Sub-Committees (IDC SCs), headed by the District and Sessions Judge to look into issues of under trial and convict prisoners, which was accepted by the Court and a G.R. issued by the GoM, subsequent to the order. Through these
committees, Prayas has actively explored and initiated dialogue to revive the relevant laws and procedure relating to rights of prisoners.

- A recent important development has been an **in-principle acceptance of a proposal submitted by Prayas to the Principal Secretary, Home (Prisons) Department, GoM, to appoint trained social workers in prisons in the state.** At a meeting called by the Principal Secretary which was attended by senior prison officials and Prayas, a decision was taken to start a three-year pilot project whereby trained social workers would be appointed in the nine central prisons and a few of the district prisons in the state. Prayas is following up this decision with the authorities concerned.

**Milestones**

**1990**

- Full-time social work starts in Mumbai Central Prison (Young Male Section), to work with under trial prisoners after five years of student fieldwork through the Department of Criminology and Correctional Administration, TISS. The initial focus of work is on casework, group work, coordination with prison administration, legal services, and contacting the families outside towards improving access to justice and rehabilitation.

**1994 – 1995**

- Arrangement for **shelter for released prisoners** is made by getting permission from the Maharashtra State Probation and After Care Association to allow the use of the After Care Hostel in Chembur for released prisoners.

**1996**

- Impact of Prayas’ work in the criminal justice system seen through the interest, generated amongst NGOs and individuals to initiate work in this area. In 1996, the then Commissioner of Bilaspur Division in M.P., Mr. Harsh Mander, requests Prayas to help the district administration with prison reforms initiated there. Accordingly, **the Superintendent, Bilaspur District Jail makes a visit to Prayas along with his team. Prayas team subsequently goes to Bilaspur to conduct a training programme for NGOs and jail officials.** Result of this collaboration takes shape in the form of a project (Kiran) in Bilaspur. Similarly, other organizations in Nashik (Abhivyakti), Ahmedabad (Gram Vikas Kendra), Jalgaon, Pune and other parts of rural Maharashtra start communicating with Prayas and express their desire to start work in prisons.

**1999**

- **Prayas receives permission from the I.G Prisons’ Office, Maharashtra to work in Thane and Kalyan prisons** focusing on identifying women and young (male) prisoners who could be referred to judiciary for probation and other deinstitutionalization programmes.
• A corresponding development is permission received from the Director, DWCD, to work with Probation Officers in Thane district, towards developing the probation system.

2000

• Prayas receives permission to start work in Byculla District Prison.

2001

• Prayas now covers all prisons in Mumbai and Thane districts. Work is undertaken in Mumbai Central Prison, Thane Central Prison, Kalyan District and Byculla District Prisons.

• A study is done on cases eligible under Probation of Offenders Act and Borstal School Act in Mumbai and Thane Prisons and submitted to the State IDC for follow-up with the concerned Magistrates/District and Sessions Judge. In each case the request of the prisoner concerned and the suggestions of Prayas is submitted - in terms of calling for the P.O.’s report, speedy trial, request for personal bond, release on bail, reduction of bail amount, legal aid etc. In many cases, action is taken based on this information.

2002-2005

• As a result of State IDC meetings, the Dept. of Law and Judiciary writes a letter to the Registrar of Mumbai High Court, to prioritize cases of women and youth (16 to 23 years of age) in prison, for speedy trial.

• Prayas’ intervention in criminal justice leads to the following initiatives in prisons, with guidance, support and technical assistance from Prayas, and financial assistance from the SDTT:

  ➢ A student who did her field work in Prayas (Kalyan District Prison), an alumna of TISS, sets up Sudhar, an NGO based in M.P., working in prisons, juvenile institutions and community corrections.
  ➢ An ex-worker of Prayas, and alumni of TISS sets up VARHAD, an NGO working in prisons, police and in the community in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra.
  ➢ A human rights lawyer approaches Prayas with a desire to start work legal guidance and aid in prisons in Western Maharashtra (based in Pune) and sets up Human Rights and Legal Defenders, a project of Sahayog Trust.
  ➢ The Solapur Unit of Prayas helps start field placements of student social workers from Bharatiya Vidyapeeth, Solapur. This leads to the setting up of Sahaydri Trust, an NGO based in Solapur working in prisons and sub-jails.
• Prayas submits a note on women prisoners, released prisoners and children of prisoners to Principal Secretary, DWCD, and Government of Maharashtra to include suggestions made by Prayas for this group in the proposed Maharashtra State Policy for Women.

• At the request of the Hon’ble Lokayukta of Maharashtra, Prayas submits a report related to suggested improvements of the mulakat system for prisoners and their families. Most of the suggestions are accepted by the Hon’ble Lokayukta and included in his recommendations to the GoM, which accepts the same and starts the process of implementation. Prominent among them were suggestions to improve facilities within the mulakat room so as to provide an element of privacy during mulakats, improving facilities for drinking water and toilet facilities in the waiting room/mulakat shed, increasing the mulakat timings, and replacing the earlier system of submitting a ‘mulakat form’ by the relative concerned, by way of an entry in a ‘mulakat register’ to be maintained by a prison guard, at stipulated timings every day.

• Pratham, an NGO working on child rights, starts balwadi and literacy classes in prisons in Mumbai and Thane districts, at the initiative of Prayas

2005-2006

• A writ petition filed by PUCL about situation of women prisoners at Byculla District Prison in Mumbai High Court, leads to the formation of a Committee which gave several far reaching recommendations to improve the situation of women prisoners and their children. Prayas was a member of this Committee appointed by the Hon’ble High Court. Based on the report of the Committee, the Hon’ble High Court passed the following directions:

  ➢ Setting up of a panel of visiting medical officers from JJ Hospital consisting of a gynecologist, a pediatrician, a skin specialist and psychiatrist to visit the prison once a week.
  ➢ Appointment of a full-time female medical officer for the Women’s Section.
  ➢ Appointment of welfare officers to look into the needs of women prisoners and their children (yet to be implemented).
  ➢ Suggesting measures to improve the situation of lack of police escort for taking prisoners to court on their dates of appearance.
  ➢ The HC asks the State to submit data of all under trial prisoners in Maharashtra, to verify whether there are any under trial (UT) prisoners who have spent more than the maximum possible sentence under the charge for which they have been arrested. The said data of more than 25,000 UT prisoners was submitted to the Court by the prison department and was subsequently verified by Prayas, at the request of the Court. A list of prisoners was then submitted to the Court, after examination, based on which two under trial prisoners were identified who had exceeded their maximum sentence, both of whom were from Kalyan District Prison. The Hon’ble High Court immediately set the two prisoners free and the government was ordered to pay a compensation of Rs. 75,000/- and Rs. 50,000/- to each of them.
PUCL, with the help of Prayas, also submitted a list of UT prisoners who have completed more than one-third, more than 50 per cent and more than two-thirds of the maximum sentence as under trials (in cases where the maximum sentence was less than ten years), praying that they may be released on personal bond. Accordingly, such prisoners were set free on personal bond.

Based on Prayas’ recommendation, the Hon’ble Court passed general directions for release of under trial prisoners on personal bond based on certain criteria - any under trial prisoner, who is arrested in a case where the maximum sentence is less than three years, and the prisoners has spent more than six months from the date bail was granted to him/her, the UT should be released on personal bond. Similarly, if an under trial prisoner is arrested in a case where the maximum sentence is less than seven years and the prisoner has spent more than one year as an under trial from the date that bail was granted to him/her, the prisoner should be immediately released on personal bond by the magistrate/judge in the said case.

In a related PIL (Rajendra Bidkar and Sunil Shinde Vs. State of Maharashtra) on non-production of UT prisoners on their court dates, the HC asks the State to examine the feasibility of producing UTPs through the videoconferencing facility, instead of physically producing them in court, during the remand stage i.e. before the actual trials start in their cases in courts.

Prayas sends a team of its workers to Andhra Pradesh to study the implementation of the videoconferencing facility in AP prisons. Based on the findings of the team, a set of guidelines were submitted to the Hon’ble HC, regarding precautions to be taken if this facility were to be started in Maharashtra. The HC passed an order incorporating many of these guidelines, a first in the country.

The State IDC issues a G.R. constituting District IDCs in all districts under the chairmanship of the district judge to monitor problems of prisoners at the district level. Prayas suggests that NGOs working on prison issues should be included in these committees to increase transparency and bring field level problems to the notice of the authorities concerned. The G.R. is amended incorporating this suggestion.

Prayas organizes a State Level Workshop on Social Work Intervention in Criminal Justice, in collaboration with the Bombay Association of Trained Social Workers (BATSW), to promote field placements and projects by colleges of social work in Maharashtra and NGOs.
2006

- Prayas initiates a scoping study in collaboration with the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), Delhi, to create database on the civil society interventions within prisons across states in the country.

- Prayas team visits Nanded district and helps the Department of Social Work, Swami Ramanand Teerth (SRT) University, as a follow-up of the Prayas-BATSW Workshop, to start field placements of social work students in prisons and police stations. A workshop is organised by them with the support of Prayas on the Probation of Offenders Act and provisions relating to release on personal bond and legal aid.

- Yuva Parivartan, an NGO working on vocational training for youth in slums, starts vocational training activities in prisons in Mumbai and Thane districts, at the initiative of Prayas.

- Prayas receives a one-year funding support from UNDP for promoting legal access to justice for under trial prisoners in Mumbai and Thane districts, under the Strengthened Access to Justice in India Phase I (SAJI-I), a joint collaboration of the UNDP and the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice, G.O.I., Delhi

2007

- Prayas organizes two district-level Seminars for the judiciary and one State-level Workshop probation officers under the SAJI-I Project. The seminars and workshop were on themes related to release on personal bond, bail and the Probation of Offenders Act. The recommendations from these initiatives are being followed up with government departments concerned and the judiciary, towards their implementation.

- The Prayas team visits Ratnagiri district to promote work in prisons amongst NGOs in the district. One of the NGO volunteers starts a library inside prison. The Principal of Law College, Ratnagiri, agrees to start a legal aid clinic inside the prison. Pratham, another NGO, agrees to initiate literacy and computer literacy classes inside the prison.

2008

- The DWCD issues a circular, based on the recommendations of the SAJI-I Workshop and subsequent discussions with Prayas, nominating one probation officer in each district to act as a prison welfare-cum-liaison officer, whose job will be to visit the prison at least once a week, attend to problems faced by women prisoners and their children and arrange for visits between children of prisoners living in the community or in institutions and their parents in prison.

- Prayas-CHRI National Scoping Study on NGO interventions in prisons leads to a publication called Community Participation in Prisons: A Civil Society
**Perspective.** The study analysed the nature and extent of NGO intervention in prisons across the country. Prayas took up the responsibility of scoping the situation in the eight states in the Western and Southern regions namely, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. The data collection was done with the help of NGOs such as VARHAD, Amravati, Sudhar, Bhopal and Sahyadri, Solapur. Through this exercise, Prayas was able to establish links with like-minded organizations, leading to a working relationship with them, to meet with the long-term goal of the rehabilitation of prisoners and the issues relating to custody.

- With the culmination of the data collection phase of the project, a National Roundtable was organised by CHRI in Delhi, in January 2008. Prayas participated in the Roundtable and led the session on the Role of the Voluntary Sector in Custody and Rehabilitation of Prisoners.

**2009-2010**

- Towards strengthening the implementation of the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958, Prayas organised a meeting between the Superintendent of Byculla District Prison and the District Probation Officer. Following this meeting, a Prayas worker has been accompanying the Probation Officer for prison visits.

- Prayas team visits prisons in various parts of Maharashtra (as part of activating the District IDC Sub Committees) and Gujarat (as part of fostering new developments under the Mentoring Unit of Prayas) to highlight issues related to legal guidance and aid for under trial prisoners; services for children of prisoners; and vocational training, education and library facilities for prisoners. Prayas efforts have led to positive changes in Mumbai, Thane, Taloja, Alibaug, Savantwadi, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Solapur, Osmanabad, Buldhana, Akola, Aurangabad, Nasik, Nanded, Kolhapur, Jalgaon, Sangli, Dhule, Chandrapur, Surat, Vadodara (check with Sunil and Krupa), through the support of prison officials, district welfare departments, the judiciary and NGOs interested in prisoners’ welfare.
3. Juveniles in conflict with Law

Umerkhadi Observation Home, Mumbai

With the passing of the Juvenile Justice Act in 2000, the age of minor boys was increased from 16 to 18 years, thus reducing the population of male youth in prison and consequently leading to a substantial increase of minor boys in the observation homes across the country. These Homes were ill-equipped to handle this group of older boys, arrested in a range of minor and serious offences, both in terms of custodial care and rehabilitation. It was also found that the police continued to arrest boys in the 16-18 age group and send them to prison by ‘showing’ their age as above 18 years. Prayas came across many such cases which had to be brought to the notice of the judge concerned and then transferred to the JJB, after producing their age-proof certificate or getting their age-verification test done through court orders. As a logical extension of his work, the Prayas worker followed up these cases after they were transferred to the observation home in Mumbai. This led to the initiation of work with juveniles in conflict with law in Mumbai.

Milestones

2010

- A Prayas worker initiates an effort to identify and follow up cases of juveniles wrongly detained in prisons and later transferred to the Observation Home, Umerkhadi (as per the provisions of the JJ Act, 2000), from the point of view of their rehabilitation. The magistrate and members of the Juvenile Justice Board, Mumbai and Mumbai Suburban, in appreciation his efforts, request the Prayas social worker to remain present during the JJB sittings, so that cases in need to rehabilitation could be referred to Prayas.

- Referral of cases to Prayas starts from Observation Home and the David Sasoon Industrial School, a children’s institution under the JJ Act for juveniles in conflict with law.

2011

- Prayas received written permission from the Juvenile Justice Board, Mumbai to provide legal guidance to juveniles in conflict with law and work towards their rehabilitation.
4. Legal Aid and Courts

Efforts made in this area have resulted in increased attention to the legal needs of persons being processed by the CJS. In time, issues in regard to protection of legal rights and rehabilitation needs of the affected persons have become visible to this system. Being based within the CJS, social workers have attempted to sensitize the system and create networks to strengthen procedures.

1991

- **Prayas receives permission from the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (C.M.M.)** to look into the need for social work intervention in courts. Permission to meet under trials in the lock-up in Esplanade Court (where the Office of the C.M.M. is based) is granted, in view of their rehabilitation.

1992

- **A legal aid worker is appointed** to visit prison and identify cases for free legal aid, provide legal counseling to inmates, write applications for them and follow up of cases in courts.
- Prayas builds a **strong network of lawyers** to take up cases either free or for an honorarium at the Metropolitan and the Sessions courts. This becomes possible due to an increasing appreciation amongst the lawyers about the role being played by Prayas in the CJS.
- Prayas develops a good working relationship with the probation system, whereby **cases are referred to probation officers** or mutually discussed with them, before the social investigation reports are submitted to court by them.

1993-94

- A writ petition about the condition of the under trial prisoners, is filed *Suo Moto* by the Chief Justice of Mumbai High Court based on an article published in Times of India on the issue, where Prayas’ work is featured. **Prayas is made a Party Respondent to the PIL by the High Court to assist the Court.** Prayas brings several pertinent issues to the notice of the Court, e.g. arrangement of police escorts for female under trial prisoners, under use of government legal aid scheme, grant of bail on personal bond, implementation of Probation of Offenders Act, etc.
- In pursuance to the orders of the High Court based on suggestions made by Prayas, **the State constitutes an Inter Departmental Committee to look into custodial issues and bottlenecks in rehabilitation of prisoners in CJS in Maharashtra.**
- As **legal aid work stabilises, prisoners from all over Maharashtra**, namely Thane, Kalyan, Yeravada, Nashik Road, Amravati, Kolhapur and Ratnagiri **send requests to**...
Prayas for legal aid and guidance. Prayas responds by giving them relevant legal information, referring them to appropriate authorities, offices or agencies and in certain cases, to the High Court, I.G. (Prisons), NHRC, etc.

- Prayas starts work at CMM Court at Esplanade Court Complex Mumbai to explore the role for the social worker in courts, which includes helping people approaching the court with legal awareness and counseling, writing applications on their behalf, networking with lawyers for legal aid, referring deserving cases to the magistrates for probation and presenting psycho-social facts of a case at the request of the magistrates.

- Judiciary (magistrates/judges) starts referring cases to Prayas for social investigation reports and for rehabilitation purposes.

1995

- Prayas receives permission from the Principal Judge, Sessions Court, Mumbai, to bring cases of under trial prisoners to the notice of the judiciary from the point of view of their rehabilitation. Permission to meet the judges and interview under trial prisoners brought to court premises is also granted through this permission.

1997

- Prayas starts an information counter at Esplanade Court. At this counter, accused persons, complainants, litigants and their families coming to court are provided guidance with regard to the various court procedures and general directions in the court.

1998-2000

- At the request of the C.M.M., Prayas organises a month-long legal awareness campaign on making domicile certificates for students approaching the metropolitan courts to get their domicile certificates made (after passing their S.S.C and H.S.C. examinations, to get admission to professional colleges). This experiment is a major success with hundreds of students benefitting from the campaign and getting their domicile certificates made without paying bribes or being exploited by touts. Based on suggestions made by Prayas after this exercise, the GoM simplifies the application form and decentralizes the domicile certificate-making process by increasing the number of court centres where these could be obtained.

- Prayas makes active efforts to improve the functioning of the legal aid system and following up this issue with the C.M.M. and officials of the Greater Mumbai Legal Services Authority, the office bearers of the Bar Association and the lawyers.

- As a result of these efforts, legal aid camps are organised in prisons in Mumbai and Thane, with the help of Prayas from time to time, where lawyers from the legal aid
panel give legal guidance to prisoners, and requests made by prisoners for free legal aid are forwarded to the Legal Services Authority for appropriate action.

2001

- As a result of Prayas’ continuous follow up with IDC, since 2001, **senior students of the Government Law College start visiting Mumbai Central Prison and later also Byculla District Prison to carry out legal guidance work** and write applications on behalf of the prisoners (as part of their graded field work). An average of 400 applications are written each year by these students on behalf of under trial prisoners on issues as release on bail, reduction of bail, release on personal bond, release on probation, etc.

- As a result of Prayas’ efforts, the **government legal aid panel is revised and Duty Counsels appointed in Mumbai and Thane prisons.**

- The need to appoint lawyers for under trial prisoners through the Prayas panel is reducing with each passing year, due to improvements in the legal aid system.

2002

- **Prayas is appointed as a member of Mumbai District IDC** where it presents cases and requests for cooperation of the probation department and police in the rehabilitation of these cases.
2004

- **Prayas is appointed as a member on the Committee of Mumbai District Legal Services Authority.** This has helped in raising field issues relating to access to legal aid for under trial prisoners and others from vulnerable sections of society and also improved the quality of legal aid services through networking and advocacy.

2005-06

- Prayas organizes **legal awareness camps** on Slum Rehabilitation Act, Probation of Offenders Act, Immoral Traffic Prevention Act and provisions relating to bail and personal bond in the community, prisons and protective homes, in collaboration with the Mumbai District Legal Services Authority.

- Prayas organises a **one-week legal training programme for NGOs** working within CJS. NGOs working in the CJS from Maharashtra, Gujarat and M.P. participate in the course.

2006-07

- Prayas under takes a small **study with the help of TISS social work students** placed in prisons, on the **implementation of the guidelines issued by the Hon’ble Mumbai High Court on production of under trial prisoners through the video conferencing facility in Mumbai and Thane districts.**

- The findings of the Study are presented along with findings from the SAJI-I project (implemented by Prayas in Mumbai and Thane districts) at the **National Round Table on Access to Justice** in Delhi, organized by the UNDP and the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice, G.O.I. Most of the **recommendations made by Prayas have been included in the final recommendations to be submitted to the government by the SAJI-I Team.**

2007- 2008

- The issue of **increments to the employees of the DLSA Mumbai** was pursued by Prayas at the meeting of the Mumbai District Legal Services Authority and a resolution was passed to give additional increments to legal aid staff, whose salaries are not at par with the court staff.

- A decision has been taken to **increase the honorarium given to lawyers on the free legal aid panel.** This raise in honorarium was from Rs. 600/- to Rs. 1400/- in the metropolitan courts and from Rs. 900/- to Rs. 1800/- in the session’s court. This is a significant development as the current rates do not even cover basic expenses incurred by the lawyers. The low honorarium paid to legal aid lawyers affects the quality of services provided by them. However, at the ground level, this decision is yet to be implemented.
• Prayas has also been highlighting the delay in the payment of honorarium to lawyers representing under trial prisoners while being produced on their court dates through the video conferencing facility. This affects the quality of legal services are provided to prisoners. Prayas has repeatedly brought this issue in the meetings of the DLSA, Mumbai.

• With a senior Prayas social worker attached to the DLSA Office, cases needing legal aid and guidance are being taken up. These were cases of minors who were processed and convicted by the adult system, persons undergoing externment proceedings (even after they had been rehabilitated) and under trial prisoners eligible for release on personal bond under the amended section 436 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

• It had been observed that in petty matters being heard by the morning court (indecent behavior in public places, hawking in public places, ticketless traveling, etc.), accused persons were summarily tried and given sentences that were disproportionate to the nature of offences that they were accused of. Through continual dialogue with the magistrates of the morning courts, Section 3 (release of the accused on admonition) of the Probation of Offenders Act is now being used in cases of petty and first-time offenders. This is leading to avoidance of criminalization of petty and first-time offenders and positively impacting overcrowding in prisons.

• Prayas contributed to the State Legal Services Conference by raising the point of persons languishing in prison under preventive detention (Chapter Proceedings under the Cr. P.C.) and those arrested on suspicion (Section 122 of Bombay Police Act). The Executive Chairperson of the Maharashtra State Legal Services Authority directed all the district judges in Maharashtra to examine the situation and take the necessary action to forthwith release such cases.

• A seminar on Law and Poverty was organised by Prayas for the judiciary to highlight the situation of weaker sections in prison. The possibility of using provisions of release on personal bond and the use of correctional laws to address problems faced by these sections were discussed in detail. Recommendations emerging from this seminar were compiled and forwarded to the High Court Legal Services Committee. Prayas is currently following up the recommendations to convert them into directions for the lower judiciary in the Criminal Manual.

• A district level seminar was held in Thane in co-ordination with the V.P.M.’s TMC Thane Law College & Thane District Legal Services Authority on “Role of Duty Counsels and Legal Aid Lawyers: Issues and Challenges”. It was attended by judicial magistrates & session’s judges from Thane district, prison officials, probation officers, legal aid lawyers and students and faculty of Thane Law College. The seminar was aimed at encouraging judicial officers to refer cases for probation, use of the personal bond for those who cannot avail of surety / cash bail, and to take steps needed to improve the legal aid scheme.

• A Prayas social worker, who was earlier based in Kalyan prison is placed in the Office of the Thane DLSA twice a week towards identifying the role of a social worker in the
legal aid system. He also liaises with the social workers from Thane and Kalyan prisons to follow up cases requiring legal aid.

- With the active support of the Member-Secretary of the Mumbai Legal Services Authority, an interaction between departments concerned is held to discuss the issues related to the rescue and rehabilitation of the victims of trafficking. Judicial officers working under the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, Superintendents and Probation officers from Special Rehabilitation Home for Minor Girls, Government Protective Home and Reception Centre and NGOs working towards the rescue and rehabilitation of trafficked victims attended the meeting to address the problems faced by the authorities while working for rescue and rehabilitation and how the same could be removed by ensuring proper co-ordination.

- In co-ordination with the Mumbai District Legal Services Authority, Prayas organises a series of interaction sessions with judicial officers, probation officers, police, legal aid lawyers and NGO representatives. These interactive sessions were organized at the Mumbai, Sewri and Dindoshi Sessions Courts, and the Esplanade, Dadar, Kurla and Vikhroli Metropolitan Courts. The subjects discussed were the use of the PO and Borstal Schools Acts, provisions relating to personal bond and the legal rights of children of prisoners.

- A capacity building session for newly appointed legal aid lawyers of DLSA is conducted during which skill inputs were provided by senior members of the bar.

- Legal awareness sessions are organized in collaboration with the District Legal Services Authority for slum dwellers (who were being criminally processed for not possessing residence proof documents prior to 1995 at the time of the survey conducted by the Collector under the Slum Rehabilitation Act), for slum dwellers on legal provisions of the Slum Rehabilitation Scheme, for BMC workers on recovery of loans by money lenders and for youth from Dharavi on legal rights of citizens.

2009-2010

Meeting with JOTI, Nagpur

- A meeting is held with the Director, Judicial Officers’ Training Institute (JOTI) at Nagpur, which is the nodal training institution for judicial officers of Maharashtra, with the following objectives:
  - To include social legislations such as Probation of Offenders Act, 1958, Borstal Schools Act, 1929 and the Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act, 1956 in the syllabus of the judicial officers training; and
  - To organize legal sensitization seminars for judicial officers in JOTI on the above mentioned topics.
Based on the directions of the Director, the social worker met the judge who was on the Syllabus Committee of the JOTI. He agreed to include the suggested syllabus proposed by Prayas and requested for reference material and resources persons for the same.

- **Prayas social worker is included as a member of the MDLSA Committee for a period of three years**

- The Maharashtra State Legal Services Authority (MSLSA) in a recent meeting passed a resolution pertaining to raising the honorarium paid to lawyers on par with that of public prosecutors. On implementation of the said resolution, lawyers of the legal aid panel will be entitled to an honorarium of Rs. 1000/- per day, a first in the country.

- **Prayas** initiated a **pilot project of placing social workers in the court setting**. A project proposal was submitted by Prayas and two meetings were conducted with Smt. Ranjana Desai, Hon’ble Justice and Shri J. N. Patel, Hon’ble Justice of the Mumbai High Court. In the second meeting, Justice J.N. Patel also the Executive Chairman of the Maharashtra State Legal Services Authority, accepted the proposal and agreed to provide space and the necessary permission to Prayas in the premises of the Mumbai Sessions and the Thane Sessions Courts on an experimental basis.

- **Prayas started work in the Mumbai Sessions and the Thane Sessions Courts** along with the district legal aid staff. As per the permission, Prayas workers were given space in the offices of the Mumbai & Thane District Legal Services Authority. Besides this, all the judicial officers of the Mumbai and Thane district were directed to look into cases referred by the Prayas workers for release on probation, personal bond, cases under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, cases for legal aid and cases of children of prisoners.

- Based on the feedback received from the Superintendent of the Protective Home about the **wrongful practice by the Mumbai Sessions Court of releasing rescued victims on bail** (through advocates hired by pimps and gharwalis using fake identities of relatives), the social worker brought this matter to the attention of the Principal Judge, City Civil & Sessions Court. The recent Mumbai High Court judgment and other relevant material were also submitted. The **Sessions Court has now refrained from releasing such victims on bail**.

- The Mumbai High Court with the help of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has been in the process of starting a permanent Lok Nyayalaya in the Mumbai criminal courts. The Maharashtra State Legal Services Authority (MSLSA) requested Prayas to provide a list of social workers to act as panel members in the permanent Lok Nyayalayas. Names of eight Prayas social workers have been submitted to establish permanent positions in the judicial set-up and to partially achieve Prayas’ objective of creating a cadre of social workers within the judicial system. The Mumbai High Court has started its first permanent Lok Nyayalaya at the Ballard Pier Metropolitan Court and the rest are in the formation process.
• The NALSA appoints a Prayas worker on its Mumbai District Committee for conducting legal awareness programmes for CJS functionaries and the public.

• In a joint venture with the DWCD, Mumbai District Legal Services Authority and Suburban Mumbai District Legal Services Authority, Prayas organised a seminar on the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958 at the Small Causes Court.

• A sensitization-cum-legal awareness seminar for judges, magistrates and legal aid panel lawyers is held at the Police Club premises in Mumbai. More than 150 judicial officers from Mumbai Sessions Court and other Metropolitan Courts along with 50 legal aid panel lawyers attended the seminar. The seminar stressed on the loopholes in the present legal aid schemes and arrived at suggestions.

• Prayas conducts a training programme for probation officers deputed to women’s institutions. This was done in the light of the fact that there were probation officers who had been transferred from other departments within the DWCD and had not been trained for their responsibilities. The Programme was conducted once a week over seven weeks. 28 probation officers were deputed to attend the training.

• A series of awareness programmes have been organised with financial support from NALSA:

  ➢ A legal awareness program on rights of workers was organized in co-ordination with Kherwadi Social Welfare Association and Mumbai District Legal Services Authority (MDLSA) at Kherwadi. The Prayas social worker along with a retired Labour Court judge spoke on the rights of the workers and Free Legal Aid scheme of MDLSA. More than 200 workers attended the programme.
  ➢ A legal awareness program on the rights of woman prisoners was organized in Byculla Prison.
  ➢ A legal awareness programme on Women’s Rights & Law was organized at the Korba Mithagar slum, Wadala, BDD Chawls at Worli and SNDT University. More than 300 women attended each of the programmes.
  ➢ Prayas along with Mumbai District Legal Services Authority (MDLSA) organized an awareness program on the occasion of Workers’ Day for rag pickers in collaboration with Apnalaya. The session focused on the rights of workers, the historical struggle of the workers’ movement, the ground realities of the unorganized sector and ways to redress the grievances of the workers.
  ➢ A legal awareness programme on child rights and the JJ Act was organized at Observation Home, Umerkhadi by Prayas and the District Legal Services Authority.
  ➢ A legal awareness programme was organized in the premises of the Thane District and Sessions Court by the Thane District Legal Services Authority (TDLSA) and Prayas on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and problems faced by the unorganized sector in getting their dues as workers from their employers. This programme was significant as it was attended by people from the community in large numbers.
5. Coordination between the sub-systems of the Criminal Justice and Allied Systems

Prayas’ work with women and male youth under trial prisoners has resulted in the identification of specific areas which if attended to could impact on custodial conditions for persons being processed by the CJS. One major area that required addressing was the coordination between the prison department and other government departments that played a role in the lives of under trials.

In 1996 and 2005 respectively, responding to a suggestion made by Prayas in PILs¹, the Hon’ble High Court issued directions for State and District Inter Departmental Committees on Prisoners to reduce coordination problems in the CJS. However, since these structure are not functioning as they were intended to, Prayas has been confronted with the task of mobilizing the system.

Milestones

A. Advocacy on issues relating to women in custody and institutions

Milestones

1995

- Prayas receives permission from the Dy. Director, DWCD, Maharashtra to interview women in the Govt. Protective Home, Mumbai.

- Prayas receives permission to start social work intervention with women/girls rescued from prostitution, with a full-time social worker placed in the Government Protective Home for Women (persons above 18 years of age) rescued from prostitution.

1996

- In February 1996, the Mumbai Police raids red light areas in Central Mumbai, in response to a writ petition filed *Suo Moto* by the Chief Justice of Mumbai High Court and rescues around 484 minor girls from prostitution. Prayas submits a report on its observations and suggestions related to rehabilitation to the Hon’ble Court.

- Due to Prayas’ involvement in rehabilitation effort, the government requests Prayas to start vocational training activities at the Special Home for Juveniles (which was set up under High Court orders) at Deonar.

1996-99

- Prayas receives permission from Director, Women and Child Welfare, Pune, to start work at the Special Juvenile Home at Deonar, with focus on vocational

¹ Shabnam Minwala Vs State of Maharashtra in 1994 and PUCL, Sunil Shinde and Rajendra Bidkar Vs State of Maharashtra in 2005
training and networking towards repatriation. During this phase, Prayas is engaged in pioneering efforts to identify gaps in the implementation of the ITPA, in terms of the role of the police, the judiciary, protective home and NGOs towards the rescue and rehabilitation of victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

Specific Changes:

*Vis a Vis Police*

- Increased focus on the role of the police in rescue of women/girls from prostitution.

- Improved coordination between Protective Home and rescuing police stations regarding arrangement of escorts, recovery of property etc, through creation of a platform where both exchange their specific problems and ask for advice/suggestions.

- This effort results in a circular (P.N. Para) issued by the Commissioner of Police, Mumbai to all police stations in January 1997, instructing the police to recover personal property of rescued persons, rescue of children / relatives, provision of escort to a specified NGO where the person is being sent, and coordination with Protective Home staff and Prayas in connections with all issues above.

- The D.C.P. (E.O.U.) made the liaison officer for Prayas and the other NGOs working on the issue of rescue and rehabilitation of women from prostitution.

- The practice of producing rescued persons before a magistrate re-started (as per section 16 of ITPA), which has ensured that no rescued woman is handed over to persons of dubious background.

*Vis a vis Judiciary*

- As an outcome of continuous sensitization of magistrates about the provisions of the ITPA, the report of the probation officer is now being called for (as per section 17 of ITPA) by the magistrates before deciding each case.

- Organising regular meetings with magistrates to clarify the role of different implementing agencies including that of NGOs like Prayas with regard to various sections of the ITPA.

- A workshop is organized by students of TISS placed through Prayas, attended by the Hon’ble C.M.M., the magistrates of Mazagaon, Girgaon and Mulund Courts, the D.C.P. of Zone II, police officials from Nagpada, D.B.Marg and V.P.Road police stations, staff of rescue homes and DWCD officials regarding the implementation of the ITPA.

*Vis a vis DWCD*
• A Probation Officer is appointed at the Protective Home, after Prayas demonstrates the need for a welfare officer and raises this issue with the Department for Women and Child Development. A Medical Officer and medical unit is also attached to the Home. The PO and the Prayas social worker reach a stage where they work in close collaboration with each other to work out a plan of action in each case.

• Networks are established with NGOs working in vulnerable districts from across the country from where women / minors are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

• Prayas is made an Invitee Member in the Guidance and Monitoring Committee for custodial institutions for rescued women and minors, set up under the orders of the Mumbai High Court to improve the rehabilitation process. Prayas has been actively participating in the meetings of the said committee along with other NGOs like Prerana, CCDT, IJM, FACSE, etc.

2001-2004

• The Superintendent of Female Beggars Home, Mumbai requests Prayas to initiate vocational activities for the residents of the Female Beggars’ Home.

• Prayas attends meetings called by the Central Advisory Committee to Combat Trafficking of Women and Children, by the MWCD, GOI.

• Prayas organizes a two-day National Workshop on Laws Related to Trafficking: Towards a Rescue and Post-Rescue Strategy, in collaboration with the NHRC (27th-28th February, 2004), in Mumbai. Participants from the departments of women and child development, social welfare, police, probation, judiciary, advocates, legal aid authorities and representatives of NGOs from eleven States participate in the workshop to deliberate about the issues and problems relating to prevention of trafficking, rescue and rehabilitation. Detailed recommendations emerge from the workshop, which is forwarded to the NHRC.

• The report of the National Workshop on Laws relating to Trafficking, organized by Prayas in collaboration with the NHRC, is released at a formal function by the Chairperson, NHRC in New Delhi on 24th August, in the presence of the members of the Commission, government officials, NGOs and the media. The Commission adopts the recommendations of the report and forwards the same to the Department of Women Child Development, GOI for its consideration.

• Prayas submits suggestions on the draft amendments to the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, based on the recommendations of the National Workshop to the DWCD, G.O.I.
• Prayas is an invitee member to the National Expert Committee of the Swadhar Scheme, a grant-in-aid scheme of the MWCD, GOI, for NGOs working with ‘women in difficult circumstances’.

• Meeting with the Home Minister, GoM:

- The Governor of Maharashtra had written to the Chief Minister asking him to examine a proposal to legalise prostitution in the State. In response to this letter, Prayas requested Justice Dharmadhikari (Retd.) to call a meeting with the GoM to oppose the move. In our view, legalisation of the trade would lead to increased trafficking of women and children and would be detrimental all efforts at rescue and rehabilitation of this exploited section of the population.
- At our request, Justice Dharmadhikari wrote to the Home Minister, Shri R.R. Patil who convened an Inter-Departmental meeting on this issue at Mantralaya on the 12th of July, 2004. The meeting was attended by senior officials from the Departments of Home, Women and Child Development, Law and Judiciary, Technical Education, Commissioner of Police, Mumbai, NGOs, and members of the press.
- The meeting took a policy decision that Government of Maharashtra will not take any steps to legalize prostitution in the State (as had been suggested by the Governor through a letter to the CM) and resolved to take all steps necessary to combat the menace of trafficking of women and children and make all possible efforts to rehabilitate victims of trafficking. The meeting was widely reported in the marathi press and had the desired effect to counter any move to legalize the trade. As a result of this meeting, the Mumbai Police Commissioner undertook a major initiative to carry out sustained raids on beer bars, massage parlours, hotels, lodges and red-light areas to rescue minor girls and women forced into this trade.
- A decision was taken to form a State level Advisory Committee on Immoral Traffic chaired by the Home Department. Accordingly, A G.R. has been issued by the Home Department constituting such a Committee chaired by the Addl. Chief Secretary (Home). Prayas and a few other NGOs working in the field are members of this Committee. This forum has given a space to Prayas and others working in this field to raise issues relevant to rescue, rehabilitation and trafficking with the government.

2004 – 2006

• Prayas submits detailed suggestions to the GoM towards a draft State Policy on Rescue and Rehabilitation of Trafficked Women and Children.

• Prayas drafts the State Rules for the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act and submits them to the DWCD, GoM. The Draft Rules under ITPA are adopted by the DWCD, after a series of consultations with government departments concerned and civil society organizations working in the field of trafficking of women and children.

• Prayas is invited by the Central Advisory Committee to Combat Trafficking of Women and Children to be a member of the Sub-committee on Rehabilitation. The
Sub-committee is constituted to prepare a rehabilitation scheme for victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

- **Prayas receives a grant from the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD), Government of India of Rs. 4.7 lacs** for the work it is doing towards the rehabilitation of women and minors in prostitution. This is in addition to the annual grant of Rs. 2.5 lacs from the Central Social Welfare Board that we have been receiving for our work with women and children.

**2006-07**

- Prayas organizes a *two-month training programme for care-taking staff of government institutions for women* in Mumbai on socio-legal aspects of care and rehabilitation.

- Ministry of WCD, G.O.I. suggests that Prayas applies for a grant under a newly formed scheme for the rehabilitation of trafficked women and children, Ujjawala².

- The Superintendent, Govt. Protective Home requests Prayas to *initiate the NGO Placement Programme for residents of the Protective Home*.

**2009-2010**

- **Maharashtra State Rules for Immoral Traffic Prevention Act** get notified.

- Discussions are held with Dy. Commissioner (Women’s Development) of the DWCD and the District WCD Officer, Mumbai, to explore the possibility of an MoU with the Department, to establish a bridge service which links institutionalized women with the outside world, and to provide such women with post-release services. The DWCDO calls for a meeting with the Superintendents of the Protective Home, reception Centre for Women and Female Beggars’ Home and Prayas to work out the modalities of the tie-up. This meeting leads to an *MoU between Prayas and the DWCD* with following terms and conditions:

  - **Space and infrastructure support** will be provided in the complex where Prayas will carry out an income generation programme and counseling of women residing in these institutions.
  - **Income generation activities for women residing in the three institutions** will organised by Prayas. Currently, these activities include embroidery and patch work items, which are used in making the Prayas product line. Women are trained and paid on a piece rate basis at this Centre. Cases are referred by the three institutions on a regular basis to Prayas for counseling, guidance and legal aid.
  - Clients referred by the three institutions will also be sent for exposure to work in the various units in the institutions – kitchen, gardening, tailoring, office work, etc.

² 2011: Application for grants under scheme Ujjawalla still pending as Prayas does not run a shelter home (but is instead exploring non institutional shelter options).
whereby they will be paid a **monthly stipend to residents by Prayas** and their progress monitored by Prayas and the institutional staff.

- The Employment Unit of Prayas will liaise with the institutions to **find employment options for women** coming out of these institutions.
- **Security and health will remain the responsibility of the institutions**, while they are placed with Prayas.

This MoU has been a major step towards the Department recognizing the need to create rehabilitation services for institutionalized women. Services provided at this Centre include vocational training, educational support, repatriation, increasing connections with family and the placement of residents through the Prayas NGO Placement programme.

Over the last year, it was observed that while options for shelter have increased, procedures for admission continue to cause hurdles especially in the case of emergency situations. In 2009-10, Prayas has been in dialogue with the Superintendents of the institutions to explore possibilities for admission with minimum procedures. Prayas has been bringing up these issues at various fora and meetings.

- **Prayas has been in dialogue with the Ministry for Women & Child Development, Govt. of India and the Department of Women & Child Development (DWCD), Govt. of Maharashtra, to highlight the need for a special scheme for women released from institutions.**

- **Visits were made to various shelter homes** in an effort to identify issues relevant to rehabilitation of women living in shelter homes and incorporate them in a proposed rehabilitation scheme for persons released from custodial institutions. Visits were also made to the **National Commission for Women, the Ministry of Women & Child Development and to the NHRC** to discuss the needs of women in the post-institutionalization phase and the need for a government scheme for their rehabilitation.

- **A research on the status of rehabilitation services for women in institutions** was undertaken in Maharashtra with the permission and support of DWCD. During this year, institutions for women and children in Mumbai, Raigad, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Aurangabad, Paithan, Satara, Kolhapur, Sangli, Amravati, Yavatmal, Akola, Buldhana, Washim, Nagpur, Bhandara, Gondia, Chandrapur, Gadchiroli, and Wardha were visited.
- The findings demonstrated the need for specialised after-care services for women released from institutions. An interim report is in the process of being drafted.

- Simultaneously, during this period, dialogue continued with the DWCD, GoM on this issue. The above mentioned research culminated in a **state level workshop on the issue of rehabilitation of women after discharge from institutions**.

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3 Some of the suggestions arrived at were later presented before the Justice Dharmadhkari Committee that led to notification of directions to state run and supported institutions.
• A Committee to Prevent Atrocities Against Women, chaired by Hon’ble Justice Dharmadhikari (Retd.) is set up by the GoM, in response to the rising incidents of crimes against women in the state. Prayas is a member of this Committee.

• Prayas submits suggestions in regard to procedures for women in state homes, protective homes for women and prisons before the Justice Dharmadhikari Committee.

• This results in a GR relating to admission procedures, eligibility for admission, reasons for discharge, custodial conditions and rehabilitation of women in custody.

• Submissions for the rehabilitation of women in commercial sexual exploitation is made before the Panel of Sex Workers appointed by the Supreme Court in Budhadev Karamaskar Vs. State of West Bengal.
B. Advocacy with regard to probation services and schemes for prisoners and their children

In addition to the regular work inside prisons, Prayas has consistently attempted to focus on implementation of the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958\(^4\), the Maharashtra Grant-in-Aid Scheme for Released Prisoners and the *Bal Sangopan Yojana*\(^5\) for children of prisoners. Follow-up meetings with the District Probation Officer of Mumbai and Thane districts were held for this purpose. Lack of necessary documents is a major hindrance for access to most welfare schemes, as is the case with these schemes. Attempts at referring individual cases for this purpose are a result of post-release needs of prisoners and requests from Probation Officers to refer cases.

*Milestones*

**2006-2008**

- With the support of the District and Sessions Judge, Prayas organizes *seminars for the judiciary on the relevance and use of the P.O. Act, 1958*. Likewise, *interactions with probation officers* helps in eliciting their experiences and views. These interactions have sensitised judicial officers and helped bring out their views on the use of the Act. Interactions with probation officers has helped in understanding their grievances vis a vis their department and the judiciary. Some of these included the inadequacy of cases being referred by the judiciary, poor staff strength and burdening them with additional responsibilities by their department.

- As a part of the overall development of correctional services in the state, *Prayas initiates and organises a two-day workshop on correctional laws in collaboration with the Department of Social Work, SRT University, Nanded*. The workshop aimed at raising issues before the judiciary regarding the utilization and implementation of the Probation of Offenders Act, the Borstal Schools Act, and provisions relating to release on Personal Bond.

- *Prayas organizes a State Level Workshop on “Probation Services: Issues and Challenges”* for probation officers, in collaboration with the Department of Women and Child Development, GoM, in Pune October 2007. The Workshop was attended by officers from the Probation Wing and discussions were directed towards addressing operational issues. The outcomes from the Workshop included the creation of a first-ever discussion forum on ground level issues, identification of specific bottlenecks at

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\(^4\) The P.O. Act, 1958 provides for non-institutional and community-based rehabilitation of young offenders, first-timers and those arrested in less serious offences. Under this Act, the court can call for a social enquiry report from a ‘probation officer’, and release the accused pleading or ‘found’ guilty on admonition or on a ‘bond of good behaviour’ with or without sureties and with or without additional conditions, for a period of one to three years. For details, refer to [http://indiankanoon.org/doc/167447/](http://indiankanoon.org/doc/167447/) and [http://court.mah.nic.in/courtw eb/criminal/pdf/chapter11.pdf](http://court.mah.nic.in/courtw eb/criminal/pdf/chapter11.pdf) retrieved on November 8, 2011.

\(^5\) This scheme is implemented by the DWCD, GoM, under which children without parental support are supported through a fostership scheme, whereby the foster family gets a monthly grant of Rs. 400/- per child till the age of 18 years.
the ground and policy level and an assurance by the Jt. Commissioner, DWCD, GoM, to set up a Committee to examine the recommendations from the Workshop and revise the State Rules under the P.O. Act accordingly.

2008-2010

- Prayas initiates exploration of the option of use of probation services for women prisoners, and organises a meeting between the Superintendent, Byculla District Prison and the District Probation Officer, Mumbai District. The meeting was conducted in the office of the Superintendent, Byculla District Prison. Issues such as procedures for increasing Probation Officers’ visits to Women Barracks, and referral of cases to Probation Officers were discussed. Following this, the social worker accompanied the Probation Officer on prison visits, and followed up on the decisions taken in regard to strengthening of probation services for prisoners.

- Prayas undertakes a ground-level understanding of the existing probation services in Mumbai city. Services of probation officers are available for different categories of vulnerable persons, namely prisoners, juveniles in conflict with law, children in need of care and protection, and women residing in institutions (such as Female Beggars Home, State Homes, reception Centres and Protective Homes). One social worker of Prayas was deputed to study the structure of services provided. Initially, the focus of the study was the probation system at Observation Home, Umerkhadi, followed by a study of the same in Mumbai District and its suburbs. The study focused on obtaining an understanding about the role, process, gaps and procedures of decision-making regarding children. Different aspects relating to the implementation of the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958 were explored. Literature on the probation system in other countries, to understand the principles, policies and objectives behind the implementation of the Act in developed countries, was also studied.

- In order to promote the access of schemes for prisoners and their children, meetings with probation officers in Mumbai and Mumbai Suburban are held to explore availing government schemes for women and for children of women in custody. The social workers of Prayas were directed to get in touch with NGOs who receive funding under the Bal Sangopan Yojana. A form was drafted to be filled up by women prisoners for referral to the Bal Sangopan Yojana. A meeting was held in this regard with the Superintendent of Byculla District Prison to work out the modalities. It has been decided that cases will be referred to the Probation Officers by the prison and Prayas will follow up the cases.

- Prayas initiates a dialogue with the Superintendents of the Byculla District Prison and Kalyan District Prison towards starting anganwadis for children in prison under the ICDS.

C. Health rights of persons in custody and institutions
Prayas has been working to secure access to basic health services for custodial populations and those vulnerable to destitution since its inception. While most of this work has been on a case-to-case basis, attempts have been made from time to time to bring it to policy level with some success. Post 2008, Prayas began a systematic exercise wherein issues concerned with the health of women in custodial institutions were enlisted for the purpose of bringing them to the attention of the health authorities. Some of these issues were: the need for para-medical workers attached to shelter homes, the difficulties confronting persons without family support in accessing in-patient treatment in government hospitals, facilities for persons with special medical needs (pregnancy, HIV, etc), age verification procedures conducted on female inmates by male doctors, the spread of communicable diseases within custody, mental health issues, etc.

Prayas established contact with the Directorate of Health Services, Government of Maharashtra with the aim of raising before them the health issues of persons in custody. The initial contact was made within the context of proposing the increased participation of the Health Department within custody as well as during the post discharge/release phases.

**Milestones**

**1996-1999**

- **A Medical Officer and medical unit** is also attached to the Protective Home, Mumbai as a result of discussion with the Secretary, DWCD, GoM, regarding problems faced by women rescued from commercial sexual exploitation residing in the Protective Home.

**2000**

- A circular is issued by the Municipal Commissioner, B.M.C. instructing all municipal hospitals to admit destitute persons referred by Prayas without a 24-hour full-time escort being provided with the patient during the hospitalisation period.

- The Executive Health Officer of the Public Health Department, BMC, **issues a circular to all Medical Officers of Municipal Hospitals making it mandatory to include the permanent address of the mother in the birth certificate of children of imprisoned mothers (and not the prison address)**.

**2006**

- **Prayas intervenes in a Supreme Court PIL on under trial prisoners (R. D. Upadhyay Vs. State of A.P. and Others)**, by presenting the findings of the study on children of prisoners. Following this, the SC passed orders for implementation of suggestions made in the book, in regard to setting up of balwadis outside prisons, up scaling the diet of pregnant women, nursing mothers and children, special provisions for health care of children, provisions for visiting pediatrician, and psychiatrist inside prison; and provisions for special clothing and utensils for children. In addition, SC
passed orders wherein the mother’s permanent address was to be declared in the birth certificates of the children (and not the prison address).

- A writ petition filed by PUCL about situation of women prisoners at Byculla District Prison in Mumbai High Court, leads to the formation of a Committee which gave several far reaching recommendations to improve the situation of women prisoners and their children. **Prayas was a member of this Committee appointed by the Hon’ble High Court.** Based on the report of the Committee, the Hon’ble High Court passed the following directions:
  
  - Setting up of a **panel of visiting medical officers** from JJ Hospital consisting of a gynecologist, a pediatrician, a skin specialist and psychiatrist to visit the prison once a week.
  - Appointment of a **full-time female medical officer** for the Women’s Section.

**2008-10**

- Prayas has a meeting with the Superintendent, Byculla District Prison to discuss the need for mental health services for women prisoners. With his consent, Prayas decides to explore the possibility of placing students pursuing masters-level degree in counselling for their field work.

- To this end, Prayas writes to the Department of Applied Psychology, Mumbai University and thereafter, makes a **presentation at the National Seminar on ‘Psychology in India’ on the need for psychological intervention in custodial institutions**, with the aim of encouraging psychology professionals to initiate and support work within custody.

- Prayas begins a process of **dialogue with organizations providing mental health services** such as J.J. Hospital, K.E.M. Hospital and the Thane Mental Hospital. A plan is worked out whereby Prayas would organise awareness sessions in women’s institutions and cases would be identified to facilitate their access to specialised services. Three sessions on understanding and dealing with stress are organized and conducted in the women’s institutions.

- **TISS social work students placed through Prayas** collect data in women’s institutions such as the Women Section of the Byculla District Prison, the Navjeevan Mahila Vastigruha, the Kasturba Mahila Vastigruha and the Female Beggars Home, to **identify current health concerns within custodial institutions**.

- Prayas approaches the Directorate, Medical Education and Research (DMER) and submits a proposal requesting them to initiate health education programmes in custodial institutions. The Joint Director, DMER, issues a letter to four hospitals under its jurisdiction to respond to the Prayas proposal. Eventually, Prayas receives a copy of a letter from DMER to the Dean of Sir JJ Hospital, directing him to discuss the proposal
with Prayas regarding the implementation of the programme within the boundaries of their rules.

2009-2010

Issues presented before the Director, Health Services:

- The spread of communicable diseases within custody with specific reference to TB and skin diseases.
- Requesting for free treatment for destitute persons in government hospitals.
- Highlighting the need for mental health services in shelter homes and institutions.
- Waiving the requirement of consent form to be signed by social workers/shelter home staff for admission to hospitals, in the case of destitute patients.

In the meetings, the following agreement was reached:

- The regular dissemination of health information through the National Health Programmes of the Health Department.
- Identification of short-term trainings through the available programs which would equip inmates with some basic skills to facilitate entry into the employment options in the health sector.
- Making available a list of NGOs that are associated with programmes of the Health Services Department and in order to facilitate admission of Prayas trainees in their programmes and services.
- An internship programme for ten Prayas trainees in a year through the Health Department.

Prayas follows this meeting up with a letter to the Director, Health Services and interactions thereafter with the Assistant Director. The focus of the discussions:

- The specific institutions in which the proposed programme would be conducted
- The specific National Health Programmes proposed during the initial phase namely, TB Control Programme, AIDS Control Programme, Maternal & Child Health Programme, Malaria Control Programme and the Mental Health Programme.
- Operational details.
- Health issues of persons without family support.

Prayas submits a proposal to the Directorate of Health Services based on the above discussions. This is accepted and the District Health Officer, Thane Zilla Parishad is identified by the Department to implement the proposed plan in Kalyan District Prisons (Women’s Section). However, the TZP raises jurisdiction issues and rejects the idea. Prayas follows up with the Directorate, Health Services to take the matter forward. An appropriate authority is finally identified and a decision is taken to refer the matter to the Kalyan Dombivili Municipal Corporation. The first session on prevention of TB is conducted on 24th February 2009 in the Women’s Section in Kalyan District Prison. This is followed by a session on maternal and child health.
D. Activating Prison Libraries

This initiative was in keeping with the ideology of strengthening the right to education for custodial populations; access to books and reading resources is a concomitant to promoting education. Prayas requested permission from the office of the Inspector General, Prisons, Maharashtra to visit all the prisons in the state, so as to acquire an in-depth understanding of the situation with regard to prison libraries. Permission was granted but only for the prisons in the Mumbai and Thane districts. The Prayas social worker also met the Additional Director of the State Central Library, for more information on the government schemes that could be applicable to prisons. Subsequently, visits were made to the Mumbai and Thane Central Prisons; and Byculla, Kalyan, Dhule, Jalgaon and Buldhana District Prisons. These visits helped in understanding the situation of prison libraries. Discussion with the Directorate of State Libraries led to a circular being issued by the Director to district librarians in the state to extend their library facilities to the nearest prison in their jurisdiction.

Milestones

2008

- A meeting is held with officials of the State Libraries Department and they agree in principle to extend their library facilities to prisons and women’s institutions, to start with in Mumbai. Following this meeting, a letter is sent to the D.I.G. Prisons (Southern Region) apprising him of this development and requesting for his cooperation to start such a venture in Mumbai Central and Byculla District Prisons. Similarly, the Mumbai District Women & Child Development Officer is apprised of this initiative and he assured his full cooperation to get the library facility started under this scheme in the women’s institutions in Chembur.

- In November, 2008, the Prayas social worker attends a workshop on the Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Scheme organized by Nashik. This helps in gaining an understanding about the functioning and maintenance of libraries as well as develop contacts with various library officials. During this workshop, the social worker comes to know about the 4-C Plan scheme as well as approach the Director, State Libraries Department, to get permission to extend the scheme to the prisons in the state.

- In November, 2008 the Indian Library Association in collaboration with TISS had organized an International Conference where Prayas makes a presentation on ‘Role of Libraries in Prisons’. The presentation was awarded with the ILA Platinum Jubilee Award by the Indian Library Association.

- In December 2008, the Director, State Libraries issues a circular to all District Libraries to extend the benefits of the 4-C Plan scheme to all the prisons in the State. Prayas forwards a copy of the circular to the D.I.G. Prisons (Southern Region), Mumbai DWCDO and superintendents of prisons in the state.

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6 A scheme under which the district libraries loan 25 books at a time to existing libraries on payment of a deposit of Rs. 500/- and Rs. 150/- as fees for two years.
2009-2010

- In July 2009, Prayas organises a one-day workshop for representatives of the Library and Prison Departments, Prayas staff and NGOs working in prisons, to address issues such as ways to strengthen prison libraries, available library schemes and the issue of co-ordination between prison staff and the district libraries. The recommendations of the Workshop were forwarded to the D.I.G. Prisons (Southern Region) for his perusal.

- On a suggestion made to DIG Prisons (Southern Region), a circular is issued to prison superintendents in his jurisdiction to report on the progress made in strengthening prison libraries with the support of the libraries department.

2011

- **Ten prisons now have library membership** (Mumbai, Thane, Taloja, Nasik (Borstal School), Nagpur, Aurangabad, Alibaug, Jalgaon, Wardha and Chandrapur prisons). Four prisons are in the process of obtaining library membership (Morshi Open Prison (Amravati), Amravati Central Prison, Nasik Central Prison and Akola District Prison).

- In response to a suggestion by Prayas, **Additional D.G. Prisons issues a circular to all superintendents of the District Prisons, regarding the allocation of budget head for payment of library fees to district libraries.** The deposit amount of Rs. 500.00 and membership fees for two years of Rs. 150.00 can be debited to the budget head of Prisoner’s Welfare Fund, thus removing the hurdle being faced by prison superintendents to where to debit this expenditure.
E. Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, Ministry of Human Resources Development,

Through its social work intervention, research and other interactions in the field (both in and outside Mumbai), Prayas has had some success in widening the perspective towards the client group, or affecting procedures which promote the objective of re-integration of vulnerable groups process by the CJS. Individual cases have been taken up with the local administration, meetings have been called, and the scope of existing programmes and services has been extended.

Milestones

1993-2005

- Prayas receives financial assistance from the Department of Youth Affairs for the work it does with youth in prison for the year 1993-94.

- At the request of the Department of Youth Affairs & Sports (Ministry of Human Resource Development, GOI), Prayas organises a National level Symposium on ‘Youth in Conflict with Law’ in 1995 to arrive at suggestions which would form part of a National Perspective Plan for Youth 1995-2020. The seminar is well attended by a wide variety of delegates across the country and leads to the emergence of practical suggestions towards a comprehensive government policy on youth and crime. It provides a forum for representatives of many marginalized and ostracized groups of the society such as released prisoners, children of prisoners and women in prostitution, transgender, homosexuals, ex-criminal tribes, youth groups and people having a close understanding of rural crime to put up their issues and problems on an equal footing before government officials, academicians and policy makers.

F. Municipal Administration

Prayas has been making efforts to highlights concerning civic rights of marginalised sections coming in contact with the CJS from time to time. It has also liaised with the municipal administration to get space to conduct its activities, resulting in securing two room each in two municipal schools on rental basis to initiate its contact-cum-rehabilitation centres for its clients.

Milestones

2000-2007

- Prayas gets space for its rehabilitation activities with women at a municipal school in Mumbai Central, through the intervention of the Municipal Commissioner, MCGM.

- MCGM conducts a vocational training course on wiremanship and electrical repairs through the Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) with male youth in Mumbai Central Prison, at the request of Prayas.
• MCGM gives financial assistance for vocational training (under the SJSRY) for released prisoners referred to its Community Development Officers in various wards.

• The Executive Health Officer of the Public Health Department, MCGM, issues a circular to all Medical Officers of Municipal Hospitals instructing Municipal Hospitals to admit patients referred by Prayas, without making it mandatory for their having to appoint escorts for the patient during stay at the hospital.

• Prayas gets space for its rehabilitation activities with male youth from MCGM at a municipal school in Byculla.
6. Promoting New Initiatives in CJS

As the work of Prayas has taken roots, it has spiraled off similar initiatives in other parts of the state and outside through the setting up of NGOs and field placements by colleges of social work and law in criminal justice settings, especially in prisons and women’s and children’s institutions. Prayas has attempted to actively support such initiatives through visits, organising workshops and meetings and sharing of experiences (through documentation). Prayas believes that a larger climate needs to be created for social work intervention in criminal justice and allied settings to take firm roots in the country, which in turn, would help in creating a lobby for law and policy change towards the social inclusion and rehabilitation of persons in custody or living at the margins of society.

Milestones

1998-2007

- Lok Vikas Samajik Sanstha, an NGO initiated by an ex-faculty of a social work college based in Nasik, approaches Prayas for guidance and capacity building to start work in prison. Two of their workers are placed with Prayas for one month and exposed to work in prisons and the criminal justice system. **Lok Vikas later initiates work in Nasik Central Prison.**

- Prayas initiates supervision of field work in prison and police station with students of social work from Solapur, leading to the setting up of an NGO, ‘**Sahaydri’ focusing on social work intervention in Solapur District Prison and Pandharpur Sub-Jail.**

- Support and guidance to an alumna of TISS (who had done field placement at Prayas) to initiate work in prisons in M.P. leads to **setting up of Sudhar, an NGO working in prisons, the juvenile justice system and community corrections based in M.P.**

- An ex-worker of Prayas initiates works in Amravati Central Prison. This initiative is given guidance and support by Prayas and leads to **setting up of VARHAD, an NGO based in the Vidarbha region, working in prisons and community corrections.**

- A lawyer based in Pune approaches Prayas for guidance and support to initiate legal aid work with prisoners in Western Maharashtra. Discussions and support to him leads to **setting up of Human Rights Law Defenders, a project of Sahayog Trust, working with prisoners in Pune and Western Maharashtra.**

2006-2008

- The Bombay Association of Trained Social Workers (BATSW) and Prayas jointly organise a **two day state level workshop on social work intervention in criminal justice in April 2006,** attended by colleges of social work, NGOs working within the CJS, social work professionals, and criminal justice officials. The workshop resulted in a consensus on the need to foster developments in the field. Two follow-up meetings
were held with interested participants. This was followed by local and region-wise meetings with colleges of social work in Maharashtra.

- The Department of Social Work, School of Social Sciences, Swami Ramananda Tirtha Vidyapeet, Nanded initiates student field work in prison. Prayas extends specific inputs to the faculty and also conducts a two-day training programme for students of social work on work in prison. The placement is developing and the department has started student placements at the court and police station too.

- NGOs working on prison issues come together at the behest of Prayas to discuss issues, share experiences and information and initiate a forum for NGOs working in prisons to take relevant issues forward. Meetings of the forum have focussed on sharing of experiences and creating a platform to advocate issues with the government.

- Prayas initiates a meeting of government and non-governmental organisations in Ratnagiri in December 2007 with the support of the District IDC Sub Committee. Local NGOs and the law college are among the participants at the meeting. Prayas presents the need for intervention with prison inmates and requested NGOs to consider extending their services. Pratham expresses willingness to start computer literacy classes and the Principal of the Law College makes a donation for the purchase of library books.

- In February 2008, Pratham starts computer training classes for prisoners at Ratnagiri District Prison. Pratham is now considering extending their services to four more prisons in Western and Central Maharashtra, for which they have requested for continued inputs from Prayas.

- Prayas provides guidance and facilitation to Sahyadri in Solapur by extending professional guidance, organising a two-day para-legal workshop for their staff and assisting them in getting permission from Juvenile Justice Board to work with juveniles in conflict with the law.

- Prayas initiates dialogue with the Dean, School of Rural Development, TISS to start fieldwork in the Osmanabad District Prison. It assists the TISS Rural Campus faculty in writing to the DIG Prisons (Central Region) for permission to place students for fieldwork in the Osmanabad District Prison and for an orientation visit by BSW students to the Osmanabad District Prison and briefs the students about the need for social work in prisons prior to their visit to the prison.
2008-2009

- An NGO Forum meeting is organized in TISS attended by six organizations and twelve individual members to share their experiences and views on issues relating to working with marginalized groups affected by criminal justice processing and related issues. Some of the issues identified during the meeting is the need for a rehabilitation policy for prisoners and the need to resist the deputation of police officers to the prison department. The idea of starting a newsletter highlighting work of the organizations, criminal justice reforms as well as preventive work at the community level is discussed in the meeting. This meeting is followed by three meetings during the year i.e. in June, October and December 2009.

2009-2010

- The NGO Forum is named ‘Forum for Socio Legal and Rehabilitation Initiatives’. The founding members of the Forum are Prayas, Sudhar, VARHAD, Sahyog Trust and Sahyadri. Besides, local NGOs from Mumbai working in the prisons of Mumbai, Thane and Kalyan are also invited.

- The Fellowship programme of the Unit got a boost in 2009 when Prayas receives proposals from individuals who desired to start work in custodial institutions. Based on a process of intensive scrutiny, six Fellowships are granted for initiating work in the field of criminal justice in Chandrapur (to work with women and youth offenders and their children), Amravati (to explore services for families of homicide victims), Akola (to explore extending the services of the District Legal Services Authority inside the Prison), Solapur (to work towards the rehabilitation of juveniles in conflict with the law), Bharuch (to explore the needs of families of the offenders housed in the Bharuch Sub-Jail and Bharuch ‘A’ Division Police Station) and Nagarcoil (to work with children of prisoners).

- A three-day training program is organized for Fellows in July 2009. The programme included topics such as social work in prison, court and police station; work with women prisoners, youth prisoners and children of prisoners; cases coming to the police station; and legislations such as Probation of Offenders Act, 1958, Juvenile Justice Act, 2000, IPC, Cr.P.C., etc. The programme helped in the interaction between Fellows, exposing them to newer avenues within the field of criminal justice and in gaining knowledge and information about the field.

- A five-day training programme on ‘Legal Information & Documentation’ is organized for Fellows, staff of Prayas and other NGOs working in the field of criminal justice. The topics selected were:
  o Overview of the criminal justice system in India
  o Constitutional rights of prisoners and prison reforms
  o Bombay Police Act, 1951 and police reforms
  o IPC, Cr.P.C. and Evidence Act

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- Probation of Offenders Act, 1958 and its importance in rehabilitation
- Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956, its rules and implementation
- Juvenile Justice, 2000 & Borstal Schools Act, 1929
- Prevention of Beggary Act, 1959 & its process of rehabilitation
- Right to Information Act, 2005 & its implementation
- Personal Laws & Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
- Documentation Skills

- Support and guidance is extended to two NGOs based in Yavatmal and Aurangabad. The NGO based in Yavatmal has initiated work in the prison through counseling on HIV/AIDS, adult literacy classes and career guidance to youth in prison. The NGO based in Aurangabad has initiated a library project in the prison.

- On 14th November, 2009 i.e. Children’s Day, a workshop on children is organised by Sahara Society, Yavatmal, with the support of Prayas. The Workshop was attended by various NGOs, students from MSW colleges, faculty, etc.

- Prayas presents a paper on **Role of Social Work in the Correctional Settings** at the **Eighth State Level Seminar on Correctional Administration organised by the Kerala Prison Department at Thrissur**. Participants included prison officials from district and central prisons of the State.
7. Training and Capacity Building

*Milestones*

2006-2008

- **Prayas organises an in-service training programme for the care-taking staff of the government women’s institutions housing persons in difficult situations**, namely Navjeevan Mahila Vastigruh, Kasturba Mahila Vastigruh, Male and Female Beggars’ Homes and the Special Rehabilitation Home for Minors (rescued from trafficking). This training was organized in collaboration with the Centre for Life Long Learning, TISS. Eleven input sessions and one exposure visit were conducted for twenty caretaking staff. These sessions provided inputs about legal aspects, hurdles faced at work, addressing occupational difficulties, working with clients from stigmatized backgrounds, health problems faced by women in custody, and rehabilitation and citizenship rights of persons in custody.

- **One-day Seminar on Implementation of Probation Services** is organised in collaboration with the Probation Wing of DWCD for two revenue divisions (covering eleven districts) in the Vidarbha region. 78 probation officers and NGO representatives participated. This is the first of four such seminars to be organized in Maharashtra, towards sensitizing probation officers to prisoners’ welfare and rehabilitation work.

- **Prayas organises a five-day legal training programme for the staff of NGOs working within prison settings**. The programme is attended by 14 staff members of organizations in and outside Mumbai, covering topics such as the Indian Constitution, the structure of the Criminal Justice System, substantive and procedural laws, correctional legislations, and laws relevant for social workers functioning within prisons.
8. Police

In the course of its work, Prayas has had to liaise with the police on a range of issues such as re-arrest or preventive action against Prayas clients (due to past criminal record), rescue and repatriation of commercially sexually exploited women, admission of destitute persons into hospitals and shelter homes, and access to justice for marginalised sections through police action. This has been possible through a process of continuous dialogue with ground level and higher police officials, which has yielded rich dividends.

Milestones

City Police:

1993

- **Prayas starts work at Deonar Police Station**, Mumbai with the placement of two full-time social workers after fieldwork placements of TISS students at Matunga and Deonar police stations shows considerable scope for placement of trained social workers in police stations. The groups identified for psycho-socio intervention identified are women, children, youth, psychologically and emotionally disturbed persons, and senior citizens.

- Prayas social workers and students of TISS are actively involved in **relief work with victims of the communal riots in Shivaji Nagar area**. A Citizen Facilitation Desk is created and one police officer from the Police Commissioner’s Office is specially deputed to liaise between the citizens approaching the police station and the social workers based there.

- **Work shifts to Shivaji Nagar Police Station**, as a result of creation of a new police station after the riots.

- A circular (P.N. Para) is issued by D.C.P. Crime (Preventive) permitting Prayas to issue letters of identity to persons being rehabilitated. Further, the police is directed to inform Prayas if and when a case is registered against such persons.

- TISS submits a proposal to the Director General of Police, Maharashtra, for the need for a cadre of trained social workers in the criminal justice system. The DGP calls for a presentation by TISS on the proposal before a team of senior police officers at his Office.

- Based on the presentation made by the TISS team, the **DGP appoints a Police-TISS Committee to examine the Need for a Cadre of Trained Social Workers in the CJS**.

- The **Committee submits its report to the DGP** after six months of deliberations, recommending the need for such a cadre. The recommendation is based on the
experiences of the Prayas model and the Special Cell for Women and Children, another field action project of TISS.

- The DGP recommends the creation of a cadre and forwards it to the Home Department, GoM.

- Prayas and the Special Cell for Women organizes a one-day workshop with retired and serving officers from police, prisons, judiciary, probation, women and child development and NGOs to strengthen the need for a cadre of social workers in CJS. The report of the workshop is sent to the Home Department, GoM.

1994

- **Shivaji Nagar Police Station project ends** in 1994, as the scoping of work done and Prayas intends to explore new areas of social work intervention.

- **Full-time work starts at Chembur Police Station**, focusing on girls, male youth and women in the communities; and police personnel and their families at police lines. Cases mostly get referred under non-cognizable offences, including family conflicts, marital disputes, neighborhood disputes and property matters.

- Prayas initiates work at the police lock-up with first time offenders and young offenders. The services rendered include legal information and advice, and paying home visit.

- A mutually supportive yet non-interfering relationship is developed with the police. After four years of work in police stations, the social worker’s presence is seen as a necessary service by the staff at police stations.

- Acceptance also comes in the form of a separate sitting arrangement for the social worker inside the station house and a regular referral of cases from the police. It is also seen that the social worker’s presence in the police station subtly makes a difference to reduce corruption and human rights violation.

1996-1997

- Prayas holds a series of meetings with local youth groups and NGOs to create a lobby for the appointment of social workers at police stations.

- Prayas receives permission from the Addl. C. P., North-East Region, Mumbai to commence work in police stations in Zone VI. Work is initiated at the Ghatkopar Police Station and the lock-up situated there, through student field work.

- As a result of Prayas’s continuous work, the role of a social worker in police station gets recognised by the police. The changed outlook of the police towards social workers is evident when Prayas is invited to speak about the role of social work in
police stations at a Communal Harmony workshop organised by the D.C.P. Zone V for police station staff.

- As work stabilizes, a positive change is visible in the behaviour of the police towards the citizen approaching the police station, especially in cases of alcoholics, mentally disturbed and women complainants. Awareness increases amongst members of the public about how to access the police station and use its services,

- The presence of social workers in the police station helps lower the number of Non-Cognizable cases being registered with the police, as the socio-legal counseling and pre-litigation work done by social workers helps to settle disputes leading to lowering of formal registration.

- Another impact of Prayas’s work in the field is that community based organizations such as mahila mandals and youth groups feel more comfortable in the presence of the social worker at the police station, in pursuing cases they have taken up. Hence, the presence of social worker helps bridge the gap between police and the organizations.

1997

- Prayas receives permission from the D.C.P. Zone II to start work at Nagpada Police Station, with the objective of exploring the role of a social worker working with police towards rescue and rehabilitation of trafficked women and girls. Services include:
  - Socio-legal counselling and information giving,
  - Mobilizing police action towards effective rescue of children/relatives/siblings from the brothel, and recovery of the rescued person’s property from the brothel.
  - Liaising with the police of Zone II (V.P. Road, D.B. Marg and Nagpapda Police Stations) to carry our ‘genuine’ raids resulting in rescue of minors and women forced into prostitution.
  - Having regular meetings with the D.C. P. of Zone II and the Addl. C.P. (South Region) to highlight issues and procedures related to rescue, escort, recovery of property, rescue of children / relatives, etc.
  - Conducting sensitization and training programmes with local police to the provisions under the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act and IPC sections relating to rescue and prosecution of traffickers.

- Prayas’s intervention makes the following impact:
  - Gives a humane face to the post-rescue phase, when the woman / minor is brought to the police station.
  - Provides the rescued person with moral and emotional support.
  - Exploding myths in the rescued person’s mind about being treated as a criminal by the police on being rescued (as oriented by the brothel keepers / pimps),
- Provides information about procedures being followed and legal rights of rescued persons.
- Informs the rescued person about possible options to get out of prostitution.
- Changes the procedures relating to rescue and bringing it in line with the provisions of the ITPA e.g. production of women after rescue before the magistrate within 24 hours of rescue starts, instead of the earlier practice of sending them to the rescue home only with a police referral note. The new practice reduces the scope for manipulation by brothel keepers and traffickers to try to retrieve the person back, by using undue influence on the police, since now every rescued person is under the custody of the magistrate.

1999

- Prayas receives permission from D.C.P. Zone IV to start work in Mahim Police Station. Considering the absence of a victim relief and assistance programme, Prayas decides to take up work with criminally victimized persons and their families. The types of cases include families of homicide victims; cases of neighbourhood disputes; victims of sexual abuse, marital dispute and alcohol abuse; mentally disturbed and their families; harassment of senior citizens; cases of destitute women and young girls in prostitution; burn victims; and children requiring assistance.

2001

- Work at Nagpada Police Station ends, as rescue process changes whereby women / minors now being directly taken to the rescue homes and produced before the magistrate the next day. This leaves little scope for the social worker at the police station to interact with the women / minors after being rescued. However, the experience leads to the next step, viz, setting up of an Income Generation and Training Centre for Women at Mumbai Central, in response to the issue of alternate options for livelihood for women coming out or willing to come out of prostitution.

- Work at Mahim ends as the social workers at the police station are increasingly being referred cases of family disputes, mentally disturbed persons, marital conflicts, etc. instead of cases of victims of criminal cases, as per the original plan.

2004-2007

- Social Service Branch of the Mumbai Police issues a circular (P.N. Para) to all police stations in its jurisdiction to extend co-operation to Prayas for cases taken up for the purpose of rehabilitation.

- A meeting is held with the Jt. C.P. (Crime), Mumbai Police to discuss the rehabilitation of youth offenders. This is followed by a suggestion that the D.C.P. Preventive (Crime Branch) of Mumbai Police and Prayas, along with other agencies, should enter into a formal collaboration to rehabilitate youth in crime.
• The initiative taken by the Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime), Mumbai is formalized with the formation of a **Youth Offenders’ Rehabilitation Cell in Crime Branch**, with the D.C.P. Preventive as the Liaison Officer for this Cell. The Cell is to liaise with police stations from across the city to refer cases of youth offenders in the age group of 16 to 21 years to NGOs working for vocational training and rehabilitation of youth.

• A letter is sent to the Addl. Chief Secretary, Home, requesting her to examine the possibility of implementing the recommendations of the Police-TISS Committee on Need for Trained Social Workers in Criminal Justice, which had given its report to the DGP, Maharashtra (in 1993), recommending the creation of a cadre of trained social workers in the CJS. An article appears on this issue in the DNA, whereby the ACS, Home is quoted saying that the government is open to such a proposal.

**2009-2010**

• Prayas decides to resume its efforts towards establishing social work services for persons reaching the police. Prayas receives **permission from D.C.P. Zone VI to organize meetings with the police staff at the beat and police station level** to discuss this issue with them. Meetings are held with police staff and the response of the police is positive.

• Prayas highlights the need for trained social workers at police stations before various fora such as the Minorities Development Department and the State level Committee on Implementation of the Sachar Committee Report.

**Railway Police**

One of the issues that emerged from the work of Prayas at police stations is that of the situation of destitute women and girls who have left their families and vulnerable to sexual and physical exploitation. It was felt that such women usually travel by buses and trains and reach the city alone or with a person/s who then push them into exploitative situations. In order to explore this issue further, Prayas initiated a study of destitute persons found on railway premises, leading to starting social work intervention at the CST Railway Police Station.

**1998**

• Prayas receives **permission from the Chief PRO, Central and Western Railway and S.P Railways, to undertake a survey of women residing in and around stations** and officials concerned to identify the dimensions and extent of the problems, effectiveness of existing formal or other responses and resources available to avoid crime against women.

**1999-2003**

• As an outcome of this study, **Prayas starts work in C.S.T Railway Police Station** to intervene in cases of women and children coming to or living in railway premises,
whether as victims, complainants or accused persons. Regular patrolling is done to identify cases of women and children in need/distress.

- A circular is issued to railway police stations in the jurisdiction of Mumbai Railway Police Commissionerate to refer cases of women and children to Prayas for psychological and rehabilitative intervention. Cases referred include runaway children, mentally disturbed women, accused persons, women in prostitution, women found begging, etc.

- Work at CST reaches a point where the issue of runaway girls and trafficking of women and minors is being taken seriously by the railway police. Two police constables are deputed to carry out patrolling and anti-trafficking work at the police station in response to Prayas’ suggestion made to the Commissioner of Railway Police.

- Work starts with women found soliciting in railway premises and vulnerable to being arrested under Section 145 B of the Indian Railway Act (indecent behaviour in public place), to motivate them to consider options other than prostitution. Women and young girls found in the station premises by the police are now regularly referred to the Prayas Women’s Development Centre and to shelter homes in Mumbai for rehabilitation.

- Prayas presents its work before officers and constables of Railway Protection Force, to sensitize them about Prayas’ work with vulnerable women and children and convince them to refer cases.

2004-2007

- Prayas gets regular referrals of cases of vulnerable women and children from the GRP and RPF. The two constables engaged in anti-trafficking work at CST work as a team with Prayas social workers, toward the rescue and rehabilitation of women and children found at the railway premises.

2008-2010

- Following the Mumbai terror attacks, there is increased and vigorous patrolling at all railway premises by the police, leading to the ‘removal’ of ‘unauthorised persons’ from railway premises. This leads to a situation whereby the poor, the homeless and those vulnerable to exploitation are forced to shift their base away from the railway premises to nearby areas of the city. Under these circumstances, it becomes increasingly difficult for Prayas to work at CST. Prayas ends work at CST Railway Police Station in the light of these circumstances.

9. Research and documentation

Over the years, Prayas has systematically focussed on generating knowledge from the field through documentation of its experiences which have helped in advocating changes at policy
level, changing perceptions about persons in crime and rehabilitation of persons in custody, and generating teaching and learning resources for students of social work, law, counselling and allied subjects at the graduate, post-graduate and doctoral levels. Prayas has also engaged with the media with the objective of sensitizing the media and the public around issues of crime, commercial sexual exploitation, destitution, custodialisation of vulnerable sections and their legal rights and rehabilitation. Some of the documents and publications of Prayas include:

10. A Study of the Socio-Economic Situation & Rehabilitation Needs of Women in Dance Bars, 2005
11. Forced Separation: Children of Imprisoned Mothers, 2002
15. Annual and Biennial Reports

- Two short films of the durations of four and six minutes on Prayas and on the rehabilitation issue have been made by media students. Over the years, newspaper and magazine articles featuring on issues around which Prayas works include rehabilitation of trafficked victims, children of prisoners, problems of under trial prisoners, prison reforms, etc.

10. Bharuch Unit

Prayas Bharuch unit has been interacting with the system to bring about changes in government policies and programs:

1996
• **Prison work starts at Bharuch Sub-Jail.** The initial services involve arranging for legal aid, vocational training activities and rehabilitation.

1999

• **The DSP, Bharuch, asks Prayas to start work in all police stations** in Bharuch District. This was not possible due to staff shortage. Prayas is then asked to intervene in cases from the social and rehabilitation point of view in one police station.

• **DSP, Bharuch District shows interest in starting separate police station to handle cases of women.** Prayas is involved in discussions and brainstorming, and sensitizing of women staff which is to be appointed for this purpose.

2000-2001

• **Prayas is invited to be a member of Core Committee formed at the initiative of the Hon’ble Minister for Jails, Government of Gujarat** to discuss problems of under trial prisoners.

• **Collector of Bharuch asks Prayas to start a night shelter in Bharuch for women and youth, for which administration would take responsibility of funding.** Proposal is submitted, but it does not work out due to the transfer of the Collector.

• Permission to work in male section of Bharuch Sub-Jail is cancelled on the grounds of security. Prayas submits a fresh letter to the I.G. Prisons’ Office enumerating its role in prison. Prayas’ permission letter is renewed, thus proving that Prayas has been able to demonstrate the need and role of social workers in criminal justice system.

2001-2002

• **The prison authorities of Surat and Vadodara prisons request Prayas to initiate work in their prisons.** Surat being industrial area, there is a sizable migrant population in prison without family support. All convict women from the State are housed at Vadodara Central Prison. These women face problems like contacting and meeting families and children. Due to shortage of staff, it is not possible to expand Prayas’ work to these prisons.
2004 – 2005

- I.G. Prisons shows interest in Prayas starting work in Vadodara Central Prison in the Women’s Section and also in other prisons in the State. Prayas responds with a proposal that if selected NGOs are identified, Prayas would train them on prison-based work. Since the post of welfare officers does not exist in all prisons in the State, Prayas also offers to train jail officers towards welfare work.

- Prayas organizes a training programme for the Railway Police on the Juvenile Justice Act. One Police Inspector, one Head Police Constable and one Women Police Constable from all Railway Police Stations attend the training.

2005 – 2007

- Prayas initiates meetings with the Superintendent of Police to discuss various issues relating to work at the police station. The worker at the police station identifies the non-implementation of J. J. Act at the police station as a major concern. As a result of the meetings, the D. S. P. agrees to organise training about the J. J. Act for the field level staff. Another issue discussed is about mentally disturbed women and their treatment. The D.S.P. is very sympathetic towards the problems of these women and is responsive to the idea of police taking custody of mentally disturbed women and sending them to hospitals for treatment.

- Prayas has meetings with the Chairperson of Child Welfare Committee, DSP, District Judge, I.G. Police (Vadodara Range) on the need for training police staff on the Juvenile Justice Act.

- Prayas coordinates with District Legal Services Authority and organizes a training programme on Juvenile Justice Act for Head Constables and Constables of all police stations in the District. The resource persons for the training include the Chairperson of Juvenile Justice Board, Chief Public Prosecutor and social workers from Prayas.

- As a result of the training, Prayas starts receiving many phone calls from various police stations when they take custody of children.

- As a result of various discussions with police staff, Prayas feels the need to start training programmes towards income generation for the families of police staff. With the help of ONGC Anklehwar and the DSP, Prayas initiates a training programme for the wives and daughters of the police staff.

- Prayas’ presence in Bharuch is widely recognised by the government and civil society representatives. Prayas workers are involved in many activities and district level meetings on issues related to criminal justice, juvenile justice and rights/welfare of women and children:
Prayas workers are invited as **conciliators in Lok Adalats** organized by District Courts.

A Prayas worker is appointed as a **member of the Child Welfare Committee** under the JJ Act.

A Prayas worker is appointed in the **Committee under the Dowry Prohibition Act**.

A Prayas worker is **invitee member of District Mahila Suraksha Samiti**.

Prayas is invited for various meetings organized by district administration where discussions on issues related to rehabilitation of criminal justice clients becomes possible.

- In coordination with District Legal Services Authority, Prayas workers participate in various **legal aid and awareness sessions at the Children’s Home and Bharuch Sub-Jail**.

- Prayas workers are invited to participate in **legal awareness camps organized in the community by the DLSA**.

- The issue of women and children being exploited on railway platforms, and the need to arrange shelter and rehabilitation is discussed with SP Railways. As a result, the SP issues a **circular to Railway Police Stations, Bharuch to refer cases in crisis and need to shelter homes and the contact Prayas for follow-up and rehabilitation**.

- Prayas follows up with different agencies of the district administration for training and self-employment of Prayas clients who do not possess necessary documents, which enables them to take benefit of government schemes. Some results:
  - Six clients receive equipment and material for self employment.
  - Prayas is able to get necessary documents for some clients to get benefit of government schemes.
  - Permission from municipal authorities for allowing clients to keep hand carts on the road, for self-employment.
  - Organizing various educational and awareness sessions for prison inmates in Bharuch Sub-Jail.

- A **training programme is organized for RPF staff at Ankleshwar Railway Station on social legislations, sensitizing them on issues of women and children, and information on shelter of women and children**.

**2008-2010**

- In addition to working with under trial prisoners in Bharuch Sub Jail, Prayas also **intervened in the cases of convicted prisoners**. The social worker wrote applications for parole and furlough, and followed up on them with the administration. The worker
also extended support to prisoners and their families to avail of the Kaidi Sahay Yojna and other government schemes.

- Due to the intervention of Prayas, the lawyers of the District Legal Services Authority are using sections of Domestic Violence Act, and magistrates are encouraging lawyers to make use of the Act.

- It was observed that Nari Suraksha Kendra was not offering any rehabilitation programme for women in crisis. Thus, a training programme in tailoring and beauty treatment was organized for the inmates of Nari Surakshan Kendra, and for inmates of Juvenile Home for Girls.

- To reach out to women in crisis and youth in crime, Dy. Superintendent of Police issues letters to all police stations in the district, informing them about the work of Prayas and to contact Prayas in regard to the training and rehabilitation needs of the women and youth.

- I.G. (Prisons) shows interest in work of Prayas and is interested in facilitating such initiatives in other prisons of Gujarat. Prayas, Bharuch follows up the matter with the prison officials and also with I. G (Prisons). The I.G. directs prison superintendents to plan various welfare programmes in prison with the help of NGOs. Prayas co-ordinates various awareness programmes on van mahostav, vyasanmukti, use of library, and organising sports activities for inmates.

2011

- Prayas Bharuch starts work at Juvenile Justice Board and Observation Home in Bharuch to work with juveniles in conflict with law.

- Prayas starts work at the Mahila Police Station, Bharuch.