

HIGHLIGHTS OF TRANSGENDER RIGHTS PROGRESS IN PAKISTAN – 2021 TO 2024

In recent years, Pakistan has witnessed significant strides in advancing transgender rights and welfare, reflecting a growing commitment to inclusion and protection. From the launch of the National Strategic Framework for Transgender Persons to pioneering initiatives like microfinance empowerment and vocational training centers, the landscape for transgender rights is transforming. The Khawaja Sira Society, operational since 2012, has been at the forefront of these efforts, championing the cause of the transgender community. This newsletter highlights key developments from 2021 to 2024, showcasing the ongoing progress and the challenges that lie ahead in ensuring equality and dignity for all.

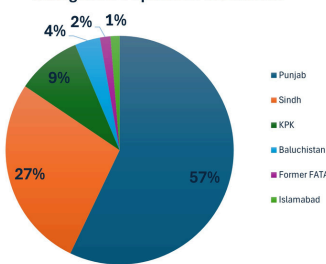
PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSGENDER PERSONS'

On December 4, 2023, the UNDP introduced Pakistan's National Strategic Framework for Transgender Persons, which addresses discrimination and political exclusion. Despite the 2018 Transgender Protection Act, violence remains pervasive, with over 91 transgender individuals killed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from 2015-2023. The framework, developed through five consultative meetings, outlines a five-level strategy to enhance inclusion and protect transgender rights.



Source-www.undp.org

Transgender Population in Pakistan



Transgender Population in Pakistan, 2017
Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

FROM MARGINS TO MAINSTREAM: MICROFINANCE FOR TRANSGENDER EMPOWERMENT IN PAKISTAN | THE FRIDAY ECONOMIST²

In Pakistan, the transgender community faces significant socio-economic challenges, with estimates of their population ranging from 0.4 to 1.5 million. The 2017 census reported only 21,744 transgender individuals, highlighting severe under-reporting. Microfinance initiatives, like those by Akhuwat Foundation, have empowered over 1,500 transgender individuals, offering loans up to PKR 150,000 and monthly income support of PKR 1,200 for those above 40 with low incomes. However, barriers such as lack of CNICs, discrimination, and low financial literacy hinder broader access to these services.

"TRANS-RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS" CAMPAIGN BY NADRA³

On International Human Rights Day (10 December), NADRA launched the "Trans-Rights are Human Rights" campaign to enhance transgender registration. By 13 December 2021, NADRA trained field officers to address challenges in transgender registration and so far, 5,626 transgender persons have been registered by 2021. Mobile Registration Vans (MRVs) were deployed on 10 December 2021, including at Multan's First Transgender School, where CNIC registration is free. NADRA also employs transgender individuals based on their qualifications.

TAHAFFUZ CENTRE: A SAFE HAVEN FOR TRANSGENDER AND VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES⁴

On March 18, 2023, the Tahaffuz Reporting Centre was inaugurated in Attock by RPO Syed Khuram Ali, ensuring legal aid and social protection for transgender individuals and marginalized groups.



Source - ABPlive.com



Unleashing Potential,
Transforming
Futures



Source - Dawn.com

HISTORIC MILESTONE: REEM SHARIF APPOINTED DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF PAKISTAN'S FIRST TRANSGENDER PROTECTION CENTER⁵

On January 27, 2024, Reem Sharif was appointed Deputy Director of Pakistan's first Transgender Protection Center in Islamabad on the Basic Pay Scale-18 by the Government of Pakistan marking a historic moment as the first transgender person in such a senior role.

TRANSGENDER REPRESENTATION IN KMC CITY COUNCIL

"KARACHI CITY COUNCIL OATH-TAKING INCLUDES 118 RESERVED SEAT COUNCILLORS, WITH NOTABLE REPRESENTATION OF TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS"

On June 7, 2023, 118 councillors, including transgender members, took oath in Karachi. The reserved seats comprised 55 from PPP and 63 from JI and PTI. Three members, two from PPP and one from PML-N, were absent. Karachi Commissioner Iqbal Memon administered the oath, despite objections from JI regarding a member's eligibility.

"HISTORIC APPOINTMENT: SHAHZADI RAI AND CHANDNI SHAH AS KARACHI CITY COUNCIL'S FIRST TRANSGENDER MEMBERS"

On June 7, 2023, Shahzadi Rai of PPP and Chandni Shah of Jamaat-e-Islami were sworn in as the first transgender members of Karachi's City Council. This milestone follows the Federal Shariat Court's May 2023 ruling against the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018.



Rani Khan, a trans woman who teaches the Quran at Pakistan's first trans-person only madrasa, looks at one of her students during a tailoring lesson in Islamabad, Pakistan March 10, 2021. PHOTO: REUTERS

RAWALPINDI'S VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY BEGINS⁸

On August 20, 2021, the Punjab Literacy Department launched vocational training for transgender persons in Rawalpindi. Five of the 375 centers established across Punjab are dedicated to transgender education, focusing on computer literacy, sewing, and make-up. Each center enrolled up to 30 transgender individuals.



Source - radio.gov.pk

ISLAMABAD'S INCLUSIVE LEARNING CENTER FOR TRANSGENDER PERSONS LAUNCHED⁹

On July 25, 2023, Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain, inaugurated the Inclusive Learning Center for Transgender persons in Islamabad. This center will provide basic education to transgender individuals, linking them with vocational training institutes for essential skill development. The Minister emphasized the government's commitment to creating a full-fledged educational institute for transgender persons, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.



Source - tahaffuzdarsгах.edu.pk

TAHAFFUZ DARSGAH: PIONEERING TRANSGENDER EDUCATION IN LAHORE¹⁰

Tahaffuz Darsгах, established near CTD Headquarters, Jallo Lahore, is Pakistan's first-ever transgender institute, launched in 2024 as a project of UKCAB in collaboration with the Punjab Police. Offering a three-tier educational program, it provides O- and A-levels, vocational training, and degree qualifications. Registered with the School Education Department, this institution aims to empower transgender children with world-class education and equitable opportunities.



Source - propakistani.pk

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION INITIATIVE FOR LAHORE'S TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY¹¹

On June 4, 2024, the Punjab government announced the establishment of two new schools for transgender students in Raiwind and Wagah, Lahore, alongside the existing one at Barkat Market. Each student maintaining 80% attendance will receive a Rs10,000 scholarship, with Rs5,000 allocated for books and stationery and Rs5,000 for travel allowance.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

— Nelson Mandela



Source – Akhuwat.org.pk

AKHUWAT'S KHAWAJA SIRA PROGRAM: EMPOWERING TRANSGENDER COMMUNITIES¹²

Launched in collaboration with Fountain House in 2020, Akhuwat's Khawaja Sira Program provides financial aid, vocational training, and mental health support to over 3,000 transgender individuals across Pakistan. Members gain access to interest-free microloans, counseling services, and employment opportunities. With initiatives like the Khawaja Sira Rehabilitation Program and the Fountain House Transgender Wing, Akhuwat fosters dignity and economic independence for marginalized communities.

"Empowerment is the path to freedom. When you lift others up, you rise with them."

– Oprah Winfrey

FINANCIAL RELIEF FOR PAKISTAN'S TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY – BISP¹³

In December 2022, Shazia Marri, Pakistan's Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation, announced the inclusion of transgender individuals in the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP).

Approximately 600,000 transgender people are now eligible to receive Rs7,000 quarterly. Registration requires updating CNICs with transgender status at NADRA centers. BISP, which supports 8 million women, aims to expand its beneficiaries to 12 million with this initiative. Bandiya Rana, a transgender community leader, praised this initiative.



Source – Twitter/@RwpPolice



Source - www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100066391401180&mibextid=ZbWKwL

FOR MORE INFO,
SCAN HERE!

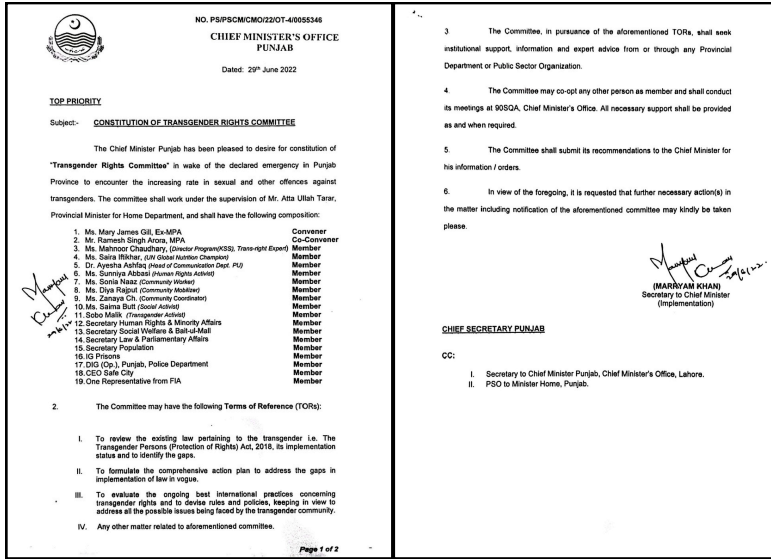


Empowering Transgender Health: A Community-Based Approach¹⁴

The Khawaja Sira Society (KSS), in collaboration with the Punjab AIDS Control Program (PACP) and the National AIDS Control Program (NACP), has developed a robust community-led prevention and treatment model. Since launching this model in 2020, KSS has reached over 25,000 transgender individuals, offering comprehensive HIV prevention and treatment services. The PACP and NACP support KSS with data-driven strategies, including regular screening and access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) for over 15,000 people living with HIV in Punjab, ensuring targeted and effective care.

SINDH'S LANDMARK JOB QUOTA FOR TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS¹⁵

On July 5, 2022, the Sindh Assembly passed the Sindh Civil Servants (Amendment) Bill-2021, establishing a 0.5% job quota for transgender individuals within the Sindh government. This move, championed by Sindh Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Mukesh Kumar Chawla, marks Sindh as the first province in Pakistan to reserve job opportunities specifically for the marginalized transgender community. The amendment to the Sindh Civil Servants Act of 1973 aims to address systemic violence, socio-political exclusion, and economic insecurity faced by transgender people.



**"To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity."
— Nelson Mandela**



TRANSGENDER RIGHTS EMERGENCY: PUNJAB'S RESPONSE

On 29th June 2022, under the directive NO. PSIPSCM/CMO/22/OT-4/0055346 from the Chief Minister's Office Punjab, a "Transgender Rights Committee" was constituted in response to the rising sexual and other offenses against transgender individuals in the province. Led by Mr. Atta Ullah Tarar, Provincial Minister for Home Department, the committee includes 19 key members, such as Ms. Mary James Gill (Convener), Mr. Ramesh Singh Arora (Co-Convener) Ms. Mahnoor Chaudhary, and Ms. Saira Iftikhar. The committee's mandate is to review the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018, address implementation gaps, and devise an action plan based on international best practices.

Source - www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100066391401180&mbextid=ZbWkWL

MEMBERS OF TASKFORCE FOR TRANSGENDER INCLUSION IN FLOOD RELIEF AND REHABILITATION RESPONSE

No	Organization	Focal Person	Designation
1	Punjab Women Protection Authority	Irshad Waheed	Director General
2	Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA)	Ghias ud Din Ahmed	Director
3	Human Rights & Minorities Affairs Department	Mr. M. Yousaf	Director
4	Social Welfare & Bait ul Maal Department	Mr. Irfan	Director
5	Local Government & Community Development Department	Javed Iqbal Bhatti	Director
6	National Commission for Human Rights - Punjab	Mr. Muhammad Khalid	Coordinator
7	Punjab Social protection Authority	Nayyah	Manager
8	Social Welfare & Bait ul Maal Department, Rajanpur	Ms. Tehmina Dilshad	Deputy Director
9	Khawaja Sira Society	Sobo Malik	Project Manager
10	Hope	Mani	Program Executor
11	Murat Tv	Sonia Naz	CEO
12	Satragi	Alisha Sherazi	President
13	DMHS	Syed Raza Haider Termizi	Program Manager
14	Peace and Justice	Mahnoor Ch	Member and provincial coordinator
15	Home Net	Umme Laila	Director
16	Wise	Bushra Khaliq	Director
17	Muslim hands	Khalid Querishi	Director
18	Trans Activist	Zanaya Ch	Activist
19	Trans Activist	Jannat Ali	Activist
20	Trans Activist	Saima Butt	Activist

No. NCHHR/PJ/18-PIN/2023/
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
23-D-1, FCC, SYED MUMTAZ ALI ROAD, GULBERG-IV LAHORE
PH #: 942-993216-8

Date: 15/02/2023

Notification of the Provincial Taskforce for Trans-Inclusive Humanitarian Response

Greetings from NCHHR!

National Commission for Human Rights (NCHHR) is an independent statutory body with an overarching mandate to look into matters pertaining to all forms of human rights violations within the territorial jurisdiction of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan by virtue of the National Commission for Human Rights Act of 2012.

2. National Commission for Human Rights (NCHHR) Punjab office in collaboration with Peace and Justice Network (PJN) Pakistan, supported by Concern Worldwide and the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) USAID is constituting a "Taskforce for Transgender Inclusion in Flood Relief and Rehabilitation Response". This Taskforce will function at provincial level focusing on mainstreaming the Transgender community in the humanitarian response in flood affected areas.

3. The Taskforce will provide a collaborative platform to bring together Transgender rights organizations, Government Departments, National and International Humanitarian Organization and UN-agencies working on "humanitarian response", especially in current flood relief and rehabilitation response, for the purpose of addressing systematic and non-systematic barriers that lead to transgender exclusion. The TORs of the Provincial Taskforce are as following:-

- i. To provide strategic policy inputs for Trans-inclusive emergency humanitarian programming, encompassing all key sectors such as health, shelter, food security, livelihood and protection from violence and discrimination.
- ii. Review existing humanitarian response policies, operational guidelines, manuals and systems to identify gaps that lead to the deprivation of Transgender people from timely and adequate humanitarian assistance during emergencies.

- iii. Support data collection and analysis to create evidence on the exclusion/inclusion of the Transgender community in humanitarian response and beyond.
- iv. To raise awareness of and building the capacity of transgender rights organization, Government Departments, National and International Humanitarian Organizations and UN-agencies transgender-inclusive humanitarian standards.
- v. Work to establish Transgender Community Protection Mechanism in the flood affected districts and ensure their inclusion in the district committees.
- vi. Set up a national Transgender-inclusive flood relief and rehabilitation response reporting mechanism.
- vii. Capacity development of local relief government and Non-government organizations on inclusive flood response.
- viii. Networking and partnership with other like-minded stakeholders for strengthening Taskforce work.

4. List of Members of Provincial Taskforce Attached as Annex "A".

5. We look forward to your strong contribution as a key member of "Taskforce for Transgender Inclusion in Flood Relief and Rehabilitation Response".

(NADEEM ASHRAF) (Ex-PAS)
MEMBER/COORDINATOR (PUNJAB)
NCHHR

C.C:
Syeda Mujeeba Batool, Program Manager, Peace & Justice Network, Islamabad.


INCLUSIVE FLOOD RELIEF: A NEW DAWN FOR TRANSGENDER RIGHTS

On 15th February 2023, the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) Punjab, in collaboration with the Peace and Justice Network (PJN) Pakistan, with support from Concern Worldwide and USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), constituted a "Taskforce for Transgender Inclusion in Flood Relief and Rehabilitation Response." This provincial taskforce aims to integrate the transgender community into humanitarian efforts in flood-affected areas. It will address systemic barriers, review existing policies, and develop strategic inputs for inclusive emergency programming across sectors like health, shelter, and protection. The initiative marks a significant step towards ensuring transgender rights in crisis situations.

"Inclusion elevates all."
 – Elaine Hall

ADVANCING TRANS HEALTH: PUNJAB'S SCREENING INITIATIVE

In May 2023, the Government of Punjab, through the Directorate General Social Welfare & Bait-ul-Mall, formed a committee to organize medical and screening camps for transgender persons. The committee, constituted on 23rd May 2023, includes Mr. Mubashar Javed (Convener), Mr. Muhammad Irfan Gondal, Mr. Ashraf Janjua, and Mr. Safdar Abbas, along with transgender representatives Ms. Mahnoor, Ms. Saima Butt, Ms. Jahan Der, and Ms. Zanaya Ch. The committee's tasks include coordinating with the Health Department, identifying camp locations in Lahore, and designing outreach programs in collaboration with Khawaja Sira Welfare Society. A detailed plan was to be presented by 29th May 2023.



GOVERNMENT OF THE PUNJAB
DIRECTORATE GENERAL
SOCIAL WELFARE & BAIT-UL-MALL PUNJAB,
41-EMPRESS ROAD, LAHORE
042-99201668

Dated Lahore, the 25th May, 2023.

NOTIFICATION

No.DSW-DIH (Transgender)/2018-III/8406-15 Pursuant to the directions of Director General SW & BM in meeting held on 23-05-2023 in the Committee Room of Directorate General SW & BM regarding arrangements of Medical cum Screening camps for Transgender Persons, in collaboration with Health Department, a committee comprising of the followings is hereby constituted :

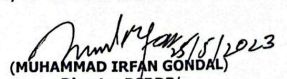
Name	Designation	Role
Mr. Mubashar Javed	Div. Director SW & BM, LHR	Convener
Muhammad Irfan Gondal	Director PCRDP SW & BM	Member
Mr. Ashraf Janjua	Deputy Director SW & BM, LHR	Secretary
Mr. Safdar Abbas	Deputy Director NGOs, SW & BM	Member
Ms. Mahnoor	Rep. Transgender Persons	Member
Ms. Saima Butt	Rep. Transgender Persons	Member
Ms. Jahan Der	Rep. Transgender Persons	Member
Ms. Zanaya Ch.	Rep. Transgender Persons	Member

TORs of the Committee:

The committee will;

1. Coordinate with the health department for arrangement of Medical Screening Camps.
2. Identity suitable place/ location for arrangement of the camps in Lahore.
3. Will arrange and manage screening camp sites.
4. Design outreach/awareness program in collaboration with Khawaja Sira Welfare Society.
5. Deign and finalize transportation plan and arrangements for transgender persons.
6. Gather detailed data of transgender persons from Khawaja Sira Welfare Society.

The committee will present arrangement plan by 29-05-2023 to Director General SW & BM for further direction and necessary action.


(MUHAMMAD IRFAN GONDAL)
Director PCRDP/
Focal Person Transgender Rights

CC: -

1. PS to Secretary SW & BM Punjab, Lahore.
2. PA to DG SW & BM, Punjab, Lahore.
3. All committee members

WAY FORWARD: A VISION FOR TRANSGENDER EMPOWERMENT AND INCLUSION

As we reflect on the strides made in advancing transgender rights and inclusion in Pakistan from 2021 to 2024, it is clear that significant progress has been achieved in promoting empowerment and protection. The establishment of dedicated shelters, educational centers, and vocational training programs marks a transformative shift towards a more inclusive society. The increased representation in local councils and job quotas exemplifies a commitment to integrating transgender individuals into all facets of public life. Moving forward, our focus must be on sustaining these initiatives, ensuring they meet the evolving needs of the community, and creating pathways for transgender individuals to thrive, contribute, and represent their communities on broader platforms. By continuing to champion their rights and foster an environment of respect and opportunity, we are not only upholding human dignity but also enriching our collective future.

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