



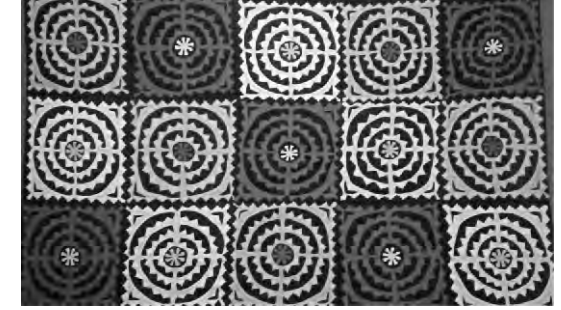
**SINDH HUMAN
RIGHTS COMMISSION**
Government of Sindh



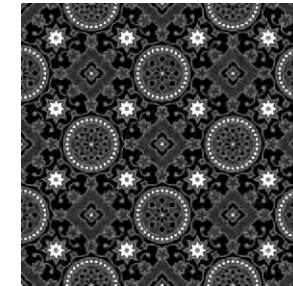
SINDH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Government of Sindh

**STRATEGIC
PLAN 2022
2025**





**SINDH HUMAN
RIGHTS COMMISSION**
Government of Sindh



/SindhHumanRightsCommission



@SHRC_official



www.shrc.org.pk

Copyrights: Sindh Human Rights Commission



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	4
Acknowledgments	6
Abbreviations	7
1. Sindh Human Rights Commission: A Brief Profile	8
2. Strategic Planning Process	9
3. Situational Analysis	12
4. Vision & Mission	16
5. Strategic Plan at a Glance	17
Strategic Pillar 1	22
Strategic Pillar 2	28
Strategic Pillar 3	32
Strategic Pillar 4	38
Structure of SHRC	40

FOREWORD

I am pleased to write this note to introduce the Second Strategic Plan of the Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC), which envisages our course of interventions for the upcoming three years (2022–2025). “Continuous Engagements and Developing Synergies” for holistically improving the situation of human rights in Sindh is the theme of this strategic plan.

The previous strategic plan was SHRC's first, and we made significant strides in contributing to its objectives of stopping human rights violations, creating awareness among the public and stakeholders, and expanding the operations of the Commission. SHRC was established in May 2013, but until 2016 it was a nascent body with limited staff and resources. Even the relevant stakeholders, including government officials and civil society, lacked awareness about SHRC.

To initiate its operations, SHRC received support from the Gender Equity Program (GEP) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which helped SHRC acquire the requisite human resources and funds. Through GEP support, the Commission actively worked across all districts and held awareness and advocacy sessions with government officials and civil society. SHRC closely worked with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), visited jails and shelter homes, and participated in various workshops, consultations and conferences. Moreover, as envisaged in its first strategic plan, SHRC opened a regional office in Sukkur in 2020 and in Larkana in 2022.

In consultations with relevant stakeholders during its first strategic planning process in 2017, SHRC identified its thematic areas for intervention. These included crimes against women, child rights/child protection/child marriage/child education, access of marginalized communities to civic facilities, more accessible law enforcement institutions, and improved access to justice. I am happy to share that SHRC carried out its work in these thematic areas with full force, and due to our constant engagements with the relevant stakeholders, we have successfully been able to initiate a pro-rights discourse. I can also confidently say that the public is more sensitized about their rights than ever before. Rights issues, like domestic violence and child marriage, were treated as cultural norms, but these are in fact serious crimes according to the Sindh Domestic Violence (Prevention & Protection) Act, 2013 and Sindh Child Marriages Restraint Act, 2013. SHRC has undertaken various provincial and community-level awareness-raising initiatives around these laws and we are optimistic that our awareness-raising has instilled a sense of responsibility among community members to report and overcome such criminal practices. Such successes are a testament to our hard work setting up comprehensive, robust, and updated mechanisms to promote and protect the highest human rights standards. However, despite all such gains, there is still a long journey for SHRC to optimally deliver on its mandate.

The Second Strategic Plan, developed after comprehensive consultations with government officials and representatives of civil society and academia, aims to address the existing gaps in the human rights response framework. The primary focuses include strengthening the capacity of government officials, using digital media for human rights awareness, reviewing the existing laws, enhancing SHRC's institutional capacity, and developing synergies with other relevant institutions and groups for effectively implementing envisaged interventions.

I believe this strategic plan will be a milestone for SHRC to institutionalize the promotion and protection of human rights in Sindh. I seek the support of all the stakeholders, including the provincial legislature, government officials, civil society and media to assist SHRC in implementing the strategic plan.



Justice (R) Majida Razvi
Chairperson, Sindh Human Rights Commission

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I want to thank the Honorable Chief Minister, Government of Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, for his consistent support. With his guidance and support, SHRC has significantly progressed in contributing towards its mandate.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability (TDEA) for assisting SHRC in preparing the strategic plan. This process has been generously funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC).

Lastly, I would like to thank all of our board members, advisors, and members of sub-committees as well as government officials, representatives of civil society and academia, people of Sindh, and other friends of SHRC for participating in the planning process and providing their valuable suggestions and inputs for the strategic plan.

ABBREVIATIONS

CAT	Convention Against Torture
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
COVID	Coronavirus Disease
CPU	Child Protection Unit
CPLC	Citizen Police Liaison Committee
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CrPC	Criminal Procedure Code
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FIR	First Information Report
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GEP	Gender Equity Project
HRIMS	Human Rights Information Management System
HRMS	Human Resource Management System
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEC	Information, Education, and Communication
ILO	International Labour Organization
KII	Key Informant Interview
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Member of the Provincial Assembly
NCHR	National Commission on Human Rights
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PPC	Pakistan Penal Code
PESTLE	Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal, and Environmental
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
SWD	Social Welfare Department
SCSW	Sindh Commission on the Status of Women
SHRC	Sindh Human Rights Commission
SWOC	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges
TDEA	Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability
TORs	Terms of Reference
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	Violence against Women

1 SINDH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION: A BRIEF PROFILE

The Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC) was established in 2013 under Section (4) of the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011. SHRC comprises a Chairperson, six members and a secretary. Currently, Justice (R) Majida Razvi is the Chairperson who was appointed in 2013. Of the total six members, two are full-time members and are retired District and Sessions Court judges, two are Members of Provincial Assembly (MPA) nominated by the Chief Minister, and two represent the civil society. The members and chairperson are nominated for three years with a possibility of a one-term extension of the chairperson. SHRC has its head office in Karachi and two sub-offices in Sukkur and Larkana.

The mandate of SHRC includes inquiring into human rights complaints from members of the public and organizations, as well as taking *suo moto* actions¹ against human rights violations; visiting jails to protect the rights of detainees and recommend measures to improve the state of affairs at these facilities; reviewing policies related to human rights, tracking the status of their implementation and recommending updates to these policies as required; conducting research and reviews of national laws, policies, and practices related to human rights and proposing changes in light of international laws and the Constitution of Pakistan; and, working to improve human rights awareness among the public.

More information about SHRC is available on its website (<https://www.shrc.org.pk/>), including SHRC's first strategic plan (2017–2021), the rules of business, and annual reports. SHRC has a social media presence on Twitter (https://twitter.com/SHRC_official) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/SindhHumanRightsCommission>).

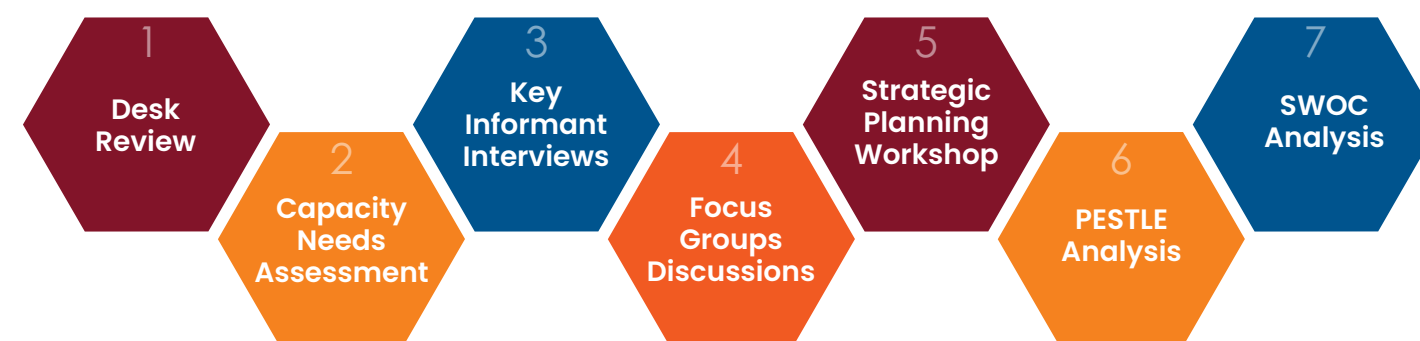
2 STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

For the development of the Second Strategic Plan, a multi-pronged, inclusive approach was adopted. Processes included desk research, a planning workshop incorporating multiple forms of collaborative analysis, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), followed by the drafting of the strategic plan. As the first step, SHRC undertook a desk review of relevant documents from a variety of sources, which guided the subsequent process.

The next phase entailed a strategic planning workshop. During the workshop, SHRC and its partners conducted a series of analyses including a Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal, and Environmental (PESTLE) analysis and a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC) analysis. These processes helped to facilitate the articulation of a comprehensive set of mutually-complementing strategic actions that will enable SHRC to fulfill its mandate of promoting and protecting rights relating to life, liberty, equality, and dignity of individuals guaranteed by the Constitution and laws.

Finally, an assessment of SHRC's institutional capacities contributed to interlinked strategic planning decisions about focus areas, operational modalities, and timing of actions. The needs assessment process helped to identify organizational capacity gaps, relevant aspects of institutional dynamics and the broader operating environment. All of these factors have been critical for designing specific and realistic strategic objectives and actions.

This mixed-method research allowed SHRC to explore and better understand inductive and deductive perspectives concerning capacities, requirements, and the way forward. The following systematic steps were undertaken to develop SHRC's strategic plan:



2.1 Desk Review

Desk review activities included studying existing literature, including secondary data and analysis, and creating a reference list so that all documents are organized and easily accessible. SHRC reviewed the following materials:

¹ *Suo moto* is a Latin phrase that means “on its own motion” or self-initiated. The phrase generally refers to a situation in which a court or other institution acts on its own initiative, without a request or complaint by any individual or institution.

- a) **The legal framework governing SHRC**, including the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011.² The Act mandated the formation of the commission for the protection and promotion of human rights in Sindh by establishing a mechanism to address cases of human rights violations, monitor the human rights situation, and provide recommendations for legislative and administrative improvements.
- b) **Government reports and notifications** on the prevailing human rights issues, including annual statistics from the website of Sindh Police, relevant legislation passed by the Sindh Assembly, and reports and information available on the websites of Sindh Human Rights Department (HRD), Women Development Department (WDD), Citizens Police Liaison Committee (CPLC), and Labour Force Survey (LFS) of Pakistan. Reports of the National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR) on Torture in Adiala Jail and a fact-finding report on minorities were also reviewed.
- c) Judgements of the Sindh High Court in human rights-related cases and other information available on the Sindh High Court website.
- d) **SHRC's First Strategic Plan for 2017–2021**.³ SHRC devised its first strategic plan in 2017, prioritizing various areas affecting the human rights situation in Sindh. These themes included crimes against women, child rights/protection/marriages/education, access of marginalized sections of society to various civic facilities, making law enforcement institutions more accessible, and improving access to justice.
- e) **Other SHRC reports**, including its annual reports for 2017–2018, 2018–2019, and 2019–2020,⁴ logs of complaints maintained, and publications on child marriage and honour killing.

The desk review provided the foundation for the subsequent steps and contributed to a sound situational analysis, which was further enriched during the various sessions in the strategic planning workshop. The desk review also clarified the legislative and administrative gaps affecting the protection of fundamental rights of the citizens in Sindh as well as the various approaches and interventions by SHRC to deliver on its legal mandate under the law and based on its first strategic plan and experience to date.

2.2 Strategic Planning Workshop

After the desk review, a two-day strategic planning workshop was held in Karachi on March 16, 2022. The event was attended by 35 participants, including 15 SHRC members and staff, two Members of the Provincial Assembly (MPAs) of Sindh, 18 participants from various civil society organizations, and three from academia.

This two-day workshop explored the working relationship between SHRC and other stakeholders, including the legislature, civil society, and academia. Reflecting on the progress made by SHRC against its previous strategic plan, stakeholders offered their inputs on the way forward. Furthermore, the workshop sought proposals and expectations from SHRC as a human rights institution. As part of the workshop, PESTLE and SWOC analyses were also undertaken.

2.2.1 PESTLE Analysis

A PESTLE analysis was conducted to understand the larger factors affecting operational environment for SHRC. Input from multiple stakeholders, each belonging to a unique sphere of life, helped establish a macro-level view of the functioning of SHRC. Some significant institution-level factors were drawn from this analysis that helped determine strategic directions in the new plan.

2.2.2 SWOC Analysis

Focusing on SHRC's positioning in the existing human rights landscape, the strengths and weaknesses of SHRC, along with the opportunities and challenges, were discussed during the workshop. A thorough review of the progress against the past strategic plan was undertaken with the members and staff of SHRC. The future course of action for SHRC was discussed to take advantage of strengths of SHRC, optimize opportunities, and address the weaknesses and challenges.

2.3 Deepening the Analysis: Key Informant Interviews

To develop a better understanding of the gaps, capture complete evidence, ascertain the capacity needs and recommend the way forward, KIIs were conducted with SHRC's Chairperson and members. These stakeholders asserted that the new strategic plan should be developed in the guiding light of the functions and powers of the commission and should consider the changing human rights environment in Sindh.

2.4 Engaging Community Members: Focus Group Discussions

To further explore and understand the local dynamics and human rights issues faced by the populace, three FGDs were held with rural and urban women in Umerkot and Karachi and with representatives of civil society and media in Hyderabad. The FGD sessions were prepared carefully by identifying the main objective of the meeting, developing key questions, and planning how to record the information gathered through the sessions. Six to eight participants were recruited for each discussion. The findings of the FGDs were recorded and they helped enrich the situational analysis and the process of devising strategies for wider outreach of SHRC and for more effective use of media and civil society. The findings of the FGDs further helped in documenting the peoples' understanding of SHRCs' role and expectations regarding the improvement of human rights situation in the province.

2.5 Developing the Strategic Plan

The mixed research method, including the desk review, planning workshop, KIIs, and FGDs, informed the development of the strategic pillars, objectives, and actions. The draft strategic plan was shared with SHRC's members for review and feedback, after which it was finalized. The plan will serve as the foundation for SHRC to guide its actions in the coming three years.

The plan will help SHRC undertake focused interventions on human rights, guided by the mandate outlined in the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011, and a thorough understanding and analysis of the human rights situation in Sindh developed through SHRC's experience over the past years and the multi-faceted and inclusive strategic planning process.

² <https://shrc.org.pk/downloads/Human-Rights-Act-2011.pdf>

The Sindh Assembly enacted the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011 after the devolution of responsibility for the human rights subject to the provinces post-18th Constitutional Amendment. <http://ipc.gov.pk/SiteImage/Misc/Files/Year%20Books/Final%20Report%20of%20Implementation%20Commission.pdf>

³ <https://shrc.org.pk/downloads/SHRC-Strategic-Plan-2017-2021.pdf>

⁴ <https://shrc.org.pk/convention-reports.php#StrategicPlan>

3

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Sindh is the second-largest province of Pakistan by population. The province has historically been rooted in Sufi traditions and houses one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse populations in the country. According to the 2017 Census,⁵ there are 4.18 million Hindus in Sindh, constituting 8.73 percent of its population, including 83,000 (1.74 percent) scheduled caste Hindus, who live in the province with relative freedom and autonomy as compared to other provinces.

Sindh has a sound legal base for the protection and promotion of human rights, and the provincial government has taken several positive steps towards these goals, including the establishment of two rights-based commissions – the Sindh Commission on the Status of Women (SCSW) and SHRC – with mandates of protection and promotion of women and human rights. Post-18th Constitutional Amendment, the Government of Sindh has introduced innovative reforms in various sectors for mainstreaming human rights into policies and development programs, particularly to overcome the inequalities that hinder the progress of marginalized groups such as minorities, women, children, transgender persons, labourers, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

With the passage of the Sindh Child Marriages Restraint Act, 2013,⁶ Sindh became the only province to end the disparity between the marriageable age of a boy child and a girl child of 18 years. Moreover, the provincial government has undertaken multiple legislative efforts to provide protection to children by promulgating legislation such as the Sindh Prohibition of Employment of Children Act, 2017,⁷ and the Sindh Child Protection Authority Act, 2011.⁸ The Sindh Child Protection Authority was formed after the passage of the law to protect children from violence, abuse, and exploitation. The authority is managing as many as 29 child protection centers in various districts in the province and is responsible for providing rehabilitation services to children affected by child abuse and child trafficking.

Sindh has also passed several pro-labour laws, including legal coverage for the occupational safety and health of workers, especially those prone to accidents due to hazardous working conditions in industrial sectors.⁹ Sindh is one of two provinces (the other one is Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) that have legislated to protect reproductive health rights of the citizens giving choice to the individual over decisions related to procreation and reproductive health.¹⁰ In addition, it is the only province that has extended maternity leave from 12 weeks to 16 weeks through the Sindh Maternity Benefits Act, 2018.¹¹ Similarly, the province has taken the lead in prioritizing women workers in the agriculture sector by promulgating the Sindh Women Agricultural Workers Act, 2019, which focuses on the rights of women

workers in the agriculture and livestock sectors. The provincial government has taken the initiative to provide leadership roles to women in the agriculture sector by enacting the Sindh Water Management (Amendment) Act, 2019,¹² which provides for mandatory representation of women on the water boards. Other progressive legislation includes the Sindh Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 2015¹³ according to which district level vigilance committees would be established to keep a continued vigilance on the situation of bonded labour in their respective districts.¹⁴ While these labour rights reforms, particularly for women's inclusion in the workforce, are in the right direction, there is still a need to work towards the implementation of these measures and to further improve labour laws to provide women workers with a conducive environment in the formal sectors of the economy.

Sindh has taken a number of measures to protect the rights of minority communities. These include the passage of legislation for forming a minority commission in Sindh. The Sindh government passed the Hindus Marriage Act, 2016,¹⁵ enabling the Hindu community to register their marriages for the first time in the country's history. The Act also provides the criteria for marriage, including a requirement that both parties are 18 years old and give their consent. The government has taken up the issue of forced religious conversions, which mainly affects girls and women in the Hindu minority. However, the draft bill on forced conversions has not been tabled in the Provincial Assembly. In order to protect the land rights of the Hindu community, the government passed the Sindh Protection of Communal Properties of Minorities Act, 2013.¹⁶ This Act protects rights related to the use of land and its resources for agriculture and livestock grazing by the communities traditionally living in those areas. However, it is important to work towards the implementation of this law by providing effective training to relevant departments and law enforcement agencies to stop illegal land-grabbing by individuals and corporate real estate developers.

Promoting and protecting women's rights have remained a priority for the Government of Sindh. The province has taken lead by promulgating the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2013,¹⁷ followed by the other provinces. Similar federal legislation on domestic violence prevention and protection has yet to be passed by the National Assembly. To ensure the implementation of this law, the Women's Development Department and SCSW have nominated district-level committees with specific responsibilities to follow up on the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act. Sindh has also taken various administrative measures, including establishing complaint and help desks and support centers for women in police stations across Sindh. These help desks enable women to

⁵ https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/population/census_reports/pcr_sindh.pdf

⁶ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.XV%20of%202014.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.III%20of%202017.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.XIV%20of%202011.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.VII%20of%202016.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.XV%20of%202019.pdf>

¹¹ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.XXXIX%20of%202018.pdf>

¹² <https://taolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/pak202624.pdf>

¹³ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.IV%20of%202021.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.XX%20of%202016.pdf>

¹⁵ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.IX%20of%202016.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.XL%20of%202013.pdf>

¹⁷ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.XX%20of%202013.pdf>

file grievances and provide services and referrals for victims of violence. To ensure that these desks are effectively delivering on their roles, the government has invested in the capacity of police to deal with gender-based violence (GBV) victims through sensitization sessions and training. The government has started inducting more women in the police force and has already achieved 2 percent of the allocated 10 percent quota of women in the police department in Sindh.

Moreover, Sindh has taken measures to improve the political participation of marginalized communities. Eighteen women legislators from the province, four on general seats and 14 on reserved seats, represent the voices of the people of Sindh, in general, and women, in particular, in the national legislature, while 31 women legislators with two elected on the general seats are part of Provincial Assembly of Sindh. Furthermore, Sindh has proactively worked for the political mainstreaming of members of the transgender community. The province allocated seats for transgender people in the Sindh Local Government Act, 2021¹⁸ at the tehsil level. The province has also taken lead over other provinces by setting a 0.5 percent quota for transgender people in government jobs.¹⁹

According to the 2017 population census, as many as 71,895 PWDs reside in Sindh. The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities was established to implement the Sindh Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2018²⁰ to take over the duties of the special education institutions in Sindh. The Government of Sindh also announced a five percent quota for PWDs in all government jobs and relaxed the of age requirements at the recruitment stage.²¹ Such proactive steps exhibit the government's keen interest in safeguarding the rights of PWDs. However, there are still gaps in implementing the existing laws and monitoring employment practices at all levels. Similarly, to encourage the political participation of PWDs, steps like the inclusion of PWDs at the local government level need to be taken.²² While the government in a recent legislative amendment allocated a one percent quota for PWDs in tehsil councils,²³ there is a need to effectively implement this quota and to reach out to PWDs for their mobilization and active involvement in various decision-making processes at the local level.

In addition to legislative and administrative actions by the Government of Sindh, the judiciary in Sindh has given various progressive rulings on issues related to minorities, missing persons, and civil society regulation in the province. Court interventions and rulings helped expedite the efforts of law enforcement agencies to trace missing persons – 298 missing persons were traced during the six months preceding February 2021, while inquiries were initiated for another 293 missing persons. The Sindh Police has also constituted committees to address the issue of missing persons²⁴ and hear from the aggrieved families at the police station level. Another such progressive action was a Sindh High Court ruling against the management of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) by the Federal Economic Affairs Division without a sound legal arrangement.

Though Sindh has made significant progress on a range of human rights issues, there is still a need

to employ systematic measures to remove economic disparities and unequal access to rights. Further legislative reforms, including the long-overdue review of criminal procedure and due process protections, to effectively legislate the provisions of the Constitution after 18th Amendment, are extremely important. The review of the legal framework will help these processes to become more gender-sensitive, especially in cases of Violence against Women (VAW) and against transgender persons. It will also improve procedures related to addressing the issue of missing persons, and enhance due process and fair trial protections in criminal cases involving minorities and members of other marginalized communities. Sensitization and training of law enforcement and court personnel are equally significant in working towards these goals. For this purpose, the relevant training curricula need specific chapters on fundamental human rights and related constitutional and legal instruments to ensure a more informed and sensitized administration and judiciary to implement legislative and constitutional frameworks effectively for the protection of human rights.

Similarly, to mainstream marginalized communities, a renewed focus on promoting and protecting their political, economic, and social rights through improvements in legislation and effective implementation of existing provisions are essential. For example, to enhance women's economic participation, labour laws must be further reviewed to ensure conducive workplaces, equal wages, and discrimination-free working environments. Moreover, improvements in labour administration and inspection mechanisms in line with the core International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions will help improve the status of marginalized workers and ensure the protection of their economic rights and social security.

¹⁸ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.XXXII%20of%202021.pdf>

¹⁹ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.VII%20of%202022.pdf>

²⁰ <https://itacec.org/document/2018/Sindh-Empowerment-of-PWD-Act-XLVIII-of-2018-june-11-2018.pdf>

²¹ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.XXIX%20of%202017.pdf>

²² Participation of PWDs at local government level was not addressed in the Sindh Local Government Act, 2021.

²³ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.XXXII%20of%202021.pdf>

²⁴ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/795740-police-traced-298-missing-persons-in-last-six-months-igp-tells-shc>

4

VISION & MISSION



Vision

"To create a society free of violence, extremism and have an environment of peace, interfaith, harmony and justice."



Mission

SHRC is a statutory autonomous body which believes in universality of human rights and works to promote and protect these as enshrined in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973 and Universal Declaration of Human Rights for a just and violence free Sindh by:

1. Driving provincial machinery to respond to violation of human rights through monitoring, suo moto actions as well as legal and policy recommendations;
2. Mainstreaming human rights awareness and education;
3. Bringing all provincial legislation, policies, institutions and actions in conformity with human rights obligations as per the Constitution and International Conventions;

5

STRATEGIC PLAN AT A GLANCE

STRATEGIC PILLAR 1

People in Sindh have easy access to efficient mechanisms to seek redress in case of breach of their fundamental rights, liberties, and freedoms by either society or the state.

Objective 1

Information flow, system, and procedures are improved for prompt redressal of rights, abuses, and violations through suo moto or petitions under the relevant laws.

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Develop Human Rights Information Management System for prompt reporting of human rights violation to SHRC.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2

Establish an online Complaint and Case Management System to efficiently deal with the suo moto cases and other complaints and maintain a promptly accessible record.

Objective 2

Government mechanisms and protection structures effectively deal with rights abuses and violations.

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Regularly monitor and release reports on the response of government institutions related to human rights abuses and violations.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2

Establish a systematic coordination mechanism with Sindh Police, courts, Prison Department, and other institutions concerned for human rights protection and rehabilitation of victims of abuse and violence.

Objective 3

Due process is sensitive to the specific needs of parties involved in the cases of rights, abuses, and violations.

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Identify and monitor criminal cases where due process was not followed.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2

Sensitize the first responders, judiciary, and Police Department regarding due process.

STRATEGIC ACTION 3

Furnish recommendations to improve due process in the Criminal Procedure Code, considering identified cases where due process was not followed.

STRATEGIC PILLAR 2

People in Sindh are aware of their constitutional rights and legal entitlements and are able to easily access information on redressal and protection mechanisms that deal with rights abuses and violations.

Objective 1

Relationships with a critical mass of human rights defenders, individuals, and organizations are strengthened for greater outreach at the community level, particularly among the most vulnerable groups.

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Identify civil society organizations and human rights defenders, especially those working for the most vulnerable groups in each district of Sindh.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2

Develop a mechanism for regular reporting and updates from human rights defenders and organizations.

STRATEGIC ACTION 3

Arrange periodic meetings of individual human rights defenders and civil society organizations.

Objective 2

Systematic engagement with media and strategic use of social media to advance rights education and awareness and encourage greater recourse to protection mechanisms.

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Conduct public events to raise awareness of citizens' constitutional and legal rights and entitlements, particularly for members of vulnerable populations.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2

Fully tap the potential of social media for rights education and awareness.

STRATEGIC ACTION 3

Build greater synergies with electronic, print, and online media for broader outreach and impact.

Objective 3

Prejudices and biases that perpetuate and encourage discrimination based on race, religion, caste, sex, residence or place of birth, etc., are highlighted through research and reviews of curriculum, textbooks, social practices, and any other means.

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Review of the primary and secondary school curriculums for identification of biases and prejudices that promote discrimination based on race, religion, caste, sex, residence or place of birth, etc.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2

Enrichment of school curriculum with specific segments on human rights, inclusion, and tolerance.

STRATEGIC PILLAR 3

Primary and secondary legislations in Sindh are consistent with the letter and spirit of fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution and international conventions, covenants, and treaties ratified by Pakistan.

Objective 1

Existing primary and secondary legislation, especially those relevant to vulnerable groups, are reviewed and recommendations for improvements are submitted to the government.

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Review legislation regarding rights of women, minorities, and children, including their inheritance and property rights.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2

Review legislation related to political participation, particularly of marginalized groups.

Objective 2

The government is assisted in developing legislative instruments to deal with rights abuses and violations not covered by existing laws.

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Conduct research on legislative possibilities for transgender rights.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2

Conduct research on legislative possibilities for forced conversions and forced marriages.

STRATEGIC ACTION 3

Legislative recommendations for improvements in labour laws.

Objective 3

A mechanism is developed to provide periodic feedback to the government on the state of enforcement of existing legislation subordinate to Articles 8 to 28 of the Constitution.

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Regularly monitor the implementation of the laws protecting fundamental rights in Sindh.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2

Release annual report on the state of fundamental rights in Sindh.

STRATEGIC PILLAR 4

SHRC strives to achieve administrative and financial autonomy for efficiently performing its functions and implementing its mandate.

Objective 1

Rules, policies, and procedures are developed for prudent management of SHRC's resources and functions.

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Develop and implement a Human Resource Management System.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2

Develop performance-based Terms of Reference for members and staff of SHRC.

Objective 2

A mechanism is developed for optimal utilization of funding to advance human rights.

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Development of institutional donor support group for resource mobilization, including Corporate Social Responsibility funds.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

Sindh Human Rights Commission

STRATEGIC PLAN
2022 – 2025

STRATEGIC PILLAR 1

People in Sindh have easy access to efficient mechanisms to seek redress in case of breach of their fundamental rights, liberties, and freedoms by either society or the state.

The framework of fundamental rights in the Constitution of Pakistan is articulated as a priority in chapter 1 of the Constitution. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) also guarantee these rights and require ratifying and acceding states like Pakistan to take measures to safeguard the fundamental rights of their citizens. In compliance with international conventions and to monitor the implementation of legislative and administrative measures to protect fundamental human rights as per the Constitution of Pakistan, the Government of Pakistan has formed rights commissions, including the NCHR. Sindh is the first among the provinces to establish the first provincial Commission on Human Rights among all the provinces.

The Government of Sindh passed the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011 that confers on SHRC the powers of inquiry either *suo moto* or based on a petition by a victim or any person on her or his behalf regarding human rights violation, abatement, or negligence in the prevention of such violation by a public servant. SHRC is also mandated to investigate and monitor the efficacy of existing legislative and administrative mechanisms available to protect the fundamental human rights and furnish recommendations to address any ineffectiveness in these mechanisms.

The Government of Sindh has adopted various legislative improvements as per the recommendations of SHRC so that the fundamental rights of citizens are adequately addressed. Relevant progressive legislation is listed in the Section 3 Situational Analysis of this strategic plan. SHRC reviewed the drafts of most of these laws and furnished recommendations for the government.

These legislative milestones are major steps in the protection of the fundamental rights of the people of Sindh, especially vulnerable groups such as women, bonded labour, children, PWDs, and minorities. Sindh is the first among the provinces to provide legal protections to the most vulnerable population in the province. For example, the Sindh Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 2015 has addressed the rights of the citizens who fall in one of the lowest economic strata in Pakistan. The Sindh Women Agriculture Workers Act, 2019 acknowledges women workers in agriculture for the first time in the country. Similarly, the Sindh Protection of Communal Properties of Minorities Act, 2013 protects the rights of minorities, predominantly members of Hindu communities, by curtailing illegal land grabs from people whose livelihoods depend on these communal agricultural lands. The Government of Sindh also has taken steps to address the forced religious conversion of minorities and drafted a bill on forced conversions, but the law is yet to be tabled.

Complementing the legislative efforts, the Government of Sindh has expanded the existing Citizen Police Liaison Committees (CPLC) from Karachi, where a centralized office is located, to other

districts in Sindh. CPLC offices have been established in Jamshoro, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, and Shaheed Benazirabad over the past four years. These offices enable close coordination between police and citizens for prompt response against crimes, including theft, abduction, kidnapping for ransom, and homicide.

Similarly, the Government of Sindh made efforts to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to enhance the efficiency of the judiciary and the police. Sindh became one of the two provinces with a centralized information management system of all the courts, which provides court officials with easy access to information regarding the number of cases on the docket, daily progress on the cases, case disposals, and so on. The government has also made efforts to improve the e-portal of the Police Department and to centralize the Human Resource Management System, Complaint Management System, Criminal Record Management System, and Police Station Record Management System.²⁵ In order to deal with the cases of missing persons, the Sindh Police has set up police inquiry committees that host public hearings for the families of missing persons in Karachi.

To register prompt complaints of human rights abuses and violations of the rights of vulnerable groups, there are several 24/7 helplines and online complaint registration systems run by government departments. These services include the Women's Complaint Center at the office of the Provincial Minister for Women Development, the 1094 helpline for complaints related to VAW,²⁶ online complaint registration for the women and children protection cell of Sindh Police,²⁷ the Madadgar helpline of Sindh Police,²⁸ the CPLC helpline 1102, and the CPLC Women Complaint Center.²⁹ SHRC has set up a comprehensive mechanism for *suo moto* cases as well as cases registered through petition and complaint and has also initiated an online system for complaint registration through its website.³⁰

While Sindh police, judiciary, human rights department, women's development department, and SHRC have actively pursued the formation of effective and efficient complaint registration mechanisms to provide redressal of complaints on human rights violations, there is a need for a more coordinated effort for the efficacy of these services and to improve public access to their fundamental rights. SHRC aims to develop and roll out a comprehensive complaint redressal mechanism to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure effective data management, speedy response, and redressal of the complaints. SHRC also plans to provide guidelines for information flow, efficient systems and procedures, and swift sharing of data by reviewing relevant legislation that safeguards the fundamental human rights of citizens, particularly the legislative provisions on fair trial and due process.

Objective 1

Information flow, system, and procedures are improved for prompt redressal of rights, abuses, and violations through *suo moto* or petitions under the relevant laws.

After being set up in 2013, SHRC started working on its core mandates as per Section 4 of the Sindh

²⁵ <https://pitb.gov.pk/spiti>

²⁶ <https://wdd.sindh.gov.pk/news/helpline-1094>

²⁷ <https://wpc.sindhpolice.gov.pk/>

²⁸ <https://sesdsindhpolice.gos.pk/madadgar-15/>

²⁹ <http://www.cplc.org.pk/women-complaint-cell-cplc/>

³⁰ <https://shrc.org.pk/complaint-form.php>

Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011, i.e., setting up a system for initiating *suo moto* cases, petitioning, and registering the complaints received online and by mail. Two members of the commission, Members Judicial I and II, are dedicated to investigating and conducting inquiries into the rights violation cases. People from across rural and urban areas of Sindh have filed more than 1,900 complaints with the commission, these complaints have been received through multiple channels including Pakistan Post, phone SMS, email, or word of mouth.³¹ The *suo moto* and petitions are primarily managed by the Chairperson. SHRC also monitors the newspapers, electronic media, and social media for reported human rights violations. Moreover, SHRC has established two field offices in Sukkur and Larkana to improve the information flow, complaint registration, and speedy redressal. The commission's staff manually handles the record of the complaints by maintaining case files of the complaints registered and admitted for processing. The history of all proceedings, evidence, outcome and follow-ups on decisions or rulings are maintained through these case management files.

The case management files are categorized according to the priority areas as per the first strategic plan of SHRC, i.e., crimes against women, child rights, access to civic facilities, law and order and access to justice, labour rights, and tribal clashes.³² SHRC is gradually adopting information technology to provide greater accessibility and has launched an online form for registering complaints through its website. SHRC has worked diligently to put the system in place and aims to work towards improvements by digitizing the case management system in the form of a Human Rights Information Management System (HRIMS). HRIMS will be a comprehensive, multi-tiered, and integrated portal accessible to the general public for registration of complaints and accessing the information on human rights violations in the province, with an inbuilt system of documenting the communication between the staff and members handling complaints and tracking progress on the registered complaints. This system will not only help make the complaint redressal more efficient, but will also be a repository of human rights violations in Sindh by their type and geographical region.

In line with the aims of the objectives, SHRC will undertake following strategic actions :

STRATEGIC ACTION 1	STRATEGIC ACTION 2
Develop Human Rights Information Management System for prompt reporting of human rights violation to SHRC.	Establish an online Complaint and Case Management System to efficiently deal with the <i>suo moto</i> cases and other complaints and maintain a promptly accessible record.

Objective 2

Government mechanisms and protection structures effectively deal with rights abuses and violations.

SHRC has the legal mandate to encourage the efforts of governmental organizations and institutions working in the field of human rights as per Section 4(x) of the Sindh Protection of Human

Rights Act, 2011. To deliver on this mandate, SHRC has sought assistance from its committees and sub-committees to assess institutional mechanisms that hinder the effective implementation of existing laws and policies. These committees,³³ as well as NGOs and the field offices of SHRC, together inform its efforts to provide recommendations to the Government of Sindh for improved mechanisms and protection structures to deal with human rights abuses and violations.

The cases of human rights violations received by SHRC are also critical areas for it to monitor and advise government institutions in effectively dealing with the abuses and violations. Most of the recommendations furnished by SHRC are related to the police department. According to SHRC's 2019-20 annual report, almost three-fourth (73 percent) of recommendations for managing the complaints were addressed to the police department, followed by the health department and the education department.³⁴ SHRC has provided a brief analysis of the response of these government departments to the complaints in its annual reports for 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020.³⁵ SHRC has highlighted the cases where the department did not take action in response to the notices and directions. To address the challenge of implementing SHRC's decisions or directions, the police department has initiated an informal mechanism for swift communication and redressal of high-profile human rights violations which also included area-specific WhatsApp groups.

However, there is still a need to further streamline the information flow, collection of human rights violation data, monitoring of institutional response, and analysis of the quality of response. The formation of the HRIMS system will not only help SHRC to streamline its case management system, but will also help in setting up a systematic coordination mechanism to track the institutional response to cases of human rights violations. The system will enable SHRC to release periodic reports on the quality, effectiveness, and rapidness of the redressal mechanisms and structures of the government departments and other institutions responsible for safeguarding fundamental human rights.

In line with the aims of the objectives, SHRC will undertake following strategic actions :

STRATEGIC ACTION 1	STRATEGIC ACTION 2
Regularly monitor and release reports on the response of government institutions related to human rights abuses and violations.	Establish a systematic coordination mechanism with Sindh Police, courts, Prison Department, and other institutions concerned for human rights protection and rehabilitation of victims of abuse and violence.

Objective 3

Due process is sensitive to the specific needs of parties involved in the cases of rights, abuses, and violations.

In 2010, Pakistan ratified the ICCPR and the Convention Against Torture (CAT), thus committing to ensure fundamental human rights of citizens, including the right to a fair trial and due process. These

³¹ <https://www.shrc.org.pk/annual-reports/SHRC-Annual-Report-2019-2020.pdf> Pg. 11.

³² <https://www.shrc.org.pk/downloads/SHRC-Strategic-Plan-2017-2021.pdf> Pgs. 20-24.

³³ <https://www.shrc.org.pk/annual-reports/SHRC-Annual-Report-2018-2019.pdf> Pgs. 13-14.

³⁴ <https://www.shrc.org.pk/annual-reports/SHRC-Annual-Report-2019-2020.pdf> Pgs. 31 and 35.

³⁵ <https://www.shrc.org.pk/convention-reports.php>

rights were acknowledged as fundamental rights of Pakistani citizens under Article 10(A) after the 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan.

The term “due process” refers to the state's obligation to apply (follow) all legal principles, rules and procedures relevant to a criminal or civil case (or administrative matter, etc.) so that all legal rights owed to a person are respected whenever a citizen interacts with the state. The principle of due process requires the state to comply with the rules governing criminal trials as per the rights granted in the Constitution and the rules and procedures passed as legislation by the Parliament and Provincial Assembly. Under international human rights law and the laws of Pakistan, the principle of due process is intended to ensure the right of every citizen to equal treatment by the state and before any court of law or other tribunal. This principle is of foundational importance to the fairness and justice of the criminal justice system.

Pakistan's legal framework for due process in a criminal trial is rooted in constitutional provisions and principles, multiple sets of laws, substantive and procedural laws, prison rules, and parole and probation regimes. The Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), 1860 is the predominant substantive criminal law, whereas the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), 1898 provides a legal procedural framework. The Qanoon-e-Shahadat Order, 1984 constitutes the law of evidence.

Protection of human rights in line with the Constitution and international commitments depends upon the legal regime, law enforcement agencies' understanding of how to ensure effective implementation, and regular monitoring of cases to assess whether the rules, procedures and constitutional principles of due process were compromised. SHRC has actively engaged with the government departments responsible for law enforcement, including Sindh Police, to improve the curriculum of police officers in order to enhance their understanding of constitutional and legal provisions on due process, human rights and international commitments. The close engagement and consultations with Sindh Police led to the development of a curriculum for a more compassionate and empathetic approach by the relevant officials with an improved understanding of the constitutional and legal framework of fundamental rights, especially those relevant to ensuring the due process.

The curriculum specifically included provisions of the PPC and investigation and enforcement under the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2013; the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Rules, 2016, the Sindh Child Protection Authority Act, 2011, the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2013, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2016, the Criminal Law (Third Amendment) Act, 2011, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2004, and Standing Orders No. 235/2009. The training sessions were held in Mirpurkhas, Hyderabad, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sukkur, and Larkana. SHRC also discussed the authority of police officials at various levels and reviewed the laws governing the powers of the police department. SHRC has dealt with complaints about human rights violations involving the police department,³⁶ especially where due process was not followed, including complaints of extrajudicial killing, fake encounters, fake First Information Reports (FIRs), illegal arrests, and so on.³⁷

Building on its work of handling complaints related to the due process, and establishing close collaboration with Sindh Police for complaint redressal and capacity building on human rights laws,

SHRC will monitor and document the cases where the right to the due process was compromised to identify the procedural problems and lacunas in the criminal justice system. This documentation will help SHRC review the CrPC for the provisions on procedures relevant to the due process and furnish recommendations for improvements in the rules and procedures to the extent of Sindh. SHRC will also continue to engage with the police department for capacity building of the officials for enforcement of human rights-based laws and human rights-focused due process.

In line with the aims of the objectives, SHRC will undertake following strategic actions:

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Identify and monitor criminal cases where due process was not followed.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2

Sensitize the first responders, judiciary, and Police Department regarding due process.

STRATEGIC ACTION 3

Furnish recommendations to improve due process in the Criminal Procedure Code, considering identified cases where due process was not followed.

³⁶ <https://www.shrc.org.pk/annual-reports/SHRC-Annual-Report-2017-2018.pdf> Pgs. 42-48.

³⁷ E.g., <https://www.shrc.org.pk/annual-reports/SHRC-Annual-Report-2017-2018.pdf> Pg. 25.

STRATEGIC PILLAR 2

People in Sindh are aware of their constitutional rights and legal entitlements and are able to easily access information on redressal and protection mechanisms that deal with rights abuses and violations.

The Constitution of Pakistan guarantees citizens' right to information as a fundamental human right. Article 19-A of the Constitution states that "every citizen shall have the right to access information in all matters of public importance subject to regulation and reasonable restrictions imposed by the law." While the right to information is one of the fundamental rights, and citizens may seek any information in matters of public importance, government institutions are also responsible for educating the public about their rights as citizens.

To facilitate the ease of access to information about fundamental rights of citizens, the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011 Section 4(viii) and (ix) requires SHRC to create awareness through print and electronic media, seminars and other available means on the safeguards available for the protection of human rights.

Promoting human rights education has been central to the previous Strategic Plan 2017–2021. SHRC has regularly held public meetings and seminars during the past three years.³⁸ SHRC staff and the Chairperson make visits to multiple districts at least twice a year to monitor the human rights situation, disseminate information through public meetings, and collect complaints from communities that are far-flung or for other reasons have limited access. SHRC has set up two field offices in Sukkur and Larkana to enhance its public outreach. The field offices are responsible for registering human rights violations in these areas and for broader outreach to the public and local civil society groups. They are also responsible for disseminating information regarding SHRC's complaint mechanism.

In continuation to its efforts to raise awareness on various laws amongst other training and awareness-raising sessions, SHRC arranged a series of training sessions on the Sindh Hindu Marriages Act, 2018 with relevant stakeholders including officials from the police department, civil society activists, and religious leaders. These training sessions were held in Hyderabad, Shaheed Benazirabad, and Mirpurkhas. As a result of these training and information dissemination sessions in June 2022, the number of Hindu marriage registrations has started increasing significantly.

Sindh holds a unique position in terms of the human rights situation due to its religious diversity, cultural variety, and distinct populations in rural and urban areas. With regard to the minority population, Sindh has the largest Hindu population in the country; the province also hosts a substantial population of Christians as well as sizeable numbers of ethnic minorities including Afghans and Biharis. With this diversity in view, disseminating information and creating an environment for easy access to information is challenging. While SHRC has focused on traditional means of information dissemination over the past three years, with the new strategic plan it aims to develop a comprehensive outreach strategy with innovative use of technology, creating networks of human rights defenders as well as making efforts to have a human rights curriculum in place for

schools in the province. SHRC is also planning to incorporate the field offices as part of its strategy to have a direct outreach to communities across the province with information on human rights legislative and administrative safeguards and protection structures.

Objective 1

Relationships with a critical mass of human rights defenders, individuals, and organizations are strengthened for greater outreach at the community level, particularly among the most vulnerable groups.

Under Section 4(x) of the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011, SHRC is responsible for encouraging the efforts of NGOs and other institutions working on human rights. SHRC has also been mandated to promote awareness of safeguards available to protect the human rights of the people of Sindh. SHRC looks at civil society as an important partner with a vital role to play in creating awareness, spreading legal literacy, and monitoring the human rights situation. SHRC has formally signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with two national-level civil society organizations.

To strengthen provincial linkages, SHRC has rolled out special committees mandated by SHRC's Rules of Business to undertake focused work on specific areas of human rights. As many as three committees are tasked to examine particular areas of human rights, minority rights, and gender-based violence. The members of these committees are identified from academia and civil society organizations from various districts of Sindh.³⁹ These committees have the critical task of advising and assisting SHRC in its actions and interventions on human rights.

Under the strategic plan (2022–2025), SHRC aims to consolidate its past efforts by identifying individual human rights defenders and civil society organizations to create a critical mass of human rights defenders at the district level. To pilot this action, SHRC will start from its field offices by co-opting civil society members from Sukkur and Larkana. This mechanism will help SHRC implement a regular communication and information dissemination system to increase awareness of human rights among citizens in these two districts during the first year of the strategic plan. SHRC aims at holding community meetings in far-off areas in these two districts to reach out to the people who do not have access to social media and other electronic media. SHRC will link its community-level engagement with complaint registration and redressal and the special committees so that the issues from the community can be connected with various administrative and policy-level reform recommendations. From second year onwards, SHRC will review its progress and learnings. Later, this practice will be expanded to other districts in the province, with civil society groups and individuals at the forefront of this information dissemination drive and promotion of human rights in the province.

In line with the aims of the objectives, SHRC will undertake following strategic actions:

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Identify civil society organizations and human rights defenders, especially those working for the most vulnerable groups in each district of Sindh.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2

Develop a mechanism for regular reporting and updates from human rights defenders and organizations.

STRATEGIC ACTION 3

Arrange periodic meetings of individual human rights defenders and civil society organizations.

³⁸ <https://www.shrc.org.pk/annual-reports/SHRC-Annual-Report-2019-2020.pdf> Pgs.11–12.

³⁹ www.shrc.org.pk/annual-reports/SHRC-Annual-Report-2019-2020.pdf Pg.14.

Objective 2

Systematic engagement with media and strategic use of social media to advance rights education and awareness and encourage greater recourse to protection mechanisms.

Section 4(ix) of the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011 requires SHRC to promote awareness of the safeguards available for protecting human rights through print and electronic media, seminars, and other available means. SHRC has printed several IEC materials on various aspects of human rights, including a booklet about the functions and powers of SHRC as per the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011, annual reports, and legal reviews. Regular field visits and public meetings across the districts of Sindh are also part of the strategy to create awareness of human rights and available protection mechanisms. During the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, SHRC specifically focused on using digital technology and social media to disseminate information to the public and create awareness. SHRC launched an updated and dynamic website in 2020. The website is regularly updated with SHRC's activities, press releases, and other published material. The website hosts information on the Supreme Court's and Sindh High Court's judgments on human rights-related matters, such as minorities' rights, jirga, revoking of the death penalty for mentally ill persons, protocols of medical examination of rape survivors, and so on. In addition, international conventions on human rights ratified by Pakistan and important national human rights legislation have also been uploaded to the website.⁴⁰

SHRC manages two social media platforms: Facebook and Twitter. SHRC's accounts on these two platforms are regularly updated with information about SHRC's activities and public service messages on human rights. Occasionally, complaints about human rights violations are also received from individuals and organizations on these platforms. Moreover, SHRC engages with electronic and print media by regularly sending press releases to media outlets related to various activities undertaken by SHRC.

Recognizing the strong potential of print, electronic and social media to spread awareness and advance human rights education, SHRC aims to further strengthen its relationships by forging systematic collaborations with media. As part of implementation of second strategic plan, SHRC will design various social media campaigns using innovative techniques including the use of multi-lingual messages, and video recordings for broader appeal and outreach. SHRC is also looking to develop better synergies with electronic, print, and online media by reaching out to media experts and including them in its rights awareness campaigns on social media.

In parallel to improved utilization of print, electronic and social media, direct public outreach through field offices will be improved by arranging periodic public meetings in Sukkur and Larkana. The field officers will raise awareness of citizens' constitutional and legal rights and entitlements, especially for members of the most vulnerable communities.

In line with the aims of the objectives, SHRC will undertake following strategic actions:

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Conduct public events to raise awareness of citizens' constitutional and legal rights and entitlements, particularly for members of vulnerable populations.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2

Fully tap the potential of social media for rights education and awareness.

STRATEGIC ACTION 3

Build greater synergies with electronic, print, and online media for broader outreach and impact.

Objective 3

Prejudices and biases that perpetuate and encourage discrimination based on race, religion, caste, sex, residence or place of birth, etc., are highlighted through research and reviews of curriculum, textbooks, social practices, and any other means.

SHRC is mandated under Section 4(viii) of the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011 to spread human rights literacy among various sections of society. SHRC deems human rights literacy as one of the most critical parts of its program and believes that school education plays a vital role in forming children's character, attitudes, and actions. Given its mandate and as part of the last strategic plan, SHRC reviewed various studies to identify the prejudices, biases, and discrimination in the school curriculum from a human rights perspective. Based on the review, SHRC collaborated with the Government of Sindh and developed human rights curriculum for 10th grade. The curriculum has been handed over to the Sindh school education and literacy department. SHRC has also submitted an official request with the relevant authorities to incorporate the curriculum in the syllabus. As a result of these efforts, the education department of Sindh has formulated a committee to implement the curriculum.

SHRC also developed a curriculum based on human rights legislation in Sindh to orient the police officials in various districts. These capacity-building sessions were held in 2018 and helped SHRC to create awareness among law enforcement officials regarding SHRC's mandate, powers, and modus operandi. The curriculum mainly focused on the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011, the Sindh Child Marriages Restraint Act, 2013, the Sindh Child Marriages Restraint Rules, the Sindh Child Protection Authority Act, 2011, the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2013, the Criminal Law Second Amendment Act, 2016, the Criminal Law Third Amendment Act, 2011, the Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act, 2006, the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2004, and Standing Order No. 235/2009 (Establishment of Human Rights Cells in Districts). These training sessions were held in Mirpurkhas, Hyderabad, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sukkur, and Larkana.⁴¹ The account of the training sessions done on the Sindh Hindu Marriages Act, 2018 is given in the description of the strategic pillar 2.

As part of the new strategic plan, SHRC aims to adapt the curriculum developed for 10th grade and would propose sections on inclusion, tolerance, and human rights to be included in the curriculum of all primary and secondary school sections (grades).

In line with the aims of the objectives, SHRC will undertake following strategic actions:

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Review of the primary and secondary school curriculums for identification of biases and prejudices that promote discrimination based on race, religion, caste, sex, residence or place of birth, etc.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2

Enrichment of school curriculum with specific segments on human rights, inclusion, and tolerance.

⁴⁰ <https://www.shrc.org.pk/laws.php> and <https://www.shrc.org.pk/convention-reports.php>

⁴¹ <http://www.shrc.org.pk/annual-reports/SHRC-Annual-Report-2017-2018.pdf> Pgs. 42-48.

STRATEGIC PILLAR 3

Primary and secondary laws in Sindh are consistent with the letter and spirit of fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution and international conventions, covenants, and treaties ratified by Pakistan.

The Constitution of Pakistan protects the fundamental rights of all citizens without discrimination based on race, religion, caste, creed, residence or place of residence. Pakistan has also ratified relevant international conventions, covenants, and treaties, such as the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and core ILO Conventions, amongst many other. These international instruments require ratifying and acceding states to take relevant legislative and administrative measures to protect the fundamental rights of their citizens.

The Federal Legislative List in the Constitution was revised under the 18th constitutional amendment, delegating the legislative and administrative powers for 15 federal ministries to the provinces, including human rights, education, labour and manpower, minority affairs, women's development, and social welfare. The Government of Sindh took swift measures by adopting various federal laws to enable the provincial ministries to effectively deliver on their roles and mandates. The government also passed important provincial legislation for the protection and promotion of the human rights of its citizens. These legislative milestones are described in Section 3 Situational Analysis of this strategic plan.

Section 4(v) and (vi) of the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011 mandates SHRC to review legislation in Sindh to ensure they are consistent with the fundamental human rights protected in the Constitution of Pakistan and international commitments. After the appointment of the chairperson in 2013, SHRC undertook a review of the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011 and drafted the rules for legislative guidelines on its day-to-day operations.⁴² The passage of the rules enabled SHRC to formally initiate its work by opening an institutional bank account, hiring relevant staff, and developing its activities as per its legal mandate. Legislative review and recommendations remain one of the priority areas for SHRC to deliver on its core mandate. Amongst the laws reviewed by SHRC, SHRC undertook a comprehensive review of the Sindh Child Marriages Restraint Act, 2013, the federal Protection against Harassment at Workplace Act, 2010,⁴³ and the draft of a bill intended to end forced religious conversions. A booklet of recommendations for proposed amendments to these laws was also published.

Regular field visits,⁴⁴ interactions with various government departments,⁴⁵ visits to jails,⁴⁶ management of complaints on human rights violations in Sindh, and community meetings by the

chairperson, members, and staff of SHRC have helped build an in-depth understanding of various policy, legislative and administrative lacunas. SHRC has put together several recommendations for policy reforms and the effectiveness of secondary legislation that includes recommendations for improving the efficacy of the police department in protecting human rights, the performance of educational institutions in providing primary education to all children, facilities at health-care institutions, especially for the provision of basic health services to members of vulnerable communities, and access to labour rights for the sanitary workers and workers in agriculture and industrial sectors. SHRC's visits to jails in Kashmore, Jacobabad and Shikarpore⁴⁷ have enabled it to propose policy recommendations to improve the living conditions and well-being of prisoners in jails in Sindh, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. To understand the issues of enforcement related to the Child Marriages Restraint Act, 2013, SHRC organized a provincial conference on child marriages and documented the areas where the legal regime needs further strengthening.

Building on its existing body of work and recommendations already furnished for legislative and policy improvements, SHRC will review the current primary and secondary legislation in the light of the Constitution and international commitments to strengthen protections for human rights, especially the rights of vulnerable communities. SHRC will also prioritize areas that need new legislation to protect the rights of minorities, transgender persons, and labourers, especially women. For more informed recommendations to improve the legal provisions that are most relevant and practical, SHRC will document the human rights violations in the form of an annual report on the state of fundamental rights in Sindh.

Objective 1

Existing primary and secondary laws, especially those relevant to vulnerable groups, are reviewed and recommendations for improvements are submitted to the government.

In line with its legal mandate under Section 4(v) of the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011, SHRC has reviewed several pieces of legislation, especially those relating to vulnerable populations. SHRC acknowledges that the Government of Sindh has taken several measures to improve the existing legislation to protect the rights of vulnerable communities, including the promulgation of the Child Marriages Restraint Act, 2014, through which Sindh became the only province to declare 18 years as the legal age for marriage for both boys and girls. However, SHRC observed in its review that while the law allows for a penalty for parents if found guilty of deliberately entering their child into an early-age marriage, there is no explicit provision for the annulment of such marriages. Hence, SHRC has proposed an amendment to the law recommending a provision for the annulment of such marriages. To analyze and document the challenges being encountered by the responsible departments in the implementation of this law, SHRC organized a consultation with participation from the social welfare department, Sindh child protection authority, child protection unit, Sindh police, public prosecution department and members of the Judiciary. The consultation helped SHRC to develop new recommendations for relevant legislative amendments to protect the safety and well-being of children, as required by the Constitution and the CRC.

While reviewing the legislative landscape to protect the rights of minorities in Sindh, SHRC has identified issues related to the protection of their fundamental rights, including their right to financial

⁴² <https://shrc.org.pk/downloads/Rules-of-Business.pdf>

⁴³ <https://qau.edu.pk/pdfs/ha.pdf> The Commission furnished recommendations for improvement in the federal law for the Sindh Assembly to consider before the adoption of this law in Sindh after the passage of the 18th Constitutional Amendment.

⁴⁴ <https://www.shrc.org.pk/annual-reports/SHRC-Annual-Report-2017-2018.pdf> Pgs. 34-36.

⁴⁵ <https://www.shrc.org.pk/annual-reports/SHRC-Annual-Report-2017-2018.pdf> Pgs. 42-48.

⁴⁶ <https://www.shrc.org.pk/annual-reports/SHRC-Annual-Report-2019-2020.pdf> Pg. 64-65

⁴⁷ <https://www.shrc.org.pk/annual-reports/SHRC-Annual-Report-2019-2020.pdf> Pg. 85.

security, inheritance, property, and political participation. SHRC, while reviewing the Sindh Hindu Marriages Registration Act, 2016, observed that the Act provides for marriage registration and acquiring of National Identity Cards and succession certificates, but it does not have legal provisions related to the termination of a marriage. The law is also silent on the Hindu woman's right to financial security in marriage. As part of its second strategic plan, SHRC will propose amendments to the Sindh Hindu Marriages Registration Act in line with the Constitution and CEDAW related to protection of the rights of all members of the Hindu minority, especially women.

In an effort to protect the rights of vulnerable groups in the province, another issue identified by SHRC, based on the complaints it has received, is the denial of inheritance rights to Muslim women or illegal confiscation of inherited land, constituting two percent of all complaints received in 2017–2018, seven percent in 2018–2019, and eight percent in 2019–2020. While some complaints were resolved with SHRC's intervention, most complainants await justice due to inadequate legal provisions and even weaker implementation.⁴⁸ The Muslim Family Laws, 1961 include provisions of inheritance for Muslim women; however, these laws need a fresh review and strengthened legal enforcement mechanisms to effectively safeguard the constitutional guarantees related to the right to property as per Article 23 and Article 24 of the Constitution of Pakistan.

The Government of Sindh has taken specific legal measures to ensure the civic and political inclusion of members of marginalized groups through the passage of the Sindh Local Government Act, 2013⁴⁹ and Sindh Local Government (Amendment) Act, 2021.⁵⁰ Sindh is the only province to provide a one – percent quota to transgender persons and PWDs in the local councils. Sindh has also provided substantial representation to women in local government, with 33 percent representation of women in primary and secondary councils. However, the law only provides for indirect elections on these seats, which does not ensure effective political participation. SHRC will review the existing laws, including the Sindh Local Government Act, 2013 and its amendments to propose recommendations to effectively include women, transgender persons, PWDs, and minorities in political processes.

In line with the aims of the objectives, SHRC will undertake following strategic actions:

STRATEGIC ACTION 1	STRATEGIC ACTION 2
Review legislation regarding rights of women, minorities, and children, including their inheritance and property rights.	Review legislation related to political participation, particularly of marginalized groups.

Objective 2

The government is assisted in developing legislative instruments to deal with rights abuses and violations not covered by existing laws.

The Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011 section 4(iii) requires SHRC to formulate, implement and regularly update policies to protect human rights. In addition, section 4(vi) mandates SHRC to

study treaties and international instruments on human rights and make recommendations for their implementation. SHRC assists the government by proposing new legislation based on the analysis of human rights violation complaints, field visits, meetings held with civil society and media, and review of existing legislative, policy, and administrative instruments in the light of constitutional provisions and international commitments.

In 2017–2018, SHRC team visited Badin, Tharparkar, and Sajawal to review the situation of human rights situation in these districts.⁵¹ The team furnished various recommendations for the district and provincial authorities to improve the human rights situation and provision of basic services such as health and education. The team also highlighted issues that were not adequately covered through legislation. The issue of forced marriages and forced conversions were identified as important factors affecting the fundamental rights of minorities since women and girls of the Hindu minority community are most affected by this phenomenon. To protect the victims of crimes of forced conversions and forced marriages, the Government of Sindh drafted a government bill on forced conversions was drafted which is yet to be tabled. As part of its second strategic plan, SHRC aims to research the phenomenon of forced conversions and forced marriages by holding community meetings through its offices in Sukkur and Larkana and consultations with civil society. The goal will be to develop practical and comprehensive recommendations for a legislative instrument to protect the fundamental rights of religious minorities, especially women's right to safety and security of life and liberty and right to profess, practice and propagate their religion as per the Constitution.

During the implementation of the first strategic plan, SHRC received a significant number of complaints related to the violation of labour rights. SHRC has also engaged with various employers and labour rights organizations to understand the issues of workers' rights violations primarily related to the most vulnerable, including sanitary and agricultural workers. Taking notice of the hazardous working conditions and lack of social security provisions, SHRC furnished recommendations for administrative actions and policy measures.⁵² During COVID-19 pandemic, SHRC also took notice of the illegal dismissal of workers from the hospitality industry, tractor manufacturing, and health care system.⁵³

The Government of Sindh has passed legislation for the welfare of workers, mainly focusing on women workers, including the Sindh Home-Based Workers Act, 2018,⁵⁴ the Sindh Women Agricultural Workers Act, 2019,⁵⁵ and Sindh Factories (Second Amendment) Act, 2021.⁵⁶ However, secondary legislation for the implementation of these laws has yet to be drafted, and relevant government departments need to be notified to start implementing the provisions of these laws. Building on the insight that SHRC has gathered from handling complaints related to labour rights violations and sector-specific vulnerabilities of workers, SHRC will review the existing legislation in light of core ILO Conventions and the Labour Inspection Convention of 1947 (C-81)⁵⁷ to recommend secondary legislation for recently passed laws as well as for stringent labour inspection to improve the

⁴⁸ <https://www.shrc.org.pk/annual-reports/SHRC-Annual-Report-2019-2020.pdf> Pgs. 73–74.

⁴⁹ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.XLII%20of%202013.pdf>

⁵⁰ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.XXXII%20of%202021.pdf>

⁵¹ <https://www.shrc.org.pk/annual-reports/SHRC-Annual-Report-2017-2018.pdf> Pgs. 34–38.

⁵² <https://www.shrc.org.pk/annual-reports/SHRC-Annual-Report-2019-2020.pdf> Pgs. 62.

⁵³ <https://www.shrc.org.pk/annual-reports/SHRC-Annual-Report-2019-2020.pdf> Pgs. 25–26.

⁵⁴ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.XXXVII%20of%202018.pdf>

⁵⁵ <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/pak202624.pdf>

⁵⁶ <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.XXXVIII%20of%202021.pdf>

⁵⁷ https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C081

implementation of the laws.

To protect the rights of transgender persons, the federal government passed the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018. SHRC reviewed the federal law in collaboration with the NCHR and participated in various workshops and sessions conducted by the NCHR to develop an in-depth understanding of the cross-sectional issues of transgender communities in order to furnish recommendations for the provincial government for an effective legislative instrument to protect transgender persons' rights. The Government of Sindh has drafted such a bill, and has hosted consultations with various stakeholders. Based on the understanding of SHRC developed during the passage of federal law, SHRC will furnish comprehensive recommendations for effective legislation to protect the rights of transgender persons in the province.

In line with the aims of the objectives, SHRC will undertake following strategic actions:

STRATEGIC ACTION 1	STRATEGIC ACTION 2	STRATEGIC ACTION 3
Conduct research on legislative possibilities for transgender rights.	Conduct research on legislative possibilities for forced conversions and forced marriages.	Legislative recommendations for improvements in labour laws.

Objective 3

A mechanism is developed to provide periodic feedback to the government on the state of enforcement of existing legislation subordinate to Articles 8 to 28 of the Constitution.

The core functions performed by SHRC, i.e., complaint redressal, *suo moto* of grave human rights violations, field visits, and review of human rights laws and regulations, will help furnish recommendations for procedural and legal improvements. The data from the complaints and field visits also feeds into SHRC's analysis of the most prevalent forms of human rights violations, shared by SHRC in the form of an annual report.⁵⁸ SHRC releases issue-based reports to give feedback to the government regarding the enforcement of various laws. SHRC has released reports on increasing incidents of suicide in Sindh, honor killing and proposed interventions to prevent it, the death of sanitary worker Irfan Masih, health and safety among sanitation workers, and the relationship between countering violent extremism (CVE) and the human rights framework.⁵⁹ While SHRC has responded to prevalent and emerging issues of human rights violations, there is a need to systematically document and monitor the state of human rights in the province.

Currently, SHRC maintains data on human rights violations and types of complaints without a comprehensive database. To make its system more responsive, under the second strategic plan, SHRC will develop a HRIMS – a centralized repository of the data related to various forms of violation. This will help SHRC to develop a robust system of data management and production of periodic reports on the state of fundamental rights, enabling better accountability and improved protection

of human rights in the province.

In line with the aims of the objectives, SHRC will undertake following strategic actions:

STRATEGIC ACTION 1	STRATEGIC ACTION 2
Regularly monitor the implementation of the laws protecting fundamental rights in Sindh.	Release annual report on the state of fundamental rights in Sindh.

⁵⁸ <https://www.shrc.org.pk/convention-reports.php#AnnualReports>

⁵⁹ <https://www.shrc.org.pk/reports.php>

STRATEGIC PILLAR 4

SHRC strives to achieve administrative and financial autonomy for efficiently performing its functions and implementing its mandate.

The Government of Sindh established SHRC in pursuance of its commitment to promoting and protecting fundamental human rights in the province. SHRC is statutorily a corporate body mandated to function as an independent organization on matters within its legal scope. The Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011 provides for a non-regular, non-annual grant-in-aid from the Government of Sindh; however, in practice, the government allocates an annual budget for SHRC that is released through the provincial human rights department into SHRC's bank account. SHRC undergoes a rigorous process of approval from the human rights department for budget consumption under each budget line and every planned activity.

As per the statutory requirement, SHRC's meetings are held quarterly, while it follows an annual plan in line with its long-term strategic plan. SHRC is independent in formulating its strategic and annual plans, but the financial and administrative dependence on the human rights department creates delays.

Financial autonomy and robust institutional structure are important for SHRC to function optimally. SHRC has forwarded amendments in the subordinate legislation for delineating financial, administrative, and programmatic policies and procedures that are yet to be approved by the government, hampering an optimal delivery of SHRC's legal mandate and slowing down the process of its institutionalization.

Objective 1

Rules, policies, and procedures are developed for prudent management of SHRC's resources and functions.

Statutorily, SHRC is supported by a secretary who is a civil servant and de-facto member. The secretary is responsible for assisting SHRC in fulfilling its legal functions while complying with the government's rules and procedures. SHRC has 15 staff members – Superintendents Complaints (3), Assistant Superintendents Complaints (3), a Public Relations Officer, an Information Technology (IT) Officer, Naib Qasids (Office Assistants), and Drivers. Field In-charge, Naib Qasid, and Driver support the field offices in Sukkur and Larkana. The two judicial members of SHRC also support the Chairperson in complaint management, and each is supported by one Superintendent Complaints and one Assistant Superintendent Complaints. To support SHRC in law review, gathering information on the human rights situation in various areas of Sindh, and monitoring the response of the government departments, SHRC has formed special committees on human rights, minority rights, and gender-based violence with experts across the province as members of these committees. SHRC also has at least one volunteer from each district of the province as a focal point to gather information on human rights violations and inform SHRC promptly.

SHRC has come a long way in hiring competent staff, organizing special committees, and expanding its outreach through a group of passionate volunteers. However, the challenge is to build on these

achievements and move forward systematically. For financial and administrative compliance, SHRC, being a government institution, is required to follow the rules already in place. SHRC plans to build internal systems for efficient and effective human resource management by developing a comprehensive human resource manual. SHRC has essentially been following a horizontal organizational structure. The second strategic planning process provided an opportunity to build an organogram in line with the current system and future needs. The organogram has also helped SHRC in clearly devising the horizontal and vertical hierarchy within the staff and understanding the roles that various functions within SHRC will be required to perform for effective operationalization of the second strategic plan. As part of the second strategic plan, SHRC plans to draft performance-based terms of reference (ToRs) for each staff member based on the expectations from their respective roles.

In line with the aims of the objectives, SHRC will undertake following strategic actions:

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Develop and implement a Human Resource Management System.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2

Develop performance-based Terms of Reference for members and staff of SHRC.

Objective 2

A mechanism is developed for optimal utilization of funding to advance human rights.

According to Section 8 Article 2(i) of the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011, the Government of Sindh is responsible for releasing a grant-in-aid to SHRC's bank account, while the other provisions in the same section allow SHRC to generate funds from endowments, donations, contributions from the public, contributions from district governments and other institutions and proceeds of sales of publications and other bona fide means of generating income. While the legal provisions are available, the government procedures regarding, the release of the annual budget through the human rights department rather than a fund, and the approval required for each financial transaction make it challenging for SHRC to generate and utilize other sources of funding and income.

Therefore, financial autonomy is pivotal for SHRC to diversify its resources, and it has already submitted proposed changes in the rules of the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act, 2011. The second strategic plan outlines SHRC's future initiatives, and further clarity will come once the budgeted operational plan is in place.

SHRC plans to share the second strategic plan and budgeted operational plans with international and national institutional and individual donors by forming a donor support group to fund the initiatives of mutual interest. While seeking monetary funding under the current financial practices is quite challenging, SHRC will utilize the donor support group to identify the areas of mutual interest where support may be provided through technical assistance and direct spending.

In line with the aims of the objectives, SHRC will undertake following strategic actions:

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Development of institutional donor support group for resource mobilization, including Corporate Social Responsibility funds.

STRUCTURE OF SHRC

