



## REPORT

# CONSULTATIVE WEBINARS ON THE REVISED DISTRICT LEGAL EMPOWERMENT COMMITTEES (CONSTITUTION & FUNCTIONS) RULES AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

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Prepared By:  
Faryal Zia Mufti  
Director Instructions-II

Finalized By:  
Zia ur Rehman  
Dean Faculty

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA JUDICIAL ACADEMY, OLD SESSIONS COURT BUILDING,  
JAIL ROAD, PESHAWAR, KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report encapsulates the proceedings of two webinars conducted by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judicial Academy (KPJA) on “Revised District Legal Empowerment Committees (Constitution & Functions) Rules and Its Significance.” Held on November 22, 2024, these webinars targeted District & Sessions Judges, who serve as ex-officio chairpersons of the District Legal Empowerment Committees (DLECs), along with representatives of the Law & Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP).

The concept note of this initiative forms the introduction, outlining the objectives, rationale, and expected outcomes of the training. The objectives of the webinars were succinctly to familiarize participants with the latest amendments to the DLEC Rules, address operational challenges, and promote the efficient utilization of free legal aid services.

The report details the proceedings of the two sessions and provides annexure that include the schedule of activities and pictorial highlights of the online sessions. This initiative reflects KPJA’s ongoing commitment to enhancing access to justice by equipping judicial officers with the necessary tools and knowledge to ensure equitable and efficient legal aid delivery.

## INTRODUCTION

Legal aid is more than a service; it's a cornerstone of justice, ensuring that every individual, regardless of their financial standing, has access to fair representation and equality before the law. Recognized globally as a fundamental human right, legal aid is pivotal for guaranteeing fair trials, preventing discrimination, and upholding the principle of equality. The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, enshrines the fundamental rights of citizen, reinforcing the nation's commitment to justice for all. Despite these robust legal frameworks, the practical implementation of legal aid remains fraught with challenges, particularly due to financial constraints. The Law & Justice Commission of Pakistan, in exercise of power conferred by sub-section (1) of section 9 of the Law & Justice Commission of Pakistan Ordinance, 1979, laid down the District Legal Empowerment Committees (Constitution & Function) Rules, 2011. These rules govern the composition, establishment, and functions of District Legal Empowerment Committees, specifically providing legal aid to litigants with limited financial resources. Pursuant to its rule 2(b), the primary objective of these committees is to assist individuals unable to obtain legal aid or protection for their genuine rights and interests due to financial constraints. Furthermore, the rules outlines for granting legal aid and selecting suitable legal practitioners. Ensuring effective implementation of these legal aid instruments is crucial to bridging the gap between legal rights and accessible justice. Under rule 2(d) of the District Legal Empowerment Committees (Constitution & Functions) Rules, 2021, one of the primary sources of funding for the District Legal Empowerment Committee, inter-alia, is the Legal Empowerment Fund Window of Access to Justice Development Fund (AJDF). The Governing body, AJDF through latest amendments made in District Legal Empowerment Committees (Constitution & Functions) Rules, 2011, vide Notification No. 14/198/2005/LJC-AI, dated October 12, 2023 has increased the professional fee of legal practitioners to be appointed for free legal aid from Rs. 20000/- to Rs. 40000/- depending upon the nature of the cases.

The Commission has also revised the eligibility criteria for legal practitioners from 5 years to 3 years of standing at Bar and empowered the District Legal Empowerment Committee, in consultation with the President District Bar Association, to select the panel of Lawyers. Previously, this mandate was with the Vice Chairman of the Provincial Bar Council, subject to the approval of the Chief Justice of the respective High Court. Additionally, a new sub rule 8 (i-A) has been inserted, stipulating that the list of legal practitioners shall be notified for the period of 02 years. The performance of DLECs was reviewed by the Governing Body of Access to Justice Development Fund (AJDF) and it was observed that optimum benefit of this unique

forum is not being achieved due to lack of awareness amongst the masses and even the relevant stakeholders are unaware about the existence of such committees and their mandate at district level. In this backdrop, The Law & Justice Commission has desired to arrange exclusive training sessions for the District and Session Judges/Chairperson, the DLECs and the representatives of LJCP Secretariat vide letter # 14(198)/2005/LCJP-Islamabad/AJDF Dated 27th August, 2024 with the aim that this will help to address any queries regarding the operational aspect and benefits of DLECs, thereby fostering better awareness and promoting the effective and efficient use of the available free legal aid service.

With this background in view, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judicial Academy has arranged 02 online Webinar Sessions for the District & Sessions Judges being ex-officio chairpersons of the DLECs and representatives of LJCP Secretariat.

## OBJECTIVES

Objectives of the activity were to:

- Enhance understanding of the latest amendments in DLEC Rules, 2011.
- Help to address queries regarding the operational aspects and benefits of the DLECs.
- Foster better awareness and promoting the effective and efficient use of the available free legal aid services.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

At conclusion of activity it is expected that the participants will be able to:

- Have better understanding of the DLEC Rules, 2011.
- Appreciate effective implementation strategy.
- Create awareness about provision of the legal aid amongst judicial officers and all those concerned with administration of justice at district level.

## SESSION I: (09:00 AM - 10:15 AM)

### Participants:

District & Sessions Judges from Bajaur, Khyber, Mohmand, Kurram, North Waziristan, Orakzai, South Waziristan, Buner, Dir Lower, Dir Upper, Lower Chitral, Malakand at Batkhela, Shangla, Swat, Upper Chitral, Bannu, D.I. Khan, and Hangu.

### Activities:

1. **Recitation from the Holy Quran:** The session began with the recitation of the Holy Quran.

2. **Welcome Address**

**Speaker:** Mr. Jehanzeb Shinwari, Director General, KPJA

- Director General welcomed participants and thanked the LJCP representatives for their active collaboration.
- He emphasized the critical role of DLECs in providing access to justice for marginalized communities.

3. **Discourse on Working of DLECs and LJCP**

**Speaker:** LJCP Representative

- The speaker elaborated on the structure, objectives, and operational framework of DLECs.
- Challenges and best practices in ensuring access to legal aid were discussed.

4. **Overview of the Latest Amendments in DLEC Rules, 2021**

**Speaker:** Mr. Zia ur Rehman, Dean Faculty, KPJA

- Dean Faculty, KPJA provided an in-depth analysis of the amendments to the DLEC Rules, including the increased professional fee for legal practitioners, revised eligibility criteria, and the process for selecting legal practitioners in consultation with the District Bar Association.

5. **Open House Discussion**

- Participants engaged in a lively discussion, sharing the challenges they face in implementing DLEC rules at the district level.
- Solutions and strategies were explored to improve the efficiency of legal aid services.

## SESSION II: (11:00 AM - 12:15 PM)

### Participants:

District & Sessions Judges from Charsadda, Mardan, Nowshera, Peshawar, Swabi, Abbottabad, Batagram, Haripur, Kolai-Palas, Lower Kohistan, Mansehra, Tor Ghar, Upper Kohistan, Lakki Marwat, Karak, Kohat, and Tank.

### Activities:

1. **Recitation from the Holy Quran:** The session began with the recitation of the Holy Quran.

2. **Welcome Address**

**Speaker:** Mr. Jehanzeb Shinwari, Director General, KPJA

- Director General, KPJA reiterated the importance of fostering awareness about DLECs among judicial officers and ensuring the efficient implementation of revised rules.

3. **Discourse on Working of DLECs and LJCP**

**Speaker:** LJCP Representative

- The session highlighted the critical role of DLECs in providing access to justice for underserved populations.

4. **Overview of the Latest Amendments in DLEC Rules, 2021**

**Speaker:** Mr. Zia ur Rehman, Dean Faculty, KPJA

- The presentation covered key amendments to the DLEC Rules and their implications for judicial officers and legal practitioners.

5. **Open House Discussion**

- Participants shared insights and challenges related to the effective implementation of DLECs in their districts.
- Solutions were proposed, including capacity-building initiatives and enhanced collaboration with bar associations.

## CONCLUSION

The two consultative webinars successfully enhanced the understanding of District & Sessions Judges and LJCP representatives regarding the latest amendments to the DLEC Rules, 2011.

The sessions provided a platform for meaningful discussions on the operational challenges faced by DLECs and proposed practical solutions to promote the effective utilization of free legal aid services. Participants appreciated the detailed analysis of the amendments, particularly the increased professional fee for legal practitioners and the revised eligibility criteria.

This initiative reflects the KPJA's and LJCP's commitment to strengthening access to justice and ensuring that legal aid services are accessible to those in need. By fostering awareness and empowering judicial officers with the necessary tools and knowledge, the webinars marked a significant step towards creating a more inclusive and equitable justice system.



## ANNEXURES

- **ANNEX-A: SCHEDULE OF WEBINAR**
- **ANNEX-B: TRAINING IN PICTURES**

## ANNEX-A: SCHEDULE

S#	Region/Districts	Date	
1.	<b>Session-I:</b> Bajaur, Khyber, Mohmand, Kurram, North Waziristan, Orakzai, South Waziristan , Buner, Dir Lower, Dir Upper, Lower Chitral, Malakand at Batkhela, Shangla, Swat, Upper Chitral, Bannu, DI-Khan, Hangu.	22 <sup>nd</sup> November, 2024 (09:00-1015 AM)	
2.	<b>Session-II:</b> Charsadda, Mardan, Nowshera, Peshawar, Swabi, Abbottabad, Batagram, Haripur, Kolai-Palas, Lower Kohistan, Mansehra, Tor Ghar, Upper Kohistan, Lakki Marwat, Karak, Kohat, Tank	22 <sup>rd</sup> November, 2024 (11:00 AM-1215 PM)	
Schedule of Activities for Session-I			
S#	Activities	Resource Person	Time
1.1	Recitation from the Holy Quran		09:00-09:05
1.2	Welcome Address	Director General	09: 05-09:10
1.3	Discourse on working of DLECs and LJCP	LJCP	09: 10-09:25
1.4	Over view of the Latest Amendments in the DLECs Rules, 2011	Faculty KPJA	09:25-09:50
1.5	Open house discussion on challenges and way forward		09:50-10:15
Schedule of Activities for Session-II			
S#	Activities	Resource Person	Time
1.1	Recitation from the Holy Quran		11:00-11:05
1.2	Welcome Address	Director General	11: 05-11:10
1.3	Discourse on working of DLECs and LJCP	LJCP	11: 10-11:25
1.4	Over view of the Latest Amendments in the DLECs Rules, 2011	Faculty KPJA	11:25-11:50
1.5	Open house discussion on challenges faced		11:50-12:15

## ANNEX-B: TRAINING IN PICTURES

