

FIELD VISIT REPORT

TITLE: AWARENESS CAMPAIGN “RIGHTS IN CUSTODY, DIGNITY FOR ALL” AND SENSITISATION OF NALSA (JUSTICE AWARENESS FOR GRASSROOTS INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE) SCHEME, 2025.

Date & Time: 28/7/2026. 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM

Venue: Central Jail, Aizawl, Mizoram

**Organizers: Govt. Mizoram Law College in collaboration with Aizawl District Legal
Services Authority
(Legal Aid Cell & IPR Cell)**

Prepared by: Lalchhuanawma

Roll.no: 10 5th Semester

29/7/2026

PARTICIPANTS

GMLC Faculty Members: 2

- 1) Dr Rebecca Lalrindiki, Assistant Professor, GMLC
- 2) Ms. P. Lalremruati, Assistant Professor, GMLC

ADLSA Members: 2

- 1) Ms. Cindy Lalduhawmi, ADLSA
- 2) Mr. Lianmawia

GMLC Students: 22

- 1) C. Malsawmtluangi
- 2) David C. Vanlalmangaihzuale
- 3) H. Lalmuanawma
- 4) Jane Lalhlimpuii
- 5) Lalawmpuii
- 6) Lalchhuanawma (Rapporteur)
- 7) Laldinsanga
- 8) Lalfakawmi Renthlei
- 9) Lalfakzuale
- 10) Lalmihriata
- 11) Lalmuanawma Pachuau
- 12) Lalrinkimi
- 13) Lalsangzuale
- 14) Loisi Vanrohlu
- 15) Malsawmtluangi
- 16) Pragati Chhetri
- 17) Richard Lalchhuanmawia
- 18) S. Zonunsanga
- 19) Saitluangpuii Sailo
- 20) Vanlalsaitluangi
- 21) VL Malsawmsanga
- 22) Zomuanpuia

OBJECTIVES OF THE VISIT

- 1) To conduct a legal awareness campaign on the theme "Rights in Custody, Dignity for All" and promote awareness of the legal rights and entitlements of persons in custody.
- 2) To sensitise inmates about the NALSA Justice Awareness for Grassroots Information and Transparency Initiative (JAGRITI) Scheme, 2025, and the legal assistance available through the Legal Services Authorities.
- 3) To create awareness among inmates regarding the philosophy of prison reform, rehabilitation, and social reintegration as important objectives of the correctional system.
- 4) To provide a platform for inmates to express their legal concerns, seek clarification on legal issues, and interact directly with legal experts and resource persons.
- 5) To observe and understand the administration, living conditions, welfare measures, rehabilitation programmes, and correctional practices adopted at Central Jail, Aizawl.
- 6) To enable students of Government Mizoram Law College to gain practical exposure to the functioning of correctional institutions and the implementation of legal aid programmes.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE VISIT

The visiting team arrived at **Central Jail, Aizawl** at **12:56 PM**, where they were warmly received by the jail authorities. The team was then escorted to the Central Jail Hall, the venue for the awareness programme.

Prior to the commencement of the programme, questionnaires were distributed to the inmates. The objective of the questionnaire was to gather their perspectives on the functioning of the criminal justice system and to assess its impact on their lives. The responses were intended to facilitate a better understanding of the inmates' experiences and perceptions.

Awareness Programme

The programme commenced with a welcome address and introduction by **Dr. Rebecca Lalrindiki**, Assistant Professor, Government Mizoram Law College (GMLC), who

chaired the programme. Following the introduction, the awareness session was conducted by **Ms. P. Lalremruati, Assistant Professor, GMLC.**

The resource person began by discussing the challenges within the existing criminal justice system, particularly emphasizing the issue of overcrowding in prisons due to the high number of undertrial prisoners compared to convicted inmates. Using a multimedia presentation, she explained the key components of the criminal justice system and highlighted the importance of correctional institutions as centres for rehabilitation rather than mere punishment.

The session focused on the philosophy of prison reform, encouraging inmates to view imprisonment as an opportunity for personal growth and reintegration into society. In this context, the well-known quote by **Mahatma Gandhi**, "*Hate the sin, not the sinner*," was cited to reinforce the principle that individuals should not be permanently defined by their offences and that rehabilitation remains a fundamental objective of the correctional system.

The speaker further emphasized that prisons are intended to facilitate reform and social reintegration rather than serve solely as institutions of punishment. She also informed the inmates that correctional facilities are funded by the State Government and, despite resource constraints, efforts are made to provide inmates with their basic necessities and essential welfare services.

The awareness programme also addressed the inherent limitations and challenges of the criminal justice system, noting that laws are designed to apply uniformly in order to protect society as a whole. The concept of "**proof beyond reasonable doubt**" was explained, highlighting the high standard of proof required before a person can be convicted in a criminal trial.

Drawing upon principles of criminology, the resource person discussed the widely recognized theory that "*criminals are made, not born*," emphasizing the influence of social, economic, and environmental factors on criminal behaviour. The session further clarified the legal principle that **ignorance of the law is not a valid defence**, and concluded with an overview of prisoners' legal and constitutional rights, including the right to **free legal aid**.

Interactive Session (Inmates' Concerns)

An interactive question-and-answer session followed the awareness programme, during which several inmates actively participated by raising legal and practical concerns relating to the criminal justice system.

a. Concerns regarding access to justice

One inmate, who had been in custody for more than three years, expressed concerns regarding his experience within the criminal justice system. He felt that male accused persons often encounter significant challenges in obtaining justice and compared his experience with legal systems in other jurisdictions as well as traditional Mizo customary practices. He further stated that judicial proceedings tend to rely heavily on documentary evidence and official reports, and that accused persons may sometimes feel

that their personal accounts are not given adequate consideration during the adjudicatory process.

b. Concerns regarding prison overcrowding

An undertrial inmate facing charges of murder questioned the causes of prison overcrowding. He asked whether overcrowding should be attributed solely to the increasing number of inmates or whether systemic factors, including arrest and detention practices, also contribute to the situation. The discussion highlighted broader concerns regarding the functioning of the criminal justice system and the management of undertrial populations.

c. Concerns regarding wrongful conviction

Another inmate, who preferred to remain anonymous, raised a question regarding the legal remedies available to individuals who believe they have been falsely accused or wrongfully convicted. He sought guidance on the appropriate legal procedures for establishing innocence and pursuing justice through the appellate and review mechanisms provided under law.

The resource persons addressed the queries by explaining the relevant legal provisions, available remedies, and the importance of legal representation and free legal aid in safeguarding the rights of accused persons and inmates.

Conclusion of the Programme

The programme concluded with a **Vote of Thanks** delivered by **Ms. Cindy Lalduhawmi, Assistant District Legal Services Authority (ADLSA)**, who expressed appreciation to the jail authorities, resource persons, organizing team, and the inmates for their active participation and cooperation.

Following the programme, refreshments were served to the visiting team after they exited the jail premises. Refreshments were also distributed to the inmates within their respective wards by the prison administration.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

It was observed that throughout the awareness campaign, no security guards accompanied the visiting team inside the wards. The team interacted directly with the inmates without any security personnel present. This reflects the confidence of the prison authorities in maintaining order within the facility, as well as the trust placed in the inmates. It also suggests a stable and well-managed environment within the Central Jail.

Inmate Visit – Jail Premises

1. Ward 1

The ward has a designated capacity of 29 inmates but currently accommodates 49 inmates, indicating overcrowding. Despite the limited space, inmates reported that they adapt by

engaging in recreational activities such as playing various board games. The ward was also observed to maintain a commendable standard of cleanliness and hygiene.

2. Ward C-IV

Ward C-IV houses 45 inmates, the majority of whom are above the age of 50. During the visit, one inmate raised a legal query regarding the accountability of advocates who neglect their clients and whether clients are entitled to a refund of legal fees paid in such circumstances. The query was addressed by Ms. P. Lalremruati, Assistant Professor, and the inmate expressed satisfaction with the explanation provided.

3. Ward C-3

This ward accommodates 22 inmates. Due to operational limitations during the visit, the team was unable to enter the ward for a more detailed assessment, and therefore no further observations could be made.

4. Ward C-1 (Prison Industry)

The inmates referred to this ward as the "Prison Industry" due to its focus on vocational and productive activities. Upon arrival, the inmates showcased a variety of handcrafted products that were available for purchase. Members of the visiting team purchased several of these items, which was greatly appreciated by the inmates and served as encouragement for their rehabilitation and skill development efforts.

Ward Leadership Structure

It was observed that each ward follows a structured internal leadership system comprising the following roles:

- Ward Leader
- Controller
- Kitchen Duty In-charge
- Ward Members

This organizational structure appears to support effective coordination and day-to-day management within each ward.

Welfare Services

The Central Jail provides inmates with access to essential welfare services, including a free **Integrated Counselling and Testing Centre (ICTC)** and a **Legal Aid Clinic** within the jail premises. These services contribute significantly to the inmates' healthcare, legal awareness, and overall welfare.

BODY OF CENTRAL JAIL (INSIDE)

LIFER: 50

U.T.P: 488

R.I CONVICT: 286

S.I CONVICT: 54

GRAND TOTAL: 878

HOSPITALISED: 2

PAROLE LEAVE: 3

Percentage of Undertrial Prisoners (U.T.P): 55.58 %

QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

Based on the information received from the questionnaire, the largest proportion of inmates were in custody for offences under the **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act**. This was followed by offences under the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act**, the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)**, and the **Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition) laws (MLTP)**.

The majority of respondents did not perceive imprisonment primarily as a means of rehabilitation. Instead, many viewed prison as a place for personal reform, where individuals are encouraged to correct their behaviour and reflect on their past actions. Others regarded imprisonment as a necessary measure to prevent individuals from engaging in further unlawful conduct.

A significant proportion of inmates reported that incarceration has had a negative impact on their mental health and emotional well-being. Many respondents also expressed uncertainty about their ability to successfully reintegrate into society after completing their sentences. They believed that social stigma and negative public perceptions of former inmates would pose substantial barriers to leading a normal life following their release.

Most respondents indicated that inmates are frequently viewed differently by society and are often regarded as social outcasts rather than individuals capable of rehabilitation. They felt that such attitudes hinder their prospects for acceptance, employment, and successful reintegration into the community.

With respect to legal assistance, the responses were mixed. While a number of inmates expressed satisfaction with the support provided by the Legal Services Authority, others believed that greater outreach and more effective legal assistance could be provided to address their legal concerns.

The questionnaire further revealed that the majority of inmates were aware of the legal principle that **"ignorance of the law is not an excuse,"** indicating a basic level of legal awareness among the respondents.

CONCLUSION

The visit to Central Jail, Aizawl provided valuable insight into the functioning of the correctional institution and the living conditions of the inmates. Despite the challenge of overcrowding, the jail maintained a clean and orderly environment, supported by an effective ward leadership structure, welfare services, and vocational activities aimed at rehabilitation. The awareness programme and interaction with the inmates revealed important concerns regarding the criminal justice system, mental well-being, and social reintegration. Overall, the visit highlighted the Central Jail's commitment to maintaining discipline, ensuring inmate welfare, and promoting rehabilitation while underscoring the need for continued legal awareness and support for inmates.

Annexure: Field Visit Photographs

Figure 1: Visiting team at the entrance of Central Jail, Aizawl, Mizoram



Figure 2: Interaction during the visit



Awareness Campaign at Central Women's Prison and Correctional Home, Aizawl

Date: 28th July 2026

Venue: Central Women's Prison and Correctional Home, Aizawl

Introduction:

An awareness campaign was held at the Central Women's Prison and Correctional Home, Aizawl, with the simple goal of reaching out to the women inmates and reminding them that even inside prison, their rights, dignity, and chances for a better future still matter. The program was a joint effort between the prison authorities and the District Legal Services Authority.

At the time of the program, the correctional home housed 150 individuals consisting of 101 under-trial prisoners, 6 convicts serving simple imprisonment, 37 convicts serving rigorous imprisonment, and 9 children living with their mothers inside the facility.

The theme chosen for the campaign was "Reformation, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration of Prisoners." The resource person spoke with empathy, explaining that prisons should not only be places of confinement but also spaces where inmates can reflect, rebuild, and prepare to return to society with dignity.

Proceedings :

The programme began at 1:30 p.m. with Miss Hmingthanpuii Ralte Asst.Professor of Govt.Mizoram Law College serving as the chairperson. She opened the session with a brief but motivating introduction, explaining what the campaign aimed to achieve and encouraging the inmates to participate actively.

The main resource person was Miss Ruth Lalrinliani from Govt Mizoram Law College. She led the session on the theme of "Reformation, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration of Prisoners." Supporting the programme were Miss Sangsangi and Pu Rinawma from the District Legal Services Authority (DSLA). They provided support throughout the session and represented the DSLA, reinforcing the message that legal aid and institutional backing are available to prisoners.

After the chairperson's introduction, Miss Ruth Lalrinliani , Asst Professor of Govt Mizoram Law college , began her session by first thanking the prison authorities for allowing the

programme to take place. She reassured the inmates that “the present is what truly matters” and reminded them that their past mistakes do not define who they are as people. She explained that the campaign was part of a larger scheme laid out by the government, meant to give prisoners hope and a chance to rebuild their lives.

She then broke down the theme of the programme : Reformation, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration .

- Reformation: She described this as being “reborn paradoxically,” a chance to fix oneself and start anew. She reminded the inmates that they were not in prison merely to pass time, but to work with the government’s support toward their own reformation.
- Rehabilitation: She explained that prison should be a place where one learns to stand on their own two feet, to develop a new mindset, and to prepare for a fresh start.
- Reintegration: Once reformation is achieved, she said, inmates must return to society ready to be useful to their families and communities, contributing positively instead of being weighed down by stigma.

Throughout her talk, she motivated the prisoners to make the most of their time in the correctional home, to become the best version of themselves for their own sake, for their families, and especially for their children. She reminded them that prisons are now called “reformation centers” precisely because the goal is not punishment but renewal and hope.

To inspire them further, she cited Psalm 90:10, reflecting on the brevity of life and the importance of living meaningfully despite hardships. She also quoted St. Augustine’s famous line, “Hate the sin, not the sinner,” explaining that judges condemn crimes, not the individuals themselves. Her message was clear: do not let the past swallow the present , start afresh today.

She also emphasized the importance of police officers, the courts, and the reformation center itself, reminding the inmates that these institutions exist not to destroy them but to guide them toward a new life. She concluded her speech by encouraging the prisoners not to rebel against their circumstances but to use this moment as a chance to restart, avoid repeating past mistakes, and even motivate others outside not to fall into the same errors.

Closing Session

After Miss Ruthi’s inspiring address, the chairperson, took over the programme once again. She led an interactive session with the inmates, encouraging them to share their thoughts and ask questions.

To formally conclude the programme, Miss Sangsangi from the District Legal Services Authority (DSLA) was invited to deliver the vote of thanks. She expressed gratitude to the

prison authorities, the resource person, and the inmates for their participation, and highlighted the importance of continuing such awareness initiatives.

Follow-Up Activity

After the programme ended, a questionnaire was distributed among the prisoners. . The inmates filled out the forms with the assistance of the students who had participated in the campaign, ensuring that everyone had the chance to respond meaningfully.

Conclusion

The awareness campaign at the Central Women's Prison and Correctional Home, Aizawl, showed that prisons can be more than places of punishment. With the right approach, they can become spaces of learning, healing, and preparation for a better life outside. The women inmates, along with their children, left the sessions with more knowledge, more confidence, and a sense that society has not forgotten them.

Submitted by:

J.Lalrinmawii

Rapporteur

Awareness Campaign, Central Women's Prison and Correctional Home, Aizawl





Aizawl, Mizoram, India 🇮🇳
Qm2f+wp9 Central Jail, Aizawl, Mizoram
796009, India
Lat 23.752278° Long 92.674123°
Tuesday, 28/07/2026 01:30 PM GMT +05:30