

Topic:Delays in Justice: The Role of Police and CourtsOutline:I - Introduction

↳ Thesis Statement:

"Delays in justice are largely caused by inefficiencies in police investigations and prolonged court procedures, which undermines the public trust in legal systems"

II - Role of Police in Delays

1. Poor Investigation Quality
 - Weak FIRs and Flawed investigation reports delays trials
 - Case: The Zairab Ansari rape-murder case (2018) exposed serious lapses in police handling, causing public outrage.
2. Corruption and Political Pressure
 - Police often manipulate evidence under influence

Fact: Transparency International reports corruption in police as one of the highest in South Asia.

3. Lack of Forensic Support

- Delays in collecting or processing forensic evidence slow trials

- Case: Karachi Baldia Factory Fire (2012)

- weak evidence collection delayed the accountability

4. Low Police Capacity

- Insufficient training or resources cause reliance on outdated methods.

Fact: Police to population ratio in Pakistan is 1:625, below the UN recommended 1:450.

5. Failure in Witness Protection

- Witnesses retract statements due to fear, causing adjournments.

- Case: Daniel Pearl murder trial saw

- witnesses turn hostile due to lack of protection

III - Role of Courts in Delays

1. Case Backlogs

↳ Millions of cases pending in courts

creates excessive waiting periods

• Fact: Pakistan judiciary has 2.6 million cases pending. (Law & Justice Commission 2023).

2. Frequent Adjournments

↳ Lawyers exploit adjournments to prolong cases.

• Case: Model Town massacre case (2014)

- adjourned multiple times over year.

3. Inefficient Case Management

↳ Absence of digital tracking systems increase manual delays

• Fact: E-court system (introduced 2019)

is only partially functional

4. Judicial Vacancies ^{and Understaffing}

↳ Too few judges for massive caseloads

Fact: Pakistan has only 2000 judges for 240+ million people.

5. Appeal ~~and~~ and Review System Abuse

Multiple appeals and review petitions

prolong justice in Pakistan - III

Case: Mukhtaran Mai gang rape case took over a decade to reach final decision

IV. Consequences of Delayed Justice

1. Loss of Public Trust

- People resort to extrajudicial means (e.g. jirgas, mob justice)

Fact: Gallup Pakistan (2022) only

27% Pakistanis trust police and courts

2. Denial of Fundamental Rights

- Long trials amount to punishment before conviction

(Case: Dr Aafia Siddiqui's case)

(in US court but cited in Pakistan)

reflects debate on delayed trial justice

V. Conclusion

In Pakistan, more than two million cases are still pending in courts, while weak police investigations makes trials even slower. These delays in justice weaken public trust in legal system. Delays in justice means slow police work and lengthy court cases that stop people from getting their decisions on time. Delays in justice largely stem from weak police investigations, corruption and lack of resources, which result in poor evidence and unreliable witness. On the otherhand courts face huge cases backlogs, frequent adjournments, and too few judges to handle the rising workload. Together these problems create long trails, deny people timely justice and weak public trust in legal system. Thus, delays in justice are largely caused by inefficiencies in police investigations and prolonged court procedures, which undermine public trust in legal system.

One of the main causes in delayed justice is the poor investigations. Often, First Information Reports (FIRs) are poorly drafted, evidence is collected carelessly, which weakens the case from the very beginning.

In the **Zainab Ansari rape-murder case (2018)** public anger rose sharply when initial police handling fails to collect clues timely.

Because of such negligence, trials are dragged out as court require additional evidence to proceed. Furthermore, weak investigation leads to repeated hearing and adjournments, which consume years. Consequently, victims and their families are left frustrated, while criminals sometimes escape punishment altogether.

Thus, until investigation standards are improved, delays in justice will remain a recurring problem.

Another significant reason behind delays is corruption within the police force and the influence of political actors. Frequently evidence is manipulated, or cases are

mishandled under pressure from powerful groups. According to **Transparency International**, the police are ranked among the most corrupt institutions in South Asia. This corruption forces courts to spend extra time separating truth from fabricated evidence. Moreover, political involvement means that sensitive cases are either delayed indefinitely or slowed down through transfer of officers. As a result, both time and trust are lost. Therefore, reducing corruption and political interferences is essential if the justice system is to function efficiently.

Delays in justice are also linked to the absence of proper forensic support in investigations. Without timely DNA reports, ballistics or other scientific evidences, cases cannot move forward. A tragic example is the **Karachi Baldia Factory Fire (2012)**, where weak evidence collection prolonged accountability. Furthermore, forensic

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laboratories in Pakistan are few in number and under-resourced, which causes months of delay in producing crucial reports. In addition, Pakistan's reliance on outdated investigation methods further slows down proceedings. Consequently, courts are forced to adjourn hearings until reliable evidence is submitted. Therefore, strengthening forensic infrastructure is vital for speeding up trials.

Another challenge is the limited capacity of the police force. Pakistan's police to population ratio is 1:625, which is far below the UN recommended 1:450. Because of this shortage, investigations are often rushed, incomplete, or delayed for months. Moreover, many officers lack proper training in modern evidence collection, legal drafting and case handling. As a result, investigation reports are frequently returned by courts for correction, causing further delay. In addition, the lack

of modern equipment and digital systems force reliance on mutual records, which waste time. Consequently, victims are left waiting, while justice slips further away. Hence, increasing police numbers and the training is crucial for reducing delays.

Delays are also caused by the absence of proper witness protection system.

Witness often retract their statements due to the fear of threats, leading to repeated hearings. A notable example is the **Daniel Pearl murder trial**, where witnesses either disappeared or turned hostile, forcing court to drag the case for years. Moreover, when witnesses withdraw, prosecutors must find alternatives, which adds more delay. In addition, lack of protection discourages people from testifying at all, leaving cases incomplete. As a result, criminals benefit from prolonged trials, while victims suffer. Therefore, a strong protection program is

necessary to speed up justice delivery.

While inefficiencies within the police plays a significant role in delaying justice, the problems does not end there. Once cases enter the courts, they encounter a new set of challenges that further prolong the process. Court-related delays often arise from structural weaknesses, heavy workloads, and outdated practices. Together, these issues compound the earlier failures of police work and extend the sufferings of victims.

One major reason behind delays in justice is the massive backlogs of cases in Pakistani courts. To begin with, the judicial system is overburdened with millions of unresolved cases, which slows down the entire process. According to the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (2023), more than 2.26 million cases are pending at different levels of

the judiciary. Moreover, because there are too few judges to handle such a large workload, cases often take years, or even decades, to reach final verdict. In addition, lawyers frequently request adjournments, which further stretches the timelines. Therefore, unless the backlogs is reduced through more appointments, digital case management, and strict rule against unnecessary adjournments, delays in justice will continue to deny citizens their basic right to timely decision.

Another major factor contributing to delays is the culture of frequent adjournments in courts. Lawyers often exploit adjournments as a strategy to weaken the otherside or extend cases for financial gains. For instance, the **Model Town massacre case (2014)** was adjourned multiple times over the years, leaving victims without closure. As a

result, hearings are repeatedly postponed and justice is pushed further away. Additionally, frequent adjournments increase costs for victims, who must spend years attending courts. Therefore, stricter regulation of adjournments is needed to ensure faster decision.

Delays are also caused by inefficient case management within the courts. In most instances, manual records are used, and files are misplaced or duplicated leading to wasted time. Although an e-court system was introduced in 2019, it is only partially functional and limited to higher courts. As a result, trials take years to complete even when evidence is straightforward. Therefore, digitization and efficient case management are essential for reducing delay.

The shortage of judges is another critical factor behind delayed justice. Pakistan

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has only about **2000 judges** to handle a population of more than 240 million.

This means each judge carries an impossible workload of hundreds of cases at a time. As a result, hearings are often months apart, and trials move forward at a painfully slow pace.

Therefore, appointing more judges and increasing court staff is crucial for speeding up case resolution.

Delays are further compounded by the misuse of appeal and review system.

While appeals are important for ensuring fairness, in practice they are often used to drag out cases unnecessarily. For

example, the **Mukhtaran Mai gang rape case** took over a decade to

reach a final verdict. As a result, victims are denied closure, criminals

continued to benefit from the passage

of time. Therefore, reforms are needed to

balance the right to appeal with the

need for timely justice

The combined impact of weak police work and inefficient court processes creates a justice system that struggle to deliver timely outcomes. These delays not only harm individual victims but also have serious social consequences. In fact, the broader effects of delayed justice are visible in declining public trust and the rise of alternative, often unlawful, systems of justice.

One of the most damaging effects of delayed justice is the erosion of public trust in formal institutions.

According to Gallup Pakistan (2022) only 27% of citizen trust the legal system, showing a sharp decline in confidence. This loss of trust weakens the rule of law, encourages unlawful practices, and undermines the authority of the state.

Delays in justice also amount to a violation of basic human rights. Victims are left waiting for relief, while many accused individuals spend years in jails without being proven guilty. As a result, both victims and accused lose faith in justice system.

The combined inefficiency of police investigations and judicial processes results in prolonged trials that weaken confidence in the rule of law.

Delays in justice not only cause by weak police works but also by inefficient court practices. Case backlogs, frequent adjournments, and poor case management slow down the pace of trials. Moreover, the misuse of appeals and reviews allows lawyers for prolong cases unnecessarily, leaving victims waiting for years. As a result, both victims and accused lose faith in the legal system, while society suffers from declining trust.

and the rise of alternative, often unlawful, systems of justice. However, these challenges are not permanent. With reforms such as strong police training, modern forensic support, more judges and digital courts, the justice system can become faster and fairer. Restoring timely justice will not only rebuild public trust but also strengthen the rule of law.