

**Justice Delayed Justice Denied:
A Study of Criminal Cases in Potohar Region of Punjab Province, Pakistan**

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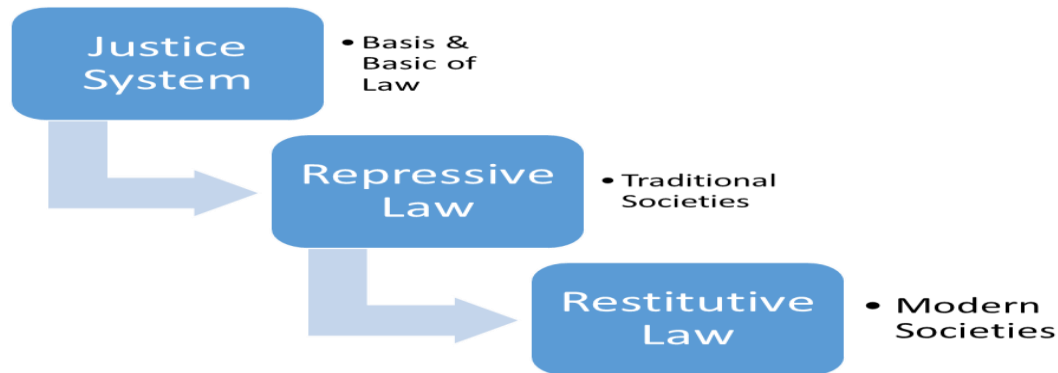
Abstract:

Study highlights that the delayed justice has numerous reasons and consequences as it hinders the practice to unveil genuineness of the case. Law is practised in modern society in which the court of justice and judicial process is incorporated. Delayed justice not only hides authenticity but also raises mistrust of society on the law. The prevailing apparatus demands replacing orthodox structure with modernized operating methods since the earlier methods serve the system rather than the public. The study discusses various measures to eradicate crime and to develop all-encompassing apparatus to counter it. The justice system ranges from judicial inadequacies to lack of judicial independence, causing undue delays in the entire procedure. Criminal cases are unending and uncalled-for disruptions in a legal course, including corrupt judicial officers, disloyal lawyers, the corrupt and sluggish role of police, and delays in commencement of trial. It is the clique that usually plays its negative role in dealing high profile cases. The delay in proceeding gives a chance to commit another crime.

INTRODUCTION

Justice delayed is directly correlated with justice denied. There are several complex and complicated factors of delayed justice that are mostly confronted to pursue justice. The renowned social scientist/ thinker Emile Durkheim stated two types of laws through which we acquire justice; repressive law and restitutive law. Repressive Laws are being practised in traditional societies since long which can be observed in contemporary traditional *Punchayats, Jirgas* and *Wali systems* etc.

Figure-I



However, the restitutive law is practised in modern society in which court of justice and judicial process is incorporated. Various manipulations have been practiced and are still being practiced during the current era concerning delayed justice. Gimmicks of delaying the justice is not only practiced to attain political purposes but are also aimed at individual benefits. Delayed justice not only hides reality but also raises mistrust of society on the law.

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Collateral Damages of Delayed Justice

Figure-II



Distrust of the general masses leads to several social issues like mob lynching, massacres, suicides, and depressing behaviour in the form of boycott of court of Justice. The deceitful justice system is usually criticised due to its slow operations, common delays, non-transparencies, intricacies, and failure to use its resources exceptionally (Garoupa & Ginsburg, 2009). Problems arising due to aforementioned reasons impact all the people including perpetrators, eyewitnesses, complainants, respondents, and specialists in the system.

For victims, the entire process seems to be too bureaucratic and confusing. They are forced to feel that the system is no legal remedy available to them. The delays are a reason for distress for the victims and a continuous agony for the witnesses. Such delays cause humiliation and exhaustion to the witnesses who had gathered courage come up to produce inevitable evidence. However, their motivation and interest are downed by the prevalent unwanted practices. At times, people are included in investigations over personal rifts despite the fact that they were never involved in such criminal acts; they usually take a longer time to get their names off from said investigations (Manyatera & Fombad, 2014).

Worldwide Existence of Delayed Justice

Delayed justice has become a problem of the world. Most of the countries have overcome delayed justice due to the extraordinary role of the judiciary. Some of the countries are in the process of overcoming delayed justice that equals denied justice. Around 253 million people living in miserable status of intense prejudice never availed any justified and legitimate shields. Approximately 40 million are contemporary slaves, around 12 million are nationless, and 200 million never have access to justice (Fair et al., 2010).

Delays in judicial decisions of criminal cases in the Rawalpindi region has become a genuine concern for the public. A qualitative study was held to trace the reasons for such judicial delays and various interconnected problems. The study mainly focuses on various implications being faced by affected families due to such delays. The public often believes that the prevailing justice system is intricate where the strategies are merely vague. Specialist skills are preferred to acquire the desired results for the satisfaction of the complainant. Prevailing apparatus demands replacing old-fashioned infrastructure with modernized operating methods since the earlier techniques serve the

system rather than the public. The process of justice is prolonged where the mechanism usually bears useless efforts with no benefits of timely results.

Moreover, the apparatus has reactionary procedures rather than a proactive mechanism which can help avert the situation from deteriorating. Responding to disturbances in the remaining year confirmed what became possible; a short and obscene response, possible elimination of some cases in hours and days with a preference for weeks and months. It would also highlight the requirement of genuine constitutional amendments in prevalent judicial processes, which are technically becoming reasons for such delays. Objectives of the study included: To study the major reasons for delays in the provision of justice in criminal cases, and; To review the judicial process causing such delays in justice provision to the affected families.

This study vividly reflects the causes of the delayed justice and also suggests remedial steps to overcome it. It pinpoints various proactive measures to eradicate crime and to develop a comprehensive mechanism to counter it. Reduction or limitation of the criminal acts is paramount to assist the sufferers and extend positive contribution towards the civilization. Whenever criminal acts take place, actions ought to be speedy to maintain deterrence. However, owing to the sluggishness of the criminal justice system, an environment of cultural tolerance has prevailed. As in magisterial courts, an average of five months is taken from the occurrence of a crime till convictions. Witnesses have to spend hours and hours in courts to record their statements; however, they do not see the perpetrators being punished.

JUSTICE SYSTEM IN PAKISTAN

The Constitution of Pakistan gives the provision to separate the judiciary from executive; however, this thing has yet to occur in a real sense. Conventionally, the strong executive has been the centre of power whereas legislature and judicature remained peripheral. Since 2007, the judiciary gained strength by using suo-moto actions to ensure execution of fundamental rights coupled with its power to punish contempt or non-observance of its orders, however, legislature has not yet been assertive through its conventions, privileges, rules, and biased nature. Constitution established constitutional courts, including Supreme Court, High Court, Federal Shariat Court, and jurisdictions of different courts to constitutional, civil, criminal and service matters.

The study of the crimes is designed as Criminology and the study of actions that controls or responds to criminal activities is termed as Criminal Justice. US has an enriched culture of producing Criminal Justice knowledge where they offer distinct degree programs more often. As per US academic practice, Pakistan's criminal justice system may be divided into five constituents i.e. police, prosecution, courts, prisons, and corrections. Each of the constituents undertakes its practices, structures, budget, working, and authorized agenda. As per practice in vogue, a distinctive provincial criminal justice system is organised by Provincial Home Department under that police and prison department work as its associated divisions. A self-explanatory introduction to all the constituents is discussed in the forthcoming section.

Police

As per Oxford Handbook on Criminology, police being an organization, has to undertake policing to perceive, avert and stop criminal activities. In Pakistan, as per the structure, every province has its

own provincial police department. All provinces have their departmental law i.e. The Police Order, 2002 is an organizational law of Punjab Police, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Police Act, 2017 is followed by KP Police, Sindh Police works under Sindh (Repeal of the Police Act, 1861 and Revival of the Police Order, 2002) and Baluchistan Police undertakes its operation under Baluchistan Police Act, 2011. Above said policing powers have been given by the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898, where all the police departments derive policing powers. Legal framework of policing validates the detection model of policing by providing the legal basis of investigation. Prosecution's action is to assess evidence acquired from the police site thus to sift it for trial purposes, which was earlier part of police department. Provincial laws of respective provinces govern the functions and organizations of the prosecution department. To further elaborate, the prosecution of the Sindh department works as an associated department of Sindh Law Department, and it follows the Sindh Criminal Prosecution Service (Constitution, Functions and Powers) Act, 2010. Similarly, with slight changes, KP follows Prosecution Service (Constitution, Functions, and Powers) Act, 2005 and Baluchistan follows Baluchistan Prosecution Service (Constitution, Functions, and Powers) Act, 2003. Moreover, Punjab Prosecution Department was found in 2006 under Punjab Criminal Prosecution Service (Constitution, Functions and Powers) Act, 2006.

Courts

Session courts and magistrate courts deal with criminal cases. Session courts and magistrate courts follow the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 which resolves the cases based on fact, which is opposite to constitutional courts found under the constitution. Magistrates are the in-charge of few police stations and hold extreme significance as far as their working is concerned. Due to its importance, former Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Asif Saeed Khosa named courts and police "Conjoined Twins." Courts arbitrate the criminal matters by undertaking trials as per the law. Magistrate and Additional Session courts operate down to tehsil in each district of country where all the held accused are produced within one day as per the Constitution (P.K. Const. art. X). The courts undertake an adversarial system of a decision where criminal cases are to be proved beyond any reasonable uncertainty and accused is counted as cleared or innocent until proven guilty.

Though few cases are hard to manage in a quick time being complicated, however, there is a need to cope with such cases through special reforms being the need of the hour. To ensure timely justice, requisite adjustments are to be made for immediate outcomes for the community, including the general public, sufferers, and witnesses.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Toast (2012), no single aspect is the sole reason for the backlog of cases. Such issues occur mostly in criminal cases in comparison with civil cases. Speedy trials in deciding criminal cases have become a remote reality. Percival (2017) argued that a main objective of criminal law is to guard the community against criminal acts by penalizing culprits, but justice demands a fair trial before one is penalized. Even the justice system requires adjudging a competent court to convict a culprit despite being caught red-handed.

A thorough procedure entails the entire process from an investigation by prosecution till the case is tried in court for ultimate conviction or acquittal. The set standard involves the entire process under Criminal Procedure Code, 1973. Watts et al. (2014) quoted section 57 of the Code of Criminal

Procedure, 1973 that each suspected individual has to be present in front of the concerned magistrate within 24 hours. Moreover, the suspected individual cannot be kept under custody without the requisite approval of the concerned magistrate. This means that justice should have visible effects where it is served, however, completing all its pre-requisites, whether for the culprit or complainant. An emphasis on timeliness of the pronouncement of judgements as negligent delay in decisions would mean negation of the right of appeal conferred upon convicts under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

Pronouncement of judgements can be inferred from provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. Section 353 (1) states that the decision of each trial in any criminal court be announced in open court soon after conclusion of the trial is done. Moreover, prior notices also served to both parties .

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study elucidates that justice be dispensed in line with social and lawful customs equally to all. Another opinion is that justice be served as per the right theory of what the justified act is. John Rawls presented two rules of justice that self-centred and balanced individuals would choose when facts would be brought forth. Principles include: equal liberty is the first principle of justice to be derived from a genuine position. This defines that all the citizens have equal rights on the fundamental freedom as John Rawls includes democratic rights, liberty of conscience, speech, and affiliation. He further added that the right of private property is fundamental freedom that the government cannot deny. Though he categorically excluded unlimited personal properties one must have. The principle of equality must ensure that both the above said conditions are met. He elaborated that the least privileged must get bigger benefits, and financial disparities be arranged to ensure everyone gets its right. Study proposes justice theory to have a better explanation of cases and the reasoning of the crime.

RESEARCH METHODS

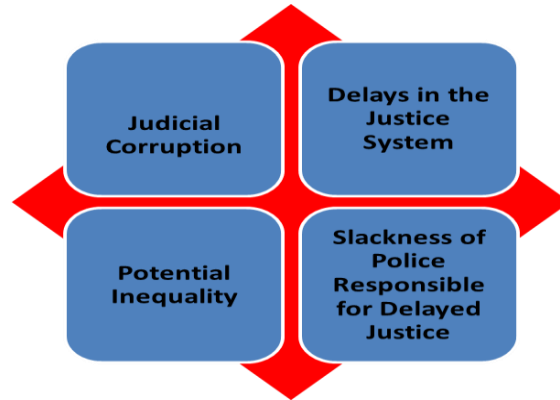
During the research, sampling method was used to collect data from the aggrieved families scattered in Rawalpindi. A small group of members was selected to represent the population. Non-probability sampling was used for random selection based on connivance of the cases. For the said purpose, convenience sampling” involved selecting samples based on convenience. Variables are being picked from the large population. Although the judiciary is a constant variable but simultaneously it is a dependent variable because of its dependence on prosecution, evidence and existing law. Crime is an independent variable in the study. Whereas prosecution and law are moderate variables that can be changed under the circumstances. A qualitative study was held to trace the reasons for such judicial delays and various interconnected problems. However, qualitative variables like nominal variables were used to categorize the criminal cases and delayed tactics to give away the reasons of justice delayed and denied.

A questionnaire was developed for the case study by the researcher to interview the families. The researcher used to ask for a reference of some other family. In this way, researcher completed the research work and interview schedule to collect the relevant data. The constructed interview schedule was aimed to collect data as per the objective of the study. The interview schedule contained the queries related to analysis of the reasons and implications of delayed justice

arranged qualitatively. Interview schedule was used as an instrument in the study to gather facts and their views to conclude the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure-III



In thematic analysis, various themes were generated by seeing the case studies. After creating themes, a comparison was made between case studies and secondary data.

Judicial Corruption

In Pakistan, crime solving lacks technological processing of cases mostly followed in developed countries. Due to public awareness, people put tremendous pressure on police to crack cases with advanced techniques; however, the capacity to unearth a case is severely diminished due to lack of forensic services, inadequate training, and equipment. Although, effective functioning of police service is required to solve several blind cases.

Punjab Forensic Science Agency (PFSA), Lahore has an advanced Crime Scene Units (CSU) with satellite stations at Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Lahore, Multan, Sargodha, Gujranwala, Sahiwal, Faisalabad, and Rawalpindi. When any crime takes place, CSU processes the crime scene, collects evidences, and further transports it to the relevant laboratory in PFSA, Lahore (Punjab Forensic Science Agency, 2021). Similarly, CSU of the National Forensic Science Agency (NFSA), Islamabad covers capital territory and few areas of the Rawalpindi division. On the contrary, local police, at its own initiative, processes the crime scene and undertakes investigations which are mostly insufficient. United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) handed over two well equipped portable CSU to Baluchistan to enhance capacity of crime scene investigation (Handing over of two Mobile Crime Scene Investigation units to Baluchistan Police, 2021). Similarly, local policemen carry out crime scene investigation in KP. Though Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), Peshawar has modern crime scene investigation units, however, it does not fulfill the requirements of entire province (Forensic Science Laboratory, 2021). In Sindh province, most of the crime scene processing is done by local police with their own designed apparatus. Though a reasonable effort is being made by local government to enhance their capabilities professionally (The Sindh Repeal of Police Act, 1861 and Revival of Police Order, 2002 Amendment Act 2019).

In Pakistan, various news channels and most of the case studies proved that there is an abundance of corruption in the judicial process. The case study demonstrated as:

Husband and his few close relatives, ruthlessly thrashed his wife and sister-in-law in a family brawl where both the ladies got multiple injuries, in the jurisdiction of Chaurtra police station on May 2020. The former party contacted and managed the police for reporting the entire matter in their favour. To facilitate the former party, prosecution started delaying the proceedings of Medico-Legal Report on one pretext or the other. Even prosecution managed to delay aforementioned requisite report for approximately a month. Due to the said delay, authorized doctors reported that they could not rule out the fabrication of the injuries. Moreover, in the First Information Report (FIR), police also attracted irrelevant sections, thus giving benefit of doubt to the accused husband and his relatives.

Delays in the Justice System

Judicial system delays reaching the destiny of the justice. The case study demonstrated as under:

A gang rape was reported in the jurisdiction of police station Rawat where daughter of the complainant was repetitively gang raped by one or two people for more than a couple of days. FIR of the incident was registered in August 2018. Moreover, Medico Legal Report of Civil Hospital Rawalpindi confirmed committal of crime with the victim girl. Unfortunately, due to the severity of the shock, the girl died two days after the incident. The prosecution having carried out postmortem, failed to provide relevant documents before the honourable court and the complainant as his right for the pursuance of the case which was primarily the duty of prosecution. Resultantly, the victim's father submitted an application in the court to provide postmortem report to pursue his case. Though the victim's father managed to acquire the postmortem report through court, no lawful action was initiated against them.

One of the main problems in such criminal cases is un-ending and needless interruptions in the legal course. Time taken in the trial of case narrates the entire episode of such interruptions and delays. In such cases, a criminal proceeding that started in 2009 was struck off after three years due to lack of evidence though many people thought that an urgent redressal must have been ensured in said case. Though there is a need to comply with all pre-requisites, however, despite the fact, it took three long years to reach a decision, thereby denoting the serious severe delays in Nigerian courts.

Potential Inequality

There is potential inequality among the people of the judicial system. It is the mafia that exaggerates and exploits other people. Some of the people are creating disparities. The case study demonstrated as:

Sabra Bibi was killed by a notorious gang known as 333 group in a firing incident over a land dispute in August 2012 in Dhoke Gangal, Rawalpindi in the Airport police station jurisdiction. A commission appointed by civil judge Rawalpindi was already present on the spot at said firing incident. Police nominated gang leader along with his sons and other accomplices in the murder case. Initially, case was heard in session court, however, later prosecution department added section 7 of Anti-Terrorism Act (7 ATA) in challan; thus case was referred to Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC). During the trial, it was observed that during the alleged murder, neither commission appointed restrained the murderers nor police ensured timely response to prevent the perpetrators. So much so, police staff on duty fled the incident site. ATC Judge held that his court lacks jurisdiction in the case thus, the case file was placed before

district and session judge Rawalpindi further to entrust the case to relevant and competent jurisdiction. Due to the biased response in handling the case by all relevant departments, the accused were released after a couple of years.

Slackness of Police Responsible for Delayed Justice

Reasoning

Judgement authored by Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khosa is scholarly where the judge handled the case systemically. He highlighted three basic things in his reasoning; firstly by analysing case law on the subject, secondly by interpreting pertinent constitutional law, thirdly by reflecting the connection between lodging an FIR and arrest power delegated to police according to the law. Above said three facets are discussed in the same order:

a. Case Law

In the case law, a worthy judge considered three classes of the judgements. In the first category, only one FIR was allowed for a happening where the ensuing statements were to be recorded under section 161 of Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 (Cr.P.C) by police hence meant one case one trial (1st category).

In the second category, it was compulsory for police to lodge FIR under section 154 Cr.P.C thus, several FIRs could be lodged. This leads to multiplication of case proceedings hence meant several cases and trials (2nd category).

The third category was to confirm the 1st category generally and 2nd category as an exemption (3rd Category). Taking lead from the ancient eras, Justice Khosa cited from a Privy Council (PC) case, in which honourable judges resisted the partiality to take every given declaration as a separate information report hence found a single FIR of a happening. He quoted:

The only information report under sections 154 to 156, Cr.P.C was recorded on 31st August 1941. The accusations noted at later stage of 5th September were merely a statement taken during investigation under sections 161 and 162 of the code in a cognisable offence. In case of non-cognisable offence, magistrate has the power to authorize investigation.

b. Statutory Law

The honourable Justice Asif Saeed Khosa commented on statutory law and interpreted the law in literal sense. He differentiated and declared that several sorts of information could be processed in a single case.

c. FIR and Power of Arrest

Lastly, Justice Khosa made an effort to disconnect the FIR from arrest. He demonstrated it while asking Ms. Sughran Bibi for repeated requests to register the second FIR though she had already exercised her right for a private complaint on her expectation for arrest of accused police officer in her son's murder case. Justice Khosa defined it as erroneous and fallacious as per comprehension of the complainant and a large segment of legal community of our country. He explained FIR control on investigation and prosecution and segregated registering the criminal case from the Power of Arrest. He quoted it in his own decision given in Khizer Hayat case.

Delay in the proceeding gives the opportunity to commit another crime. Delay in the proceedings cannot make an example for punishment to other criminals as described in case study:

Complainant submitted an application at Rawat police station to get an FIR registered against a person who had given a cheque of rupees four crore after the relevant bank dishonoured it. However, police did not register FIR despite the provision of requisite documents by the complainant. Upon which the complainant hired a counsel to address his grievance. Counsel appeared before session judge as per CR.P.C 22A and 22B for redressal of his grievances. Hence Additional Session Judge asked Rawalpindi police to lodge FIR accordingly. Though there is settled law that an FIR shall be registered if a cheque is dishonoured from the concerned bank, the complainant had to go to court to redress his grievance. Police department is usually observed showing slackness hence causing undue delay in dispensation of justice. It is important to mention here that this is court's responsibility to issue the decree and see its results reaching the oppressed.

Moreover, if court decree has to be executed through an execution court and further through local administration, then a reasonable delay is experienced. Moreover, certain delays also occur due to non-provision of requisite documents to the concerned executionary authorities. Further delays are caused due to the appeals, revisions and stay orders in the cases.

ANALYSIS

In the light of discussed arguments and law points, it is apt to analyse the judgment itself. Due to the analysis, it became evident that one FIR suffices the requirement to investigate the case as a whole. Moreover, multiplication of registration of cases was a challenge for the efficiency of criminal justice system.

As explained earlier, every FIR meant for a separate case that merits a separate investigation, due examination by prosecutor, to summon a report under section 173 Cr.P.C and conclude into a complete trial. Though registration of multiple FIRs as a counter does have a definite bearing on the overall investigation process. The surge increased manifolds after amendment in Code of Cr.P.C, which authorized judicial officers to issue directions to police for registration of criminal cases and other investigation-related matters.

CONCLUSION

To ensure provision of justice in society, police departments ought to emphasize more certified methods like substantial evidence and scientific crime scene processing. Moreover, it is important to ensure the professional evidence collection for further scientific processing at forensic laboratory examination and culminating at identification process. Punjab Forensic Science Agency (PFSA), founded approximately a decade ago, is the only comprehensive forensics setup in Pakistan that does not fulfill the entire population's requirement, thus demanding establishing forensic laboratories in all provinces. In addition, efforts must be made to ensure the establishment of CSUs at district level for rapid response at the incident site. Professional and strenuous training to the first responders can become the hallmark of its success.

It has become need of the hour to fully equip police department with modern CSU vans complemented with contemporary forensic technology i.e. evidence collection gears, ultra-violet

flashlights, laser bullet trajectory tools, shielding outfits, latent print supplies, gunfire residue kits, bloodstain evidence tools with blood detection kits, portable and remote area lights midst of other advanced equipment. With technological development, innovation in criminal activities has also been observed. There is a dire need to tailor the policing style keeping in view the civic necessities. Moreover, requisite amendments in Cr.P.C would be instrumental in dispensing justice to the needy people.

The research finds that the delayed justice has numerous causes and consequences. Justice is practised to unveil reality of the case. The uncovering of the reality makes people distrust judiciary and regard it a corrupt mafia of the country. Various research incorporated in secondary data demonstrated that people try to settle their cases and other affairs through repressive laws since going to court is costly and takes longer. Moreover, the lawyers are mostly found disloyal. At fewer instances, lawyers and judges are counted in the same categories to support each other. The system seems to be based on bribery from a reader to judge. The current study revolves around denied justice due to various factors like corrupt judicial officers, disloyal lawyers, corrupt and sluggish role of police, and delays in initiation of trials. These types of factors create mistrust amongst people which gives birth to polarization among society. The case studies of research revolve around incidents of delayed justice. Justice delayed is associated with justice denied .

Various problems arise if justice is denied. Similarly, justice hurried is equated with justice buried. Historically, in the subcontinent, both situations are experienced. In current research, various case studies are incorporated that explain that delayed justice issues equal the denial of justice. Delayed justice creates frustration and hopelessness among the common public, which generates extreme tendencies in public. Case study is an exemplary illustration of the dual faces of lawyers, role of judges, and the police department.

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