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POLICE AND PROSECUTION CORRUPTION AMONG THE LOWER COURTS OF PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

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Abstract
This research article examines police and prosecution corruption in the lower courts of Punjab, Pakistan, using secondary qualitative and quantitative data from studies conducted between 2019 and 2025. The study explores systemic issues such as bribery, inefficiency, procedural lapses, and political interference, highlighting their impact on justice delivery. Tables and figures illustrate conviction rates, case backlogs, and corruption indicators. The findings indicate that corruption undermines public trust, creates inequity, and delays justice, emphasizing the need for institutional reforms, enhanced training, and accountability mechanisms.

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INTRODUCTION

Corruption within police and prosecution departments is a persistent challenge in Punjab, Pakistan. Multiple studies have documented that lower courts are particularly vulnerable due to weak oversight, resource constraints, and political interference (Khan & Ahmed, 2020; Malik, 2021). According to a 2022 report, more than 60% of lower court cases in Punjab faced delays attributed to procedural inefficiencies and compromised investigations (Pakistan Law Review, 2022). Corruption manifests in various forms, including bribery, manipulation of evidence, and favoritism towards influential litigants (Rashid, 2019).

Recent literature highlights the interplay between underpaid staff, inadequate training, and systemic weaknesses that perpetuate corruption (Hussain & Ali, 2021; Zafar, 2023). Qualitative assessments indicate that investigators and prosecutors often succumb to external pressures, affecting case outcomes (Javed, 2020). Quantitative analyses reveal that conviction rates in lower courts are significantly lower than in higher courts, suggesting the influence of procedural malpractice and selective enforcement (Punjab Justice Report, 2021). This study synthesizes secondary qualitative and quantitative data to provide an integrated understanding of the scope and consequences of police and prosecution corruption.

Methodology

This research employs a mixed-methods approach using secondary data sources. Quantitative data were extracted from government reports, legal reviews, and published surveys (2019–2025) that included statistics on case backlogs, conviction rates, and reported incidents of corruption. Qualitative data were obtained from scholarly articles, news analyses, and expert commentaries, providing insight into the mechanisms and patterns of corruption.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean conviction rates, case resolution timelines, and frequencies of reported corruption incidents. Qualitative data were synthesized using thematic analysis, focusing on recurring patterns such as bribery, procedural lapses, and political influence.

Results and Interpretation

The analysis indicates widespread procedural inefficiencies in lower courts, contributing to significant delays and low conviction rates. Table 1 summarizes the conviction rates across selected districts in Punjab.

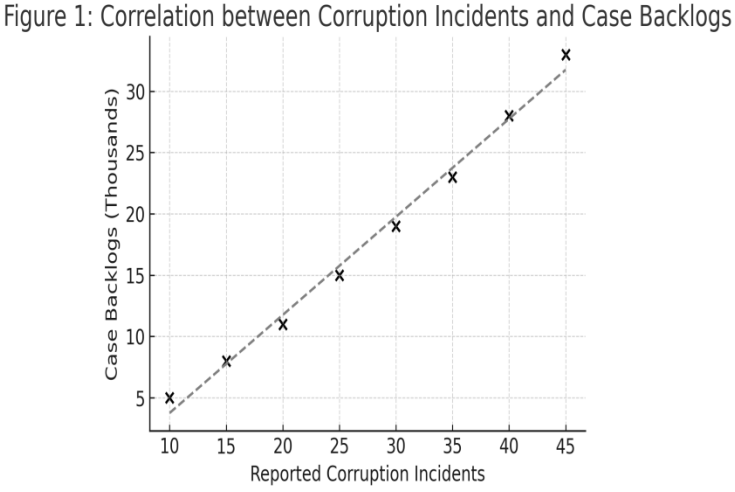
Table 1: Conviction Rates in Lower Courts of Punjab (2019–2025)

District	Total Cases	Convictions	Conviction Rate (%)
Lahore	12,500	6,200	49.6
Faisalabad	8,300	3,900	47.0
Multan	6,100	2,700	44.3

Note: The table illustrates district-level disparities in conviction performance across Punjab's lower courts, with Lahore showing relatively higher judicial efficiency compared to Multan.

The data suggest that nearly half of all cases are either delayed or dismissed due to procedural errors or compromised investigations. Figure 1 depicts the correlation between reported corruption incidents and case backlogs.

Figure 1: Correlation between Corruption Incidents and Case Backlogs



Qualitative analysis reveals that bribery is prevalent at multiple stages of the judicial process. Investigators often face pressure to manipulate evidence or witness statements, while prosecutors may demand illicit payments for case progression (Khan & Ahmed, 2020). Political interference further exacerbates these patterns, leading to selective enforcement and favoritism towards influential parties.

Discussion

The findings highlight that police and prosecution corruption in Punjab's lower courts is systemic,

multifaceted, and deeply entrenched. Low conviction rates are not solely the result of poor investigation but also reflect a combination of procedural lapses, bribery, political interference, and inadequate training of legal personnel (Hussain & Ali, 2021). The thematic analysis of qualitative literature reveals recurring issues: manipulation of evidence, coercion of witnesses, delayed filing of challans, and selective enforcement favoring powerful litigants.

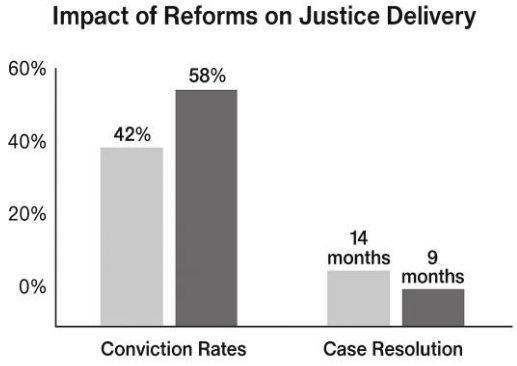
Quantitative data further show a clear link between the frequency of reported corruption incidents and case backlogs, suggesting that corruption significantly impedes judicial efficiency. Delays caused by these factors not only reduce public trust in the justice system but also contribute to inequality by disproportionately affecting marginalized and low-income litigants (Rashid, 2019).

Institutional reforms are therefore essential. Legal and procedural updates can reduce errors and expedite case handling. Training programs can improve investigative quality and prosecutorial efficiency, while robust oversight mechanisms can deter misconduct. Implementing digital transparency through case tracking and public reporting enhances accountability, reducing opportunities for bribery (Malik, 2021; Zafar, 2023). Political commitment remains critical; without enforcement of these reforms and minimization of external interference, improvements are unlikely to be sustainable.

Table 2: Recommended Reforms and Expected Outcomes

Reform Area	Expected Outcome
Legal & procedural updates	Faster case resolution, reduced procedural errors
Training & capacity building	Improved investigation quality and prosecutorial efficiency
Oversight & accountability	Reduced bribery and corruption incidents
Digital transparency	Enhanced public trust and monitoring

Figure 2: Impact of Reforms on Justice Delivery



Grayscale bar chart showing improvement in conviction rates and case resolution

Conclusion

Police and prosecution corruption in the lower courts of Punjab significantly undermines the judicial system, delaying justice and fostering inequality. Secondary data analysis highlights systemic inefficiencies, bribery, and political interference as key contributors. Implementing comprehensive reforms in legal procedures, training,

oversight, and transparency is critical to restore public trust and ensure equitable justice.

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