

CRIME INVESTIGATION IN PAKISTAN: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INVESTIGATIVE APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES IN DEVELOPED JURISDICTIONS

Uzed Umer¹, Dr. Muhammad Mubeen^{*2}, Hira Tunio³

¹Lecturer, Faculty of Law, Green International University, Lahore

^{*2}Assistant Professor in Law, Department of Law, Green International University

³Lecturer, Department of Law, Green International University

¹uzed@giu.edu.pk, ^{*2}muhammad.mubeen@giu.edu.pk, ³tuniohira94@gmail.com

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Muhammad Mubeen

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan's criminal justice system operates under a colonial-era legal framework, the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC 1898) and the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC 1860), that has seen only marginal revision since their inception. This research paper undertakes a rigorous comparative examination of crime investigation methodology in Pakistan alongside practices in the United States, the United Kingdom, and India. Drawing on the historical evolution of investigative science, relevant theoretical frameworks, forensic capabilities, and systemic deficiencies. The paper demonstrates that Pakistan's investigative process is undermined by inadequate training, pervasive political interference, poor documentation, compromised chain of custody, and an under-resourced forensic infrastructure. The paper identifies priority reform areas and advances a set of evidence-informed recommendations aimed at modernising Pakistan's investigative apparatus, strengthening the rule of law, and improving conviction rates.

Keywords: Crime Investigation, Forensic Science, Pakistan Police, CrPC, Criminal Justice Reform, Chain of Custody, FIR, PEACE Model, Locard Exchange Principle

1. INTRODUCTION

Pakistan inherited the Anglo-Saxon legal system introduced by the British in the Indian subcontinent, and this framework continues to govern criminal proceedings with only superficial amendments. The substantive criminal law is codified in the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC 1860), while the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC 1898) regulates procedural aspects of investigation, trial, and sentencing. Despite their historical durability, these statutes have not kept pace with the complex realities of modern crime (Kasuri, M. R, 2024).

Criminal investigation, the systematic process of gathering, preserving, and analysing evidence to identify perpetrators and secure convictions, has evolved into a multidisciplinary science in advanced jurisdictions. In Pakistan, however, it remains largely reactive and informal, dominated by an under-skilled police force operating under political pressure, resource constraints, and

institutional inertia. Multiple studies confirm that political elites consistently influence Pakistani police and lack professional competency, with

police priorities frequently altered at the behest of political executives. The Police Order 2002 introduced a structural separation between investigative and operational wings of the police, a conceptually sound reform. However, research confirms that major salutary provisions were diluted by amendments in 2004, and even the watered-down version has not been consistently followed across provinces.

This paper presents a systematic comparative study of investigative practices in Pakistan against the standards prevailing in the United States, the United Kingdom, and India. The objectives are fourfold: (1) to trace the historical development of criminal investigation; (2) to survey the theoretical and definitional foundations of crime and investigation; (3) to identify specific structural deficits in the Pakistani system; and (4) to propose actionable reforms grounded in international best practice (Siddiqi, M., Butt, S., & Afzaal, S, 2014).

2. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CRIME AND INVESTIGATION

2.1 History of Crime: Religious and Scientific Perspectives

The concept of crime is inseparable from the concept of authority. From an Islamic jurisprudential standpoint, the Quran identifies the first transgression on earth as a fratricidal act, a violation of divine covenant rather than man-made law. The three Abrahamic traditions converge on the narrative that rules governing human conduct preceded state institutions, establishing the theological foundation from which notions of moral accountability and deterrent punishment derive. As the Quran states in Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:8): 'Stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to fair dealing... Be just: that is next to piety (*Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:8, 5:32, 5:38; Surah Al-Nur (24:2); Surah An-Nisa, 4:58*).

The secular, evolutionary perspective traces the emergence of 'crime' through anthropological development. As Homo sapiens transitioned from instinct-driven survival behaviour to organised social living, communal norms crystallised into enforceable rules. Conduct once understood as instinctual violence, theft, and deception gradually acquired the legal designation of crime as societies

developed institutions capable of identifying, prosecuting, and punishing norm violations. Both perspectives converge on a common insight: crime is constitutively relational; it is defined against a background of social or divine order.

2.2 Early Criminal Investigation: The Bow Street Runners

The genealogy of modern criminal investigation is traceable to eighteenth-century England. Rising urban crime prompted the recruitment of 'thief-catchers' as supplements to the Watch of London (established 1253). The pivotal institutional development was Henry Fielding's creation of the Bow Street Runners in the 1750s. Operating from the Bow Street Police Office in London, Fielding's constables pioneered proactive crime-fighting, building informant networks with pawnbrokers, maintaining lists of stolen property, and developing systematic tracking methods. By 1800, the Bow Street Office was widely regarded as the leading law-enforcement institution in England, anticipating the modern concept of a specialist investigative unit.

2.3 The Bertillon System and the Transition to Fingerprint Identification

Scientific criminal identification gained its first systematic expression in the anthropometric system devised by French criminologist Alphonse Bertillon in 1879. Bertillonage, the meticulous measurement of body parts, particularly cranial and facial dimensions, combined with standardised mug-shot photography, was introduced in the United States in 1887 by R.W. McClaughry, Warden of the Illinois State Penitentiary. The system was anthropometry's first scientifically methodical application to law enforcement; before Bertillon, criminals could only be identified by name or eyewitness account (Britannica, 2026).

The 1903 West Brothers case at Leavenworth Penitentiary, where two men named Will West and William West shared virtually identical Bertillon measurements, dramatically exposed the system's limitations. Their fingerprints conclusively distinguished them, accelerating the global adoption of fingerprint analysis as the

primary identification tool. Fingerprint analysis now forms the universal baseline of criminal identification in all major jurisdictions.

2.4 Evolution of Suspect Interviewing

2.4.1 The Era of Coercive Interrogation

For most of recorded history, interrogation was synonymous with coercion. The 'third degree' physical violence, exposure to bright lights, cold water, and sustained threats, remained standard practice into the early twentieth century. The confessions thus obtained were manifestly unreliable, as suspects frequently confessed to escape continued violence rather than because of guilt. From the mid-1930s, however, legal scholars and the judiciary began questioning these tactics, noting that coerced confessions produced wrongful convictions, not truth (Gudjonsson, G. H, 2003).

2.4.2 Development of Ethical Interviewing: The PEACE Model

Reform accelerated after the 1960s, when judicial concern about police behaviour during suspect interviews mounted following documented miscarriages of justice. The watershed development was the 1992 PEACE model, developed by the UK Home Office and College of Policing in response to John Baldwin's inquiry, in which he had analysed 400 police interviews across four police forces and found widespread use of unskilled and coercive techniques (Clarke, C., & Milne, R, 2001). PEACE Planning and Preparation; Engage and Explain; Account; Closure; Evaluation replaced confession-seeking with information-gathering as the primary objective. All police interviewers in England and Wales were subsequently required to attend training in accordance with the mode (Dando, C., Bull, R., Ormerod, T. C., & others, 2011).

2.4.3 Conversation Management

A complementary framework, Conversation Management (Shepherd, 1991), structures interviews in three sequential phases the suspect agenda, the police agenda, and the challenge each separated by a reflective pause. This approach maximises retrieval of reliable, court-admissible

information by first allowing the suspect to narrate freely, then systematically developing detail, and only finally confronting inconsistencies, a sequence that minimises suggestibility and reduces the risk of evidence being dismissed as oppressive (Shepherd, E, 1991).

2.5 Islamic Jurisprudence on Crime and Investigation

The Quran recognises two categories of rights: Haquq-Ullah (rights of Allah) and Haquq-ul-Ibad (rights of human beings). Violations of the former constitute sins; violations of the latter that injure persons or damage social order are designated crimes. The Quran explicitly prescribes Hudood punishments for four offences: theft (Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:38), unlawful killing (Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:32), adultery (Surah Al-Nur 24:2), and intoxication, the last penalty established through authenticated Hadith. Investigative principles in Islamic jurisprudence emphasise testimonial evidence, impartiality, and justice: 'When ye judge between man and man, that ye judge with justice' (Surah An-Nisa 4:58).

3. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS: DEFINITIONS OF CRIME AND INVESTIGATION

3.1 Definitions of Crime

In domestic law, 'crime' is defined through the combined operation of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC 1860) and the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC 1898). An offence is any act or omission made punishable by law; the CRPC further distinguishes cognizable offences (permitting arrest without warrant) from non-cognisable offences (requiring magisterial authorisation). Internationally, crime is understood as conduct that violates a legal norm maintained by the state and is subject to sanction, including incarceration, fine, or both. Blackstone's formulation identifies crime as an act contrary to the law of the land; sociological traditions emphasise crime's social dimension, conduct injurious to the community (Khan, M. I., & Kanwel, S, 2023).

3.2 Definitions of Investigation

Section 2(h) of the CrPC defines 'investigation' as all proceedings for the collection of evidence conducted by a police officer or any person so authorized by a Magistrate. This encompasses proceeding to the scene, ascertaining the facts and circumstances, discovering and arresting the suspected offender, and collecting evidence. In advanced jurisdictions, investigation is understood more broadly as a systematic, multi-disciplinary process encompassing forensic evidence collection, digital analysis, financial intelligence, and psychologically informed interviewing aimed at reconstructing the criminal event with sufficient evidential integrity to support prosecution (Jamshed et al., 2020).

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

4.1 Theories of Crime

Four principal theoretical paradigms have shaped criminological understanding of crime causation:

- Classical Theory (Beccaria, 1764; Bentham, 1789): Crime is a rational choice; deterrence through swift, certain, and proportionate punishment is the primary policy instrument.

- Positivist Theory (Lombroso, 1876): Crime is determined by biological, psychological, or social factors; treatment and rehabilitation take priority over punishment.

- Strain Theory (Merton, 1938): Crime emerges from structural disjunction between socially approved goals (wealth, status) and legitimate means of achieving them, particularly in contexts of poverty and inequality. Merton's article 'Social Structure and Anomie,' published in the *American Sociological Review* (Vol. 3, No. 5, 1938, pp. 672–682), is among the most cited contributions in sociological scholarship.

- Social Learning / Differential Association Theory (Sutherland, 1947): Criminal behaviour is learned through interaction with others, including techniques, motivations, and rationalisations.

4.2 Theories of Criminal Investigation

Investigation theory is anchored in two foundational principles. First, the Theory of

Means holds that crime investigation proceeds through the systematic collection and analysis of physical clues, fingerprints, eyewitness descriptions, weapons, and biological material assembled into a coherent evidential narrative.

Second, and more fundamentally, Locard's Exchange Principle, formulated by French forensic scientist Dr. Edmond Locard (1877–1966) in the early twentieth century, provides the scientific bedrock of all modern forensic investigation. Locard established the first modern scientific crime laboratory in Lyon, France, in 1910. His principle holds that whenever two objects come into contact, each leaves behind a trace on the other every contact leaves a trace.' As subsequently expressed by Paul L. Kirk: 'Wherever he steps, whatever he touches, whatever he leaves, even unconsciously, will serve as a silent witness against him not only his fingerprints or his footprints, but his hair, the fibres from his clothes, the glass he breaks, the tool mark he leaves Kirk, P. L, 1953).'

4.3 Causes of Crime in Pakistan

The empirical literature on crime causation in Pakistan identifies a distinctive constellation of structural and situational factors. Economic disputes, particularly over land and property, are primary antecedents of violent crime in rural areas. Family and matrimonial conflict (divorce, honour disputes) generates a substantial proportion of crimes in both rural and urban settings. Mass illiteracy and ignorance sustain conditions in which petty crime and violence flourish. Factionalism and inter-group feuds perpetuate cycles of reprisal violence. Poverty and economic marginalisation create structural incentives for property crime consistent with Merton's strain theory. Emotional disturbance is frequently a precipitating factor in crimes of passion. The weakening of religious social control and the geographic inaccessibility of certain areas, which function as safe havens from law enforcement, further compound the picture (Advance Law Research Forum, 2023).

5. COMPARATIVE INVESTIGATIVE METHODS

5.1 United States

American criminal investigation is characterised by systematic crime scene management, multi-agency coordination, and deep integration of forensic science. The standard model, as codified in FBI guidelines and state-level crime laboratory protocols includes: establishment of a Crime Scene Debriefing Team; systematic visual inspection and evidence accounting; comprehensive documentation through reports, photographs, sketches, and video; and formal case-file management enabling independent review. Modern investigations draw on DNA databases, digital forensics, financial intelligence, and behavioural analysis (Fisher, B. A. J, 2004). Investigators operate within a constitutional framework that imposes significant constraints on arrest, search, and interrogation, the Fourth and Fifth Amendments and the Miranda rules being the most consequential.

5.2 United Kingdom

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) model exemplifies a structured, accountable investigative process. Upon receipt of a crime report, an initial investigation reviews witnesses, scenes, CCTV footage, and available forensic samples. A crime reference number is issued within 36 hours. Where proportionate leads exist, an investigating officer is assigned, takes formal statements from victims and witnesses, arrests and interviews suspects at the police station, and may impose bail to permit further enquiry. Outcomes charge, formal caution, or no further action, are communicated to the victim. The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) defines suspect rights and establishes the admissibility framework for evidence. Investigative ethics are reinforced by the PEACE interviewing model (1992), mandatory training for all UK police officers (Baldwin, J, 1993).

5.3 India

Under the Criminal Procedure Code 1973, a police Officer-in-Charge may investigate any cognizable offence within station jurisdiction

without a magisterial order (Section 156). On completion of the investigation, the officer submits either a Challan (charge-sheet, where a prima facie case is established) or a Final Report (where no case is made out). For serious or organised crime, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI, tracing its origins to the Special Police Establishment of 1941) and the National Investigation Agency exercise concurrent jurisdiction, bringing technical expertise and independence to complex cases.

5.4 Pakistan

In Pakistan, an investigation is formally initiated upon registration of a First Information Report (FIR) at the relevant police station under Section 154 CrPC. By law, police are required to register FIR without delay in cognizable matters; in practice, registration is frequently delayed, obstructed, or falsified. Peer-reviewed research has documented that the issue of non-registration routinely reaches the Supreme Court. Once an FIR is registered, the Station House Officer (SHO) typically assigns the investigation to an officer of ASI or Sub-Inspector rank officials who commonly lack specialist training. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB, est. 1999) and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA, est. 1974) exercise jurisdiction over corruption, financial crimes, and national security matters, respectively.

6. FORENSIC SCIENCE IN CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

6.1 The Role and History of Forensic Science

Forensic science encompasses the application of natural and social sciences to legal proceedings. Its institutional history predates Sherlock Holmes: The Chinese treatise Xi Yuan Lu (1248 AD) records medical-legal procedures for distinguishing drowning from strangulation; eighteenth-century French medical jurists sought to distinguish murder from suicide through pathological examination. The modern forensic science laboratory was first conceptualised and established by Edmond Locard in Lyon in 1910. The American Academy of Forensic Sciences defines the discipline as 'the study and practice of the application of science to legal purposes,'

integrating pathology, toxicology, serology, odontology, digital forensics, and trace evidence analysis (De Forest, P. R., & Gaensslen, R. E., & Lee, H. C. (1983).

6.2 Components of the Modern Crime Laboratory

A fully equipped forensic laboratory integrates multiple specialist sections. The Photography Section provides crime scene documentation and studio identification photography. The Evidence Storage Section maintains secure receipt, logging, and custody of all physical exhibits, maintaining chain-of-custody integrity. The Identification Section handles fingerprint recording, latent print development at the scene and in the lab, and biometric database comparison. The Crime Scene Search Section deploys teams of specialist criminalists to attend scenes and collect evidence for laboratory processing, ensuring that evidence is recovered before contamination or deterioration can occur (Cunliffe, F., & Piazza, P. B, 1980).

6.3 Crime Scene Documentation and Evidence Collection

Systematic crime scene processing follows a defined sequence: documentation (notes, photography, sketching, videography); systematic evidence search following FBI-approved patterns (spiral, grid, or zone) prioritising suspected points of ingress and egress; and recovery of physical evidence in priority order. The FBI recommends that search patterns be selected and followed consistently, with secondary crime scenes searched in addition to the primary location. Evidence is packaged separately, accompanied by a standardised evidence submission form, and delivered to the laboratory via secure chain (U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 2013).

6.4 Chain of Custody

The chain of custody is the chronological, written record of every person who has had possession of an item of evidence, from its discovery to its presentation in court and through all appeals. Integrity of the chain is a prerequisite for

evidential admissibility: any gap or unauthorised handling may render evidence inadmissible. Court decisions across multiple jurisdictions have confirmed that evidence moved before documentation, or handled without complete recording, may be ruled tainted and excluded from trial (Saferstein. R, 2018).

6.5 DNA Forensics and Database Intelligence

DNA databases represent one of the most consequential advances in forensic investigation. Peer-reviewed research demonstrates that forensic DNA analysis enhances investigative capabilities by identifying unknown suspects in murder, burglary, sexual assault, and violent offences, and reduces crime through incapacitation and deterrence effects. Beyond individual case identification, DNA profiles enable systematic scene-linking, connecting offences across jurisdictions through a common perpetrator profile. Amankwaa & McCartney (2019) established that DNA intelligence, when systematically managed and combined with other investigative data, generates linkage information of higher reliability than testimonial or observational evidence alone. The Swiss experience documented by Tièche, Dubach & Zieger (2021) provides a concrete model: DNA database analysis revealed a burglary series spanning multiple political boundaries, leading to the arrest of a cross-border offender linked to dozens of previously unsolved offences.

7. STRUCTURAL DEFICIENCIES OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION IN PAKISTAN

The gap between formal legal requirements and investigative practice in Pakistan is wide and extensively documented in peer-reviewed scholarship. Defective investigations have become an unignorable challenge for the successful prosecution of criminal cases, leading to acquittals even in ostensibly strong cases and creating permanent obstruction for effective trial management. The following deficiencies are systemic rather than exceptional.

7.1 Inadequate Knowledge and Training

Investigators routinely lack knowledge of procedural requirements under specific statutes, including the Anti-Terrorism Act and the Prevention of Corruption Act 1947, as well as jurisdictional rules determining which agency should lead particular investigations. Biological and physical evidence is frequently contaminated at the scene before it reaches the laboratory, due to ignorance of evidence collection protocols. The assignment of investigations to junior officers without relevant expertise is standard practice, with a Sub-Inspector rank officer investigating complex cases, including forgery, fraud, or capital murder, without specialist training or tools (Advance Law Research Forum, 2023).

7.2 Lack of Professionalism

Investigative standards are not enforced. Officers routinely bypass evidence collection in favour of conducting informal community adjudications (panchayats). Opinions on guilt or innocence are expressed without an evidentiary basis, usurping the judicial function. Media pressure and political directives routinely redirect and distort investigations. Pakistani police have been described in multiple academic studies as consistently politically influenced, with police priorities frequently altered based on the will of political executives, rendering them 'a puppet in the hands of political masters (Siddiqi, M. U. A., Butt, K. M., & Afzaal, M. 2014).

7.3 Biased and Partial Investigation

Investigative impartiality is compromised by religious, sectarian, ethnic, class, and caste prejudice. Preconceived notions about suspects influence the direction and scope of evidence collection, producing findings that confirm suspicion rather than establish facts. Research on public trust confirms that political interference is identified by complainants as one of the major causes of a lack of confidence in the police. The distinction between holding a bias and acting on a bias is not operationalised in training or supervision.

7.4 Integrity Failures

Fabrication and manipulation of evidence is widespread. In homicide cases, witnesses are planted; in dacoity cases, identification parades are not conducted, with the procedural requirement circumvented through supplementary statements. Dying declarations are not recorded, or are recorded without independent witnesses. Confessions are not obtained before a Magistrate rendering them inadmissible, and police diaries, while required by law, are neither admissible as evidence nor a sufficient basis for conviction. Injured witnesses are interviewed without medical clearance regarding their fitness to make a statement.

7.5 Improper Documentation

Inadequate documentation is among the gravest structural failures. Statements of material witnesses are not reduced to writing, making them unavailable for the court. Crime scene descriptions, positions of bodies, and locations of physical evidence, are omitted from reports. Crime empties (cartridge cases) are not seized, depriving prosecution of a key evidential link between crime, victim, and suspect. Courts can formulate an opinion only based on the facts that are relevant and brought on record; omissions by the investigating officer directly sabotage prosecution cases.

7.6 Chain of Custody Failures

The chain of custody, the cornerstone of evidential admissibility, is routinely broken in Pakistani investigations. Evidence is moved before documentation is complete; handling is unrecorded; parcels submitted to the laboratory are delayed for weeks or months; and the chronological custody record required for court proceedings is either absent, incomplete, or falsified. Research confirms that such breakdowns are considered fatal to the prosecution's case by Pakistani courts.

7.7 Delay

Unnecessary delay at every stage of investigation in sending corpses for post-mortem, recording witness statements, conducting identification

parades, and submitting physical evidence to the laboratory is considered fatal to the prosecution's case by Pakistani courts. Under Section 154 of the CrPC (Punjab), all investigations are to be completed within 14 days of FIR registration; in practice, investigations frequently remain open for months or years. Such delay is primarily attributable to institutional negligence and resource constraints (National Commission for Human Rights, 2018).

8. REFORM RECOMMENDATIONS

The deficiencies identified above are remediable. The following recommendations, drawn from comparative international practice and the structural analysis above, constitute a priority reform agenda grounded in scholarly research.

8.1 Reorganisation of the Investigation Wing

Investigations must be assigned based on an officer's qualification, experience, and specialist training not rank or availability. The separation of investigation from operations mandated by the Police Order 2002, but inconsistently implemented, must be enforced across all provinces. Academic analysis of the Police Order confirms that its investigative separation provisions were conceptually sound but were diluted by the 2004 amendments and have not been consistently operationalized (Javaid, U., & Ramzan, M, 2013).

8.2 Development of Investigation Protocols

Standardised protocols, structured as written guidelines and standard operating procedures, must be developed for the investigation of each major offence category. International research confirms that structured investigation protocols improve evidential quality, reduce contamination, and increase conviction rates. A murder investigation protocol should, at a minimum, encompass scene documentation requirements, post-mortem timing standards, identification parade procedures, and forensic submission timelines.

8.3 Professional Development and Training

Given the rapid development of technology, digital forensics, cybercrime, and DNA profiling,

continuous professional development is essential. Training must be merit-based, incentivised, and evaluated against a structured competency framework. The existing system, in which training is sporadic and unlinked to career advancement, must be replaced by a structured CPD programme with regular assessment, modelled on the UK College of Policing framework. Honest officers must also be protected from frivolous dismissal, and the practice of posting and transfer based on political favour (safari) must be systematically addressed.

8.4 Independence of the Investigation Wing

Political interference in the investigation must be structurally constrained. Media briefings should be restricted to post-investigation summaries. Political pressure on investigating officers, including instructions to register, close, or redirect investigations, should be criminalised. Independent oversight bodies, analogous to the UK Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), should be established at the provincial level to investigate misconduct impartially.

8.5 Accountability for Investigative Misconduct

Investigators who wilfully destroy, fabricate, or tamper with evidence must face exemplary punishment with deterrent effect. Accountability mechanisms must distinguish between wilful misconduct and honest error, using transparent criteria to prevent the system from being weaponised against officers through frivolous complaints. Gross negligence must also be addressed, as research confirms that simple negligence by investigating officers, particularly in relation to biological evidence collection and chain-of-custody documentation, is widespread.

8.6 Amendment of Penal Laws

Three legislative reforms are particularly urgent. First, many offences currently classified as non-cognisable should be reclassified as cognisable, removing the incentive for complainants to fabricate more serious charges to attract police action. Second, the bail before arrest, an institution eliminated in many modern jurisdictions, should be abolished or severely

restricted. Third, FIR registration must be made mandatory and simplified: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's model of compulsory registration should be adopted nationally, eliminating SHO discretion to refuse registration of cognisable offences.

8.7 Strengthening Forensic Infrastructure

Pakistan's forensic laboratories are chronically under-resourced. Investment is required in DNA database infrastructure, digital forensics capability, and toxicology. Crime scene units staffed by trained criminalists rather than ordinary police officers must be established in every major city. Chain-of-custody documentation must be standardised and digitised. International research consistently demonstrates that increased forensic capability directly improves detection and conviction rates, a finding with direct policy implications for Pakistan's investment priorities (Amankwaa, A. O., & McCartney, C, 2021).

9. CONCLUSION

Pakistan's criminal investigation system is burdened by the twin legacies of colonial-era institutional design and post-independence institutional decay. The inherited CrPC framework, while providing a skeletal procedural structure, has not been updated to reflect the demands of modern forensic investigation. Structural deficits, inadequate training, political interference, documentation failures, chain-of-custody breaches, and under-resourced forensic infrastructure combine to produce an investigative process that frequently generates inadmissible evidence, collapses at trial, and leaves victims without justice.

The comparative analysis of investigative models in the United States, the United Kingdom, and India reveals that the gap between Pakistan and best-practice jurisdictions is bridgeable. The core requirements for improvement are well established in the scholarly literature: specialist investigative units with competency-based assignment; mandatory evidence-based protocols for each offence category; structured interviewing methods aligned with the PEACE model; forensic laboratories with sufficient funding, equipment,

and trained personnel; and a legal framework that ensures mandatory FIR registration, constrains political interference, and holds investigative misconduct to account. The rule of law in Pakistan cannot be strengthened without a functional criminal investigation system. The reforms proposed in this paper are neither novel nor unique; they reflect practices already institutionalised in comparable jurisdictions and grounded in decades of criminological and forensic science research. Their implementation requires political will, sustained institutional investment, and a commitment to the principle that the purpose of criminal investigation is not to confirm suspicion or serve political interest, but to establish the truth.

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