

DELAY IN CRIMINAL TRIALS AND ITS IMPACT ON THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM- Dr Samreen Faiz¹**Abstract**

The issue of delays in the court during criminal trials has now become one of the major problems influencing the effectiveness and reliability of the criminal justice system. The reason as to why justice shall be administered in a reasonable time is critical in the delivery of justice that is fair to the accused, protects the rights of the accused, and keeps people's faith in the legal system. Nevertheless, in most jurisdictions, especially in developing legal systems, criminal cases usually take several years to be disposed of simply because of several procedural, institutional, and administrative variables. Not only do such delays congest the courts, but it also impacts negatively on the victims, witnesses, and the accused persons and in the end undermine the justice delivery process.

This research is aimed at studying the problem of the delay in criminal trials and analyzing its overall effect on the operation of the criminal justice system. The paper is geared towards determining the key contributors to the long criminal process and assessing the effects that these delays have on the principle of fairness and accountability and the right to justice. The research also aims to get insights into the role of the law and judicial interpretations in dealing with the issue of stalled court proceedings.

As a foundation of the research, it is an analytical study of the provisions and statutory frameworks of the constitution and notable cases decided by the courts that stress the need to have justice as fast as it can be. The analysis of the legal principles and scholarly debates shows that the study tracks the systemic issues that lead to an increase in the number of criminal cases on the backlog.

This observation shows that the delays experienced in criminal trials compromise the rights of victims and accused individuals, and hinder the trust of the people in the judicial system,

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and pose significant challenges in the pursuit of effective justice. The research finds that to make sure that criminal justice is administered in a timely and efficient manner, it is crucial to strengthen the judicial infrastructure, enhance the efficiency of the procedures, and implement institutional changes.

Keywords

Delay in criminal trials, Speedy justice, Criminal justice system, Case backlog, Judicial efficiency, Criminal procedure.

1. Introduction

The criminal justice system is a vital tool for law/order and social stability in society. It operates using a systemic legal procedure that investigates, prosecutes, and proves guilt or innocence using a court of law. A criminal trial is a formal trial of the court process, during which evidence and submissions made by the prosecution and the defence are considered to establish whether the alleged criminal has committed the offence or not. The range of the criminal trials is large, as it should guarantee the observance of fundamental rights, the fair treatment of people, and the provision of justice to the victims.² The way the criminal justice system works has much to do with the fairness, transparency, and efficiency of the trials.

Among the most significant rules that regulate criminal trials, one can mention the idea that justice must be administered within a reasonable time. Justice must be delivered promptly to ensure the accused receive justice, safeguard the victims, and ensure confidence among the people in the system. Criminal processes may take a long time, thereby undermining the justice system and subjecting everyone to suffering. The courts have stressed the significance of the right to a speedy trial as a component of the right to life and personal liberty. In *Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar*, the Supreme Court acknowledged that the right to a speedy trial is an inherent right implicated in Article 21 of the Constitution. The Court noted that the undue delay in handling the undertrial prisoners was a breach of the fundamental rights of the prisoners and recommended that the government should do what it could to dispose of the cases at an early stage.

²Bajaj, H., & Sinha, M. (2025). Justice in Limbo: Examining the Ripple Effects of Delayed Criminal Trials on Prisoners, Overcrowded Prisons, and Rehabilitation in India. *International Journal For Multidisciplinary Research*. <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2025.v07i01.38006>

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Although this principle is known, latitude in criminal trials has been a significant issue in the majority of legal systems. The existing huge number of cases pending in the courts is a major cause of the delays in court proceedings, which could take years. Several factors cause such delays, such as the lack of judges, the complexity of the procedure, the frequency of adjournments, the delay in the investigation process, and the insufficiency of judicial infrastructure. The courts have on numerous occasions realized that delays that are unreasonable may hamper the efficiency of criminal justice. During the *A.R. Antulay v. R.S. Nayak* case, the Supreme Court pointed out that the right to a speedy trial applies in all the stages of a criminal process, such as investigation, inquiry, and trial. The Court also said that in some situations, undue delay can result in grave prejudice to the accused and can even result in the quashing of proceedings.

There are also severe effects of drawn-out criminal trials on victims and witnesses. Latent delays can cause poor memory, decay of evidence, and hostile witnesses, hence influencing the fairness of the trial process. When the cases take a long time before being handled, this can also add to the psychological and financial burden of the victims and their families. The Supreme Court understands such concerns, and hence the case of *P. Ramachandra Rao v. State of Karnataka* restated that it is true that no strict time limit can be fixed on any criminal trial, but the courts should make sure that the cases are disposed of effectively and unwarranted time wastage is not created. The Court pointed out that the safeguarding of the right to a speedy trial should balance the necessity to promote fair and comprehensive investigation and adjudication.³

Over the last several years, the issue of slow criminal trials has acquired more and more popularity because of the growing number of pending cases in the courts. Delays not only undermine the rights of the accused and victims but also compromise the faith of the people in the justice delivery system. Delay of Justice. Incorrect timing of justice diminishes the deterrent impact of criminal law and the competency of judicial institutions. Consequently, the problem of criminal trial delays has become a significant focus in terms of the proper operation of the criminal justice system.

³Waqar, M. (2022). Criminal Justice System and its Impacts on Criminal Trial Law, Practice and Procedure in Pakistan: An Analytical Study. *PAKISTAN LANGUAGES AND HUMANITIES REVIEW*. [https://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2022\(6-iii\)24](https://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2022(6-iii)24)

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In this regard, this study aims to analyze the problem of criminal trial delay and its effect on the criminal justice system. The study will examine the key reasons as to why criminal cases take too long, consider their consequences to the delivery of justice, and how the law and judicial interpretations serve to protect the right to justice promptly. Exploring these points, the research shows that it is critical to enhance institutional mechanisms and efficiency in operations to provide the effective and timely administration of criminal justice.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To test the problem of the slowing down of criminal trials in the criminal justice system.
2. To examine the causes of lengthy criminal transactions.
3. To determine how such delays affect the operations and performance of the criminal justice system.
4. To investigate juridical protection and judicial reactions to provide justice in time.

3. Research Questions

1. What are the key causes of sluggishness in criminal trials?
2. What are some of the effects of the protracted criminal trials on the victims and the accused individuals, and the society in general?
3. What has the judicial interpretation done to resolve the problem of delay in criminal proceedings in courts?
4. What are some of the reforms and interventions that can be used to eliminate delays in criminal trials?

4. Legal and Constitutional Framework in Relation to the Speedy Trial.

A fast trial is one of the essential parts of the criminal justice system. The constitutional principle in India is based mostly on the right to life and personal liberty as enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution. Article 21 has been interpreted by the judiciary in a way that encompasses the right to fair, just, and reasonable procedure, in which the right to speedy trial has been deemed a critical component. *Hussainara Khatoun v. the Supreme Court*. The State of Bihar believed that the right to speedy trial was implied in Article 21. The Court pointed out that the extended confinement of prisoners in custody awaiting trial was in

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violation of the Constitution and pointed out that the state had the duty to ensure that criminal cases were disposed of promptly.⁴

Other than the constitutional protection, there are other provisions in the criminal procedure laws that strive to provide an expeditious trial according to the criminal procedure laws as well. The Indian procedural system of criminal trials offers the means of avoiding unwarranted delay and promoting fairness in the trial.⁵ As an example, the laws about the investigation of crimes, charge sheet filings, witness examination, and the timely documentation of evidence are supposed to support the effective flow of criminal cases. In *A.R. Antulay v. R.S. Nayak*, the Supreme Court made it clear that the right to a speedy trial was not limited to the trial phase, but it is also applicable to investigation, enquiry, and appeal phases. The Court noted that unnecessary time taken during any of the stages of the criminal process may be in breach of the core rights of the accused.⁶

The judicial system has been instrumental in ensuring the right to timely justice by its interpretative capacity and giving directions that seek to enhance efficiency in criminal proceedings. The justice delivery system has been reiterated by the courts to ensure that it considers both the interests of the victims and society in a balance with the rights of the accused. In *P. Ramachandra Rao v. The State of Karnataka*, the Supreme Court once again reorganized the constitutional significance of a speedy trial, but made it clear that in all cases, strict time limits are not possible. Rather, courts have to treat cases on a case-by-case basis and decide whether the delay is unreasonable and whether the delay has prejudiced the accused. Courts have enhanced the constitutional promise of providing justice in good time through such judicial interpretations, and they have emphasized that institutional reforms are necessary to improve the delays in criminal trials.

5. Delay in Criminal Trials Causes.

Delay in criminal trials is a multidimensional issue that is emanated by multiple structural, procedural, and administrative factors in the criminal justice system. The lack of judges and the insufficiency of court infrastructure are two of the most prominent reasons. Most of the

⁴Andersen, L. (2023). Court Delays and Criminal Recidivism: Results from Danish Administrative Data and a Policy Reform. *Justice Quarterly*, 41, 647 - 671. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2023.2260451>

⁵Melcarne, A., Ramello, G., & Spruk, R. (2021). Is justice delayed justice denied? An empirical approach. *International Review of Law and Economics*, 65, 105953. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.irle.2020.105953>

⁶Gona, S., & Gwanzura, S. (2014). Delays in Finalising Criminal Trials. *International journal of innovative research and development*, 3.

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courts have large cases with scarce judicial staff and are therefore failing to dispose of cases in time. Inadequate courtrooms, supporting staff, and technological facilities also make the criminal proceedings slow.

The other important aspect is the pendency of criminal cases, which is rising. Criminal complaints and criminal prosecutions have been on the increase, thus creating a massive burden in the judicial system. In cases where the volume of cases is high and the courts are unable to handle them, the rate at which the cases are thrown away may not be the same as the rate at which new cases are brought before the courts, thus leading to long backlogs and delayed trials.

Also, a major contribution to delays is procedural complexity and frequent adjournment. Many steps are undertaken in criminal trials, these being investigation, framing charges, witness examination and cross-examination, and final arguments. Such phases may have various hearings, and often, adjournments are allowed because of the absence of attorneys, witnesses, or other individuals, which may make the trial last considerably longer. *Vinod Kumar v. Supreme Court. The State of Punjab* condemned the tendency of adjournments that are not necessary, and the trial court should be exceptionally restricted by the state to complete trials on time.

Inefficiency in the police investigation and delay in charge sheet filing are other significant causes of delay. In most instances, investigations are overly lengthy because of the unavailability of resources, bad coordination, or failure in procedure. The late investigation prolongs the initiation of trials and the additional backlog in the courts.⁷

The problem of the witnesses is also very critical in postponing the criminal trials. Witnesses can either not come to court because they are afraid of facing the court, or because it would be inconvenient, or because of the absence of protection, and the hearings are postponed several times. Also, the long delays can lead to forgetting on the part of the witness or making him hostile, hence undermining the case of the prosecution.

Lastly, the presence of administrative inefficiencies in the criminal justice system may also be a source of delays. Criminal proceedings may be slowed down by poor case management,

⁷Hussain, A., Akhtar, S., & Hassan, M. (2021). Studying the Causes of Delay in Criminal Trials under the Criminal Justice System of Pakistan. *Global Sociological Review*. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2021\(vi-ii\).07](https://doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2021(vi-ii).07)

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police, prosecution, and courts lacking coordination, and poor use of technology. All these aspects present systemic issues that need to be solved in order to deliver justice in time.

6. Delay in Criminal Trials Interpretation by the Courts.

The courts have been critical of the identification and implementation of the right to a speedy trial as an important aspect of just criminal procedure. Courts, through several landmark rulings, have confirmed the extent of such a right and have dealt with the problem of criminal processes taking too long. *Hussainara Khaton v. State of Bihar* is one of the first and the most important decisions in this way. The situation in the state of Bihar, where the Supreme Court brought attention to the plight of thousands of untried prisoners who had been held long without trial. The Court was of the view that the right to speedy trial is primary, and that the authorities needed to do what they could to guarantee prompt disposition of cases.⁸

This principle was further explained by the Supreme Court in *A.R. Antulay v. R.S. Nayak*. In this instance, the Court has established a framework to be followed in establishing whether a delay in the criminal proceedings is a breach of the right to a speedy trial. It highlighted that the delay period, causes of delay, the behavior of parties involved, as well as prejudice to the accused, must be taken into consideration when determining whether the delay is unreasonable.

The other case, which concerns this matter, is *P. Ramachandra Rao v. State of Karnataka*, which was one of the states where the Supreme Court looked at the issue of whether there should be fixed time limits in which criminal trials should be completed. The Court believed that even though the right to a speedy trial is of paramount importance, a strict timeline can be applied consistently to all cases. Rather, judicial bodies should take a practical and moderate stand, but at the same time, deliver justice promptly.⁹

Delay at criminal trial is also of concern to the judiciary, as in the case of *Vinod Kumar v. State of Punjab*, the Supreme Court heavily condemned the custom of successive adjournments and stressed the importance of absolute obedience to procedural discipline in a

⁸Khan, M., & Bilal, M. (2025). Justice Delayed, Justice Denied: Examining the Causes of Delays in Pakistan's Criminal Justice System. *Journal of Law & Social Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.52279/jlss.07.01.4352>

⁹Dalmia, A. (2023). THE IMPACT OF PENDING COURT CASES ON THE EFFICACY OF THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM IN INDIA: "JUSTICE DELAYED IS JUSTICE DENIED". *International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research*. <https://doi.org/10.46609/ijsser.2023.v08i10.005>

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trial court. The Court instructed the judges to be more conscious of proceedings and avoid unneeded delays through adjournments.

These judicial interpretations have always brought out the point by the courts that delays in the criminal trials affect the fairness and effectiveness of the justice system. The judiciary has been instrumental in enhancing quick justice in the criminal justice system by acknowledging the right to a speedy trial as a basic guarantee and by giving orders that would help streamline the process of administration of justice.

7. Effect of Delay in the Criminal Justice System.

The long criminal trial process has far-reaching implications since it not only leads to the delay of criminal trials, but it also impacts the overall operations of the criminal justice system and its effectiveness. The extended trials pose a huge burden to the accused, victims, witnesses, and the judicial systems, and in effect, negate the intention of administering justice fairly and justly.

Implications on the Rights of the Accused.

Among the most severe repercussions of the slow criminal proceedings, there is the infringement of the rights of the defendant. Criminals are likely to experience a lot of uncertainty and psychological trauma when criminal cases take a long time to be resolved. In most of the instances, people are kept as undertrial prisoners for many years before their cases are determined. This kind of prolonged detention is against the basic rule of any individual being considered innocent before he is convicted.

In the case of *Hussainara Khatoon v. the Supreme Court*, the right of an undertrial prisoner was highlighted. State of Bihar, where the Court had noted that the undertrial prisoners were in thousands and that they had spent longer than what the law stipulated in jail for the crimes they were accused of. The Court believed that this delay was against the basic right to personal liberty and ordered the authorities to provide expeditious trials.¹⁰

Effects on Victims and Witnesses.

Criminal trials take time, and this impacts negatively on victims and witnesses. In cases that go on for years without being solved, the victims tend to have long-lasting emotional and

¹⁰Clarke, D., & Metzler, A. (2025). Estimating the Delay of Criminal Trials: Evidence From Canada. *Journal of Law and Empirical Analysis*, 2, 33 - 59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2755323x251341611>

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psychological trauma. The delay can make them fail to attain closure, and this can make them less trusting of the justice system.

There are also multiple problems faced by witnesses as a result of a long process. In the long run, the witnesses might fail to recall important information, move, or fail to cooperate in any protracted court proceedings. Some witnesses can even become antagonistic because of either fear or exhaustion due to the frequent court appearances. The case of Zahira Habibullah Sheikh v. the Supreme Court. The state of Gujarat emphasized the need to safeguard the witnesses and make sure that justice is not neglected by delays or other forces.

Damage of the Justice System credibility.

When the judicial system takes several years or even decades to resolve criminal cases, people will lose confidence in such a system. The citizens can start feeling that the legal system is slow, inefficient, and unable to deliver justice in a timely fashion. This credibility can undermine the power of the law institutions as well as dilute the deterrent impact of criminal law.

According to the judiciary, time and again, justice delayed corrupts the justice system. In the case of A.R. Antulay v. R.S. Nayak, the Supreme Court underscored that overindulgence of time in the criminal proceedings process may nullify the whole objective of the justice delivery system and may be biased against the accused.

Congestion in Prisons because of Undertrial Prisoners.

The delayed criminal trials also cause a significant impact on the prison congestion, especially because of the many under-trial prisoners. The cases take a long time before getting a trial, and many people end up in detention awaiting trial. This scenario is a massive burden to the correctional facilities and poses a difficulty in ensuring the proper administration of prisons.¹¹

Overcrowded prisons and extended detention were the topics that the Supreme Court discussed during the Supreme Court Legal Aid Committee v. Union of India, in which it ordered the release of some groups of undertrial prisoners that had been held for a long time in custody without trial.

¹¹Nomnganga, P., & Masumbe, P. (2024). Prevalence of Undue Delays in Criminal Proceedings: Realising the Right to a Speedy Trial for Crime Victims in South Africa?. *Perspectives of Law and Public Administration*. <https://doi.org/10.62768/plpa/2024/13/2/14>

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Social and Psychological Implications.

The impact of the long-term criminal trials may also be disastrous in social and psychological terms. Even before the final verdict has been announced, the accused may have to endure social stigma, monetary loss, and reputation damage. The uncertainty and lengthiness of the proceedings may cause the victims and their families emotional distress. Also, delays may make victims of crime unwilling to report crimes, and hence, the overall capacity of the criminal justice system to maintain social order may be compromised.

8. Institutional and Procedural Problems.

The delay issue in criminal trials is intricately related to several institutional and procedural problems of the criminal justice system. Such challenges are usually created by the constraints of the administrative capacity, inefficiency of procedures, and the lack of coordination between various agencies with which the criminal justice administration is concerned.

Case Management Problems

Poor case management systems in courts are one of the major problems that cause delays in courts. Most courts have numerous cases that are being heard at the same time and do not have any mechanism for prioritizing or scheduling the hearings efficiently. Consequently, cases can be kept pending for so long before being taken to trial.

Absence of Technological Adoption.

The other significant barrier is the poor use of modern technology in the court proceedings. The conventional modes of records and documentation, as well as the management of cases, have the propensity to delay the court system. Despite the measures that have been undertaken in the last few years to bring about the digital system and the use of e-court services, the complete adoption of technology in the judicial system is still in its dynamic form.

Investigative Inefficiencies

Delays in the criminal proceedings are often initiated at the stage of investigation. Poor investigation practices, incompetent staff, and inadequate forensic resources may increase the

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duration of evidence collection and submission of charge sheets. These delays delay the commencement of trials and add to the criminal backlog on the whole.¹²

Coordination lapses between the police, the prosecutor, and the courts.

The criminal justice system is enhanced when there is a high level of coordination between the investigating agencies, prosecutors, and the judicial system. Nevertheless, when there is no communication and collaboration between these institutions, it may cause procedural delays. In *Vinod Kumar v. The Supreme Court, State of Punjab*, it has stressed the need to ensure effective coordination and stringent regulations of adjournments with a view to averting unjustified delay of criminal proceedings.

9. Interventions that have been taken to counter delay.

Understanding the dire impact of trial delays by criminals, several reforms and projects have been brought in place to enhance the effectiveness of the criminal justice system and help to alleviate the case backlog.

Fast-Track Courts

The establishment of fast-track courts is one of the significant steps taken in solving delays. These courts are set up in such a way that it prioritizes specific categories of cases so that the matters can be disposed of at a faster rate. The cultures that have particularly applied fast-track courts include cases that involve serious offences and those that need immediate attention.

Case Management Reforms

Courts have also presented some reforms in case management in order to enhance the timetabling and tracking of cases. These reforms are meant to minimize unnecessary adjournments, ensure proper examination of witnesses, and simplify the process of criminal trials. *P. Ramachandra Rao vs. the Supreme Court. The State of Karnataka* highlighted the need to be more efficient in the judiciary and evaluate cases on a case-by-case basis in order to reduce delays.¹³

¹²Pellegrina, L. (2008). Court delays and crime deterrence. *European Journal of Law and Economics*, 26, 267-290. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10657-008-9076-4>

¹³Ang, A. (2014). Determining the Costs of Delay in the Philippine Criminal Justice System. *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*, 6, 1-1.

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Digitization of Courts

The e-court system and the introduction of digital technologies have been significant moves towards enhancing the efficiency of the judiciary. Computerization of records, registration of cases through the internet, and virtual hearings can greatly impact the reduction of delay in administration and access to justice. The courts are also able to handle the large numbers of cases with the help of these technological advancements.

Other strategies can be adopted to control backlog.

Other alternative ways, like the plea bargaining, mediation, and settlement processes, have also been provided to minimize the court's overburden. These mechanisms enable the reduction of the pending cases, and the courts can concentrate more on the more serious crimes by solving some cases not under the normal trial process.

10. Findings and Analysis

Structural, procedural, and administrative issues indicate that delay in criminal trials is a multidimensional issue, which is analyzed through legal provisions, judicial decisions, and scholarly discussions. The established constitutional significance of timely justice can be proved by recognition of the right to speedy trial as an inseparable part of personal liberty. *Hussainara Khatun v. State of Bihar* and *A.R. Antulay v. R.S. Nayak* are judicial rulings. The case of *State of Bihar and A.R. Antulay v. R.S. Nayak* has been instrumental in drawing attention to how people should be shielded against the unjustifiable slowing down of criminal processes.

The research also shows that delays are caused by a combination of the following factors, such as a shortage of judicial staff, complexity of the procedures, inefficiencies in investigations, and lack of liaisons between various institutions. Such delays not only undermine the rights of the accused and the victims, but also destroy the confidence of the people in the justice delivery system.¹⁴

Moreover, several reform initiatives, including the creation of fast-track courts, the introduction of digital technologies, and case management systems, have been introduced in order to overcome these challenges. Although these efforts have been achieved to a certain degree in enhancing efficiency in the judicial system, the fact that the backlog of cases

¹⁴Dandurand, Y. (2014). Criminal Justice Reform and the System's Efficiency. *Criminal Law Forum*, 25, 383-440. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10609-014-9235-y>

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continues to exist means that more structural and institutional changes are still required. Enhancement of judicial infrastructure, enhancing investigative systems, as well as better coordination of criminal justice institutions, are some of the measures that are necessary in order to ensure timely and effective delivery of criminal justice.

11. Recommendations and Suggestions.

The issue of delay, still being an ongoing problem in criminal trials, necessitates in-depth reforms that would contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system. The solution to this problem is the enhancement of the institutional capacity, streamlining of procedures, enhancement of investigative practices, and modern technological solutions. Some of these recommendations can help in minimizing delays and delivering timely justice.

Giving the Judiciary more power.

Lack of judges and poor judicial infrastructure is one of the major causes of delays in criminal trials. The number of pending cases before the various courts across the country is usually immense, and therefore, it is hard to clear the matters within a decent time. Putting more judges and creating more courts and sufficient support staff can go a long way in increasing the rate at which criminal cases are being disposed of. In *Hussainara Khatoon*, the importance of the strengthening of the judicial system has been stressed. State of Bihar where the Supreme Court, pointed at the necessity to make systemic changes to guarantee the right to the speedy trial effective.

Procedural Simplification

Procedural requirements and adjournments are complex elements that might make the criminal proceedings take long. To speed up the trial process, it is possible to simplify procedural rules and make sure that unnecessary adjournments are strictly controlled. Courts ought to develop effective case management habits that will reduce the time taken in case management and make sure that the hearings are done devoid of undue interruptions. *Vinod Kumar v. Supreme Court*. State of Punjab highly condemned the act of adjourning and called that there was the need to have strict discipline in courts so as to have the trial completed in time.

Improved Investigation Machineries.

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Stalling in criminal cases may start as early as investigation phase. The criminal justice process can also be slowed down by inefficiency in the investigation practice, absence of training, and insufficient forensic resources. The investigative agencies should also be strengthened by being properly trained, having better forensic facilities and ensuring that there is a good coordination with the prosecution authorities so that investigations are carried out efficiently and in time. Effective investigation is vital in ensuring that trial is started without undue delay and also in ensuring the quality of evidence is presented in the courts.

Application of Technology and Digital Courts.

The use of modern technology has the potential to enhance the efficiency of the judiciary and minimize the delays. Court records, electronic filing, and virtual hearings can be digitized because they can make the process of administration less complicated and decrease the time needed to manage a case. E-court systems and digital case tracking make the implementation of courts more efficient in tracking the progress of cases, and they provide transparency in court proceedings. These technological advancements can be used to a great extent to increase the overall efficiency within the criminal justice system.

Enhancing the Witness Protection and Management.

The witnesses are significant in the criminal trials and when they are not present or when they refuse to testify there is a tendency of delays. Witness protection programs can be reinforced and witness management systems can be enhanced so that the witnesses can be motivated to attend trial without any fear and inconvenience. The significance of witness protection and ensuring fair methods of the trial was highlighted in *Zahira Habibullah Sheikh v. The state of Gujarat*, in which the Supreme Court acknowledged that proper witness protection is the key to ensuring the integrity of the criminal proceedings. To minimize delays and enhance the effectiveness of the trial procedure, it is possible to make sure that the witnesses are checked in time, and appropriate protection measures are taken.

12. Conclusion

The criminal cases should be disposed of promptly, which is one of the basic requirements of the successful operation of criminal justice system. Criminal trials that take long not only impact on the rights of the accused and the victims themselves but also undermine the confidence of the people in the judicial system. The fact that justice should be administered

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within a reasonable period is directly related to the bigger philosophies of fairness, accountability and rule of law.

The establishment of the right to speedy trial as an element of individual freedom has been reinforced with the help of numerous court cases, with *Hussainara Khaton v. State of Bihar* and *A.R. Antulay verses R.S. Nayak*. These judgments help to point out that the state and judicial institutions must make sure that criminal procedures are both effective and timely.

Nevertheless, the delays remain persistent, which means that the justice delivery system is still affected by structural and procedural challenges. The problem of judges shortage, complicated procedures, ineffective investigations, and absence of technological infrastructure are still critical barriers on the way of timely justice. These issues can be overcome through a concerted action in the form of judicial reforms, administrative reforms, and technological innovation.

Finally, speedy trials are a core element both to preserve the rights of individuals and to preserve the credibility and the legitimacy of the criminal justice system. The justice system can also be a step closer to its core goal of providing fair, timely and effective justice to every member of society through enhancing institutional capacity, promoting procedural efficiency and implementing modern technological solutions.

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