



Managing Pakistan's Criminal Justice System in Linkage with the SDGs: A Thematic Study

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Abstract: *The primary objective of this study is to examine the manner in which the criminal justice system in Pakistan is influenced by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Pakistan will be the principal location of focus for the investigation. The primary objective of this research is to examine the compatibility between the Sustainable Development Goals and the laws, procedures and approaches to law enforcement employed by the criminal justice system. One approach to achieve this goal is to calculate the likelihood that the two events will occur simultaneously. The aforementioned agreement structure imparts both favourable and unfavourable consequences with regard to equity, environmental sustainability, and societal justice. An investigation into these influences constitutes the objective of this study. The principal aim of this research endeavour will be to examine the consequences that are linked to this connection. Valuable insights can be derived from research that could potentially be implemented to enhance the criminal justice system in Pakistan.*

Key Words: Criminal Justice System, Legal Framework, Social Justice

Introduction

The United Nations has established the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide explicit attention to each of these concerns. The aforementioned characteristics constitute only a minute fraction of the extensive array of subjects explored within the content. Bhandari and Bhattarai (2017) posit that the primary aim of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to attain absolute congruence with the imperatives of safeguarding human rights, promoting fair and equal access to justice, and confronting socioeconomic disparities.

When the current environmental conditions are considered, the importance of conducting this type of investigation becomes even more apparent. This discovery is an immediate outcome of the continuous inquiry that has been undertaken concerning the worldwide goal of achieving sustainable development by the year 2030. This commitment encompasses a wide range of issues, such as environmental sustainability, economic progress, and social equality, among others.

This study endeavour, which aims to improve one's understanding of the situation, has as its primary objective the acquisition of information about the present situation. As stated by George et al. (2021), is to discern possible avenues that could facilitate the harmonisation of the criminal justice system's goals with the diverse sustainable development objectives. In order to accomplish this objective, policies, legal instruments, and implementation mechanisms will be eliminated.

By conducting an extensive analysis, this study aims not only to identify potential areas of convergence but also to offer practical insights that may enhance the effectiveness of criminal justice administration and support Pakistan's pursuit of sustainable development. Alternatively stated, the purpose of this research is to achieve both of these goals. Through this endeavour, our intention is to provide vital perspectives that could potentially influence policy-making, academic discourse, and pragmatic resolutions concerning the convergence of sustainable development, crime prevention, and legislation in Pakistan. This might be attainable.

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Figure 1

17 Goals of SDGs



Problem Statement

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and effective criminal justice administration are shared aims; however, Pakistan has several problems in integrating its criminal justice system with sustainable development. Despite the fact that the SDGs and criminal justice system efficiency are mutual goals. Pakistan, like other nations, has several challenges. Social well-being and sustainable development are difficult to accomplish due to several challenges. Sustainable development hinders both aims. Criminal conduct, system inefficiencies, and institutional deficiencies are examples of these impediments. Institutions also have flaws.

The Pakistani criminal justice system must solve several challenges. Pervasive corruption, poor legal frameworks, and insufficient resources are examples of these issues. Given these obstacles, the system struggles to fight crime and enforce the law. This is due to obstacles. Disadvantaged populations also face disproportionate discrimination and limited access to justice, which worsens social inequalities and hinders sustainable development goals like poverty eradication, gender equality, and inclusive economic

growth. A fairer society is the purpose of these aims. In the next paragraphs, these goals will be detailed.

The disconnect between legal provisions and their execution, as well as data collection and analysis issues, make it difficult to develop evidence-based policies and interventions to combat crime and promote social justice (Johnson et al., 2019b). Because each of these elements makes policy and intervention development challenging. This makes social justice policies and acts harder to create. Lack of cooperation among law enforcement, the court, civil society, and communities worsens criminal justice system inefficiencies. This is a stakeholder coordination failure. Stakeholders include community members. According to Johnson et al. (2019a), the system's inability to coordinate its efforts makes it harder to respond to rising crime and emerging threats.

Due to these issues, the complex administration of Pakistan's criminal justice system and ways to improve its alignment with sustainable development must be examined immediately (TRENDS, 2017). The necessity necessitates this inquiry. This need must be met immediately. Addressing this gap is crucial to building a more inclusive, equitable, and resilient society that respects the rule of law and protects everyone's rights

and dignity. Thus, this study seeks to illuminate the main issues and explore strategic interventions that could make it easier to integrate criminal justice into Pakistan's sustainable development agenda (Erna Dewi & Maya Shafira, [2023](#)).

Research Objectives

- i. To Evaluate the Present Situation Regarding the Administration of Criminal Justice in Pakistan.
- ii. To conduct an analysis of the degree to which the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the management of the criminal justice system are aligned.
- iii. To investigate the influence that the practices of the criminal justice system have on social inequality.
- iv. To determine whatever institutional deficiencies and systemic challenges exist.
- v. The purpose of this project is to provide strategies for improving alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals.
- vi. The purpose of this study is to offer insights to policymakers, practitioners, and academics.

Research Questions

- i. What are the current legal frameworks, methods of law enforcement, and management tactics that are utilized within the Pakistani criminal justice system?
- ii. To what degree does the criminal justice system in Pakistan coincide with the values and goals that are described in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
- iii. What kind of effects does Pakistan's criminal justice system have on vulnerable people and groups that are marginalized?
- iv. What are some of the elements that contribute to these obstacles, such as corruption, limited resources, and difficulties in providing coordination among many stakeholders?
- v. In Pakistan, what evidence-based techniques and policy proposals have the potential to improve the alignment of the management of the criminal justice system with particular Sustainable Development Goals?
- vi. In order to inform policymakers, practitioners, and academics at the interface of sustainable development and criminal justice management in Pakistan, what kinds of practical insights might be gleaned from the findings of the research?

Theoretical Framework

This study makes use of a variety of distinct theories and conceptual lenses, all of which are connected with one another, in order to construct its theoretical framework. A comprehensive understanding of the relationships that exist between the administration of the criminal justice system and sustainable development in Pakistan may be obtained via the use of these frameworks and perspectives.

Systems Theory

System theory is a fundamental framework that may be employed to examine the multiple components of criminal justice systems that are interrelated with one another. Systems theory can be applied to assess these components. As a consequence of this, it possesses the capability to study the interrelationships, feedback processes, and linkages that are present inside the system.

Theory of Social Justice

This type of perspective can be applied for the purpose of examining the construction of the system. A method that might be acceptable would be to study the role that the system plays in either reducing socioeconomic disparity or maintaining it. In addition to this, it is helpful in quantifying the impact that activities within the system have on people who are vulnerable and groups who are disadvantaged at the same time.

Literature Review

The subsequent phase, which follows the completion of an exhaustive examination of the relevant academic literature, is to carry out an analysis of the specific works that are under consideration. It is of the highest significance to explore the link that exists between the execution of criminal justice and the attainment of these sustainable development goals (SDGs) when Pakistan is taken into consideration as a framework.

According to Nahar ([2024](#)), doing a comprehensive review of the existing body of academic literature has the ability to enhance one's comprehension of the many elements that play a role in determining the degree to which the criminal justice system is in accordance with the overall objectives of sustainable development. Achieving this purpose may be accomplished by doing research on the many different components that are involved.

It is vital to have a comprehensive understanding of the legal underpinnings that underpin the operation of the criminal justice system in order to carry out a comprehensive investigation of the effect that the

system has on sustainable development. In order to provide a more precise explanation, this is a reference to the frameworks' duty for generating the operational processes that are used by the system. The research conducted by Razzaq and colleagues in [2017](#) revealed that there is a need to construct legal frameworks that prominently represent the Sustainable Development Goals. In the event that a situation similar to this one were to arise, the legal system would unquestionably safeguard the goals of social inclusion, human rights, and individual equality.

In accordance with the findings of Fayomi et al. ([2018](#)), community engagement in the criminal justice system is a strategic tool that may be used to accomplish a wide range of goals. It is important to note that the aforementioned goals include not only the spread of the Sustainable Development Goals but also the development of social cohesion and trust. This latter group is committed to the establishment of institutions, relationships, and justice that are peaceful. Increasing trust, fostering social cohesion, and contributing to the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals are some of the other goals that have been highlighted.

In order to ascertain whether or not the criminal justice system is in accordance with sustainable development, it is required to conduct an examination of the social justice repercussions that are associated with the actions that have been listed. The findings of the study conducted by Bergling and Jin ([2015](#)) highlight the need to use an intersectional framework when conducting an analysis of the consequences that decisions made by the criminal justice system have on marginalised groups. In order to effectively address problems of social justice, inequality, and poverty, it is of the utmost importance that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) be implemented in the appropriate manner.

It will be much simpler to accomplish the objectives of sustainable development if technological advancements are made that enhance the effectiveness and openness of the criminal justice system. One of the numerous available choices is this one. Patel et al. ([2018](#)) state that the primary objective of their research was to investigate the potential consequences that might arise from incorporating

technology into the operation of the criminal justice system. The researchers concentrated their attention largely on the potential of technology to facilitate the implementation of accountability measures, minimise instances of corruption, and help in the pursuit of justice. This conclusion was employed throughout the course of the study in order to make progress towards the primary objective.

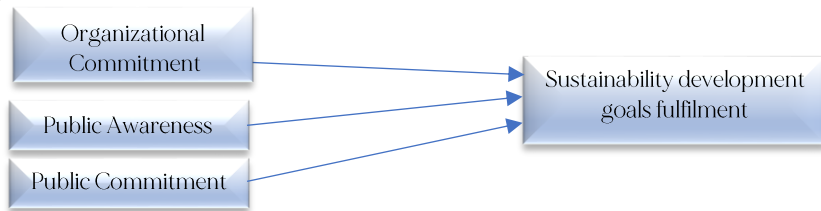
The criminal justice system operates in line with the Sustainable Development aims (SDGs), which have as key aims the mitigation of the harmful impacts of climate change and the preservation of the environment (Walker et al., [2019](#)). Based on the aforementioned facts, one may draw this judgment from the information presented.

Even if a significant amount of study has been carried out on the possibility of alignment, there are still certain concerns that have not been answered and need attention. In the post that he wrote in 2017, Browne makes the argument that in order to properly align with the goals of sustainable development, it is necessary to overcome certain obstacles. 2017 was the year when Browne's article was made available to the public. It is possible to identify a variety of problems, some of which include instances of bribery, restrictions on the resources that are accessible, and legislative frameworks that are out of date. Some of the difficulties that could be faced are listed here for your convenience. In order to successfully handle these difficulties, it is vital to acquire a comprehensive awareness of the systemic aspects that are involved. In addition to this, the implementation of individualised strategies is of great significance.

It has been brought to light by Xiao et al. ([2017](#)) that there is a need for the implementation of substantial modifications, which must be executed promptly. These adaptations are necessary in order to properly manage the issues that are being encountered by institutions and to produce justice results that are in conformity with the objectives that the public has set for sustainable development. It is of the utmost importance to bring together all of the components of the legal system in order to take the necessary steps to guarantee that these big changes will have the intended effect.

Figure 2

SDGs Dependencies



Research Methodology

Research Design

In order to conduct a complete examination of the degree to which Pakistan's sustainable development goals and the administration of the criminal justice system are aligned, this study makes use of an investigation method termed mixed methods research. When qualitative and quantitative research methodologies are used, it is possible to conduct an in-depth investigation of the intricate dynamics that are inherent in the criminal justice system. This is a practical endeavour.

Sampling and Participants

The research will make use of a purposive sample strategy in order to guarantee that there will be enough representation of important stakeholders within the organization that is responsible for criminal justice. Officials from law enforcement, representatives of the judicial system, members of the legal profession, legislators, and community leaders are the key actors participating in this context. In qualitative research, the notion of data saturation is used to guide the decision of sample size, but in quantitative research, the consideration of statistical power is included in the process.

Data Collection

a. Qualitative Data: In order to obtain comprehensive insights from key informants about their perspectives on the relationship between sustainable development

aims and criminal justice procedures, the research will make use of in-depth semi-structured interviews. A number of questions will be asked throughout the interview in order to investigate the individual's experiences, difficulties, and possible solutions to the problems that they have encountered.

b. Quantitative Data: For the purpose of acquiring quantitative data on the viewpoints and experiences of participants in regard to the alignment of criminal justice with sustainable development goals, questionnaires will be sent to a wider sample size. The survey instrument will include questions that are based on a Likert scale, inquiries that are directed at certain demographics, and structured items that are in keeping with the objectives of the study.

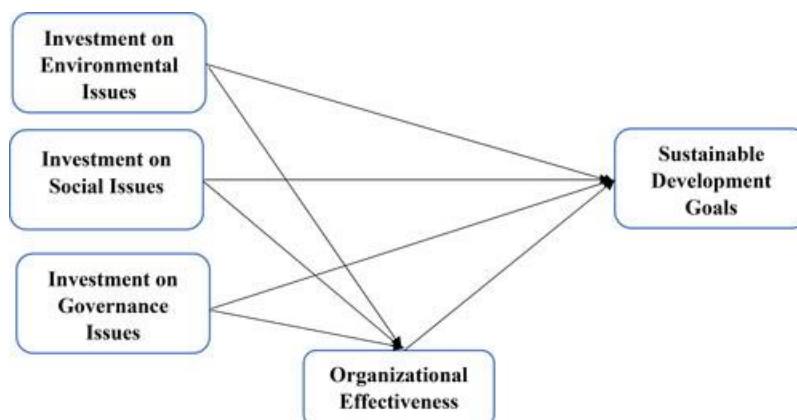
c. Document Analysis: Legal documents, policy papers, and official publications relevant to the administration of the criminal justice system and sustainable development in Pakistan will be thoroughly researched in order to provide contextual knowledge and triangulate findings from interviews and surveys. This will be done in order to present a comprehensive picture of the situation.

Data Analysis

Research employs the method of thematic analysis in order to identify recurrent themes, patterns, and variations that are present within the qualitative investigation. A methodical analysis of developing issues will be feasible thanks to the NVivo application, which will be of aid in organizing and coding the data.

Figure 3

Aligning Criminal Justice Management with SDGs



Findings & Discussion

Table 1

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	40.948 ^a	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	40.380	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.380	1	.032
N of Valid Cases	350		

The statistical breakdown of the table includes the following numbers as part of its contents: According to the Pearson Chi-Square statistic, the value of 40.948 was discovered when there were 12 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.000. It may be concluded that there are twelve degrees of freedom, given that the p-value is 0.000 and the likelihood ratio is 40.380. By using a p-value of .032, the linear-by-linear association was able to produce a value of 4.380. This was accomplished with one degree of freedom. Furthermore, remark "a" indicates that there are five cells, which is twenty-five percent of the total, that have expected counts that are lower than five, with the lowest possible projected count being 83. This is the lowest possible count that could be predicted. On the basis of the information that has been presented here, it would seem that the contingency table may have some cells that have lower projected frequencies. There is a possibility that this will have an impact on the dependability of the results obtained from the Chi-Square test.

Perceptions of Stakeholders

The results of the qualitative investigation suggest that stakeholders in the criminal justice system hold diverse viewpoints regarding the degree to which the system is in line with sustainable development objectives. This statement highlights the importance of community involvement in the pursuit of justice and social fairness,

as demonstrated by the commitment of law enforcement authorities. On the other hand, legal academics have emphasized the challenges linked to outdated legal frameworks, making it impractical for the parties involved to achieve efficient coordination among themselves.

Community Involvement and Social Equity

The findings of a quantitative study indicate that there is a positive link between the participation of the community in the operations of the criminal justice system and views of social fairness. This association was shown to be favourable. A higher degree of faith in the system's ability to contribute to the fulfilment of sustainable development goals related to the building of strong institutions, peace, and justice is one of the characteristics of those respondents who have a better view of the amount of community engagement there is.

Institutional Challenges and Opportunities

The findings of the documentary study indicate that there are institutional issues, such as limitations on resources and bureaucratic roadblocks, that are preventing the alignment of the procedures of the criminal justice system with the objectives of sustainable development. However, opportunities for

reform have been acknowledged, and a focus has been made on the requirement of constitutional modifications, initiatives to increase capacity, and the utilization of technological improvements in order to enhance both efficiency and transparency.

Intersectionality in Legal Enforcement

According to the findings of the intersectional research on law enforcement strategies, there are differences in the ways in which different demographic groups interact with the criminal justice system. Concerns have been expressed over the system's alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are based on decreasing inequities. This is due to the fact that the findings imply that disadvantaged communities may be subjected to disproportionately negative results.

Technological Innovations and Access to Justice

Using quantitative evidence, one may make an accurate evaluation of the part that technology plays in facilitating access to justice. Respondents who have

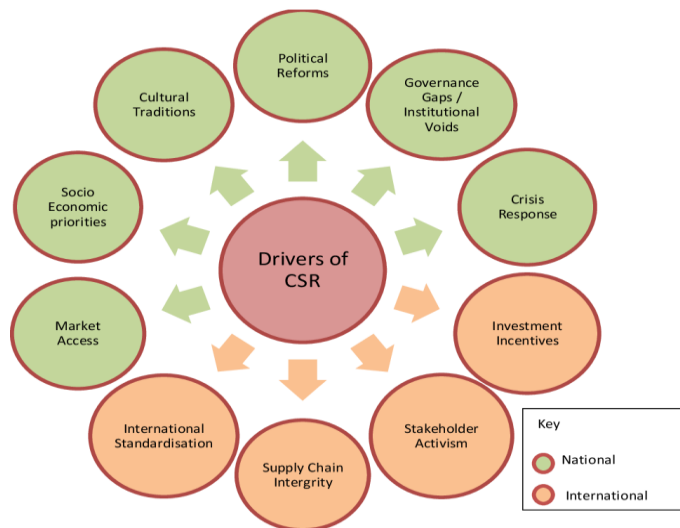
faith in the efficacy of technological advancements have a higher level of trust in the compatibility of the criminal justice system with the goals of sustainable development, particularly those that are associated with the utilization of technology for the betterment of society. This is because these respondents believe that technological advancements are improving society.

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

The investigation of environmental sustainability concerns within legal frameworks reveals a deficiency in addressing issues associated with environmental justice. This is the case despite the fact that environmental justice is not the primary focus of the research. In order to align with the sustainable development objectives that address climate action and environmental sustainability, the findings of this study show that there is a demand for the inclusion of ecological ideas into the practices of the criminal justice system. This is necessary in order to meet the requirements of the goals.

Figure 4

Corporate Social Responsibility



Conclusion

An exhaustive investigation into the relationship between the implementation of the criminal justice system and the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Pakistan has uncovered a number of intricate phenomena that have an impact on the efficiency of the

criminal justice system in terms of its capacity to enhance the general welfare of society.

This analysis is being carried out as the study draws to a close. On the other hand, the aforementioned findings, as stated by Ali (2017), offer insights into both good traits and challenges that require attention from

policymakers, practitioners, and academics. They make a representation of a complex ecological system that has elements that are both beneficial and detrimental to the ecosystem.

Principal Outcomes: A Brief Recap

There is a wide range of viewpoints on the degree to which certain sustainable development goals are matched with the system, as demonstrated by the qualitative insights that were obtained from stakeholders within the criminal justice system. Despite the fact that there is a shared commitment to justice and community engagement, there are significant hurdles that must be overcome.

The problems are related to the difficulties that are linked to outmoded legal systems and the constraints that are imposed by institutions. The findings of the quantitative survey contain information that can be used to obtain an understanding of the beneficial connection that exists between community participation and perceptions of social justice. Additionally, these findings shed light on the possibilities of introducing inclusive strategies into the process of building alignment, which was not something that was previously known about.

Repercussions for Current Practice and National Policy

The findings of the study have major implications, both in terms of theory and practice, for all individuals working in the field of criminal justice, including policymakers and practitioners. These implications are relevant since the study was conducted. There is the possibility for the criminal justice system to improve its openness, responsibility, and inclusiveness by implementing tactics such as giving priority to programmes that incorporate community involvement and dedicating resources towards the incorporation of technological aspects. This can be accomplished by putting into action a number of different tactics.

The results of this study lay the groundwork for additional research to be conducted on the long-term effects of legal reforms, the efficiency of activities that involve community engagement, and the incorporation of environmental justice principles into the functioning of the criminal justice system.

Further Research Directions

The results of this study provide the foundation for more research endeavours that will be undertaken in the far future. If we conduct comparative research across a variety of different fields of study, we might be able to acquire a better understanding of the contextual distinctions that come up when striving to strike a balance between the objectives of sustainable development and those of criminal justice.

Essentially, the study highlights the relevance of putting into action a comprehensive plan that would serve to link the administration of the criminal justice system in Pakistan with the aims of sustainable development in the country. This plan would serve to link the administration of the system with the goals of sustainable development. By drawing attention to the interplay that exists between justice, community involvement, and technical advancement, the authors present a persuasive argument in favour of the implementation of important improvements. Having said that, it is crucial to point out that the findings acknowledge the issues that have been encountered earlier. When looking at this research from the point of view of Pakistan's efforts to attain sustainable development, it is a vital undertaking that the country needs to carry out. In addition to this, it provides vital perspectives that can be exploited in order to arrive at decisions that are well-informed and to establish policies that are inclusive.

When it comes to the accomplishment of the objectives that are outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the convergence of sustainable development and criminal justice is not merely a hypothetical ideal; rather, it is a duty that calls for simultaneous attention in order to accomplish the objectives. The primary objective of this alignment is to enhance the general well-being of the population and to make headway towards the objectives that are outlined in Agenda 2030 of the United Nations. The findings of this study provide a framework that can be used to develop activities that are informed and in line with the ever-changing requirements of Pakistani society. These actions can be formulated using the framework. On top of this, they are very active participants in the continuing conversation that is taking place around problems of justice, equity, and sustainability.

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