

## **Analysis of Medico Legal aspects of Forensic Autopsy: Scenario and Challenges in Sindh, Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

Medico legal autopsy is one of the significant areas in criminal justice. This article highlights the practices of Medico legal autopsy and presents the challenges in province of Sind, Pakistan. The potential audience of this paper are the medico-legal practitioners. Qualitative methods were used to conduct this study. The study used both primary and secondary data for this research. However, a significant part of the study is based on secondary sources. The results suggest that the forensic labs in Sindh province lack equipment and funds to sufficiently analyze medico-legal autopsies. The study recommends more funding and equipment along with improvement in human resources.

**Keywords:** Medico-legal, Autopsy, Forensic, Post-mortem, Exhumation, Preservation, External Examination, Complete Autopsy, Poisoning Cases, Pakistan

### **Introduction**

The term Forensic Medicine or Medico legal Jurisprudence (MLO) is being used synonymously with various other terms namely, Forensic Medicine, Forensic Pathology and State Medicine. It deals with the application of medical knowledge in administration of justice by correlating such knowledge and applying it in different cases. Medical Jurisprudence (Juris=law Prudentia=knowledge) is a branch of law dealing with the organization and regulation of the medical profession, with the legal aspects of medicine such as the legal rights, privileges, duties and obligations of a medical practitioner and person in government services.

The forensic examination is conducted by Medico Legal Officer authorised for this purpose. It is conducted in many cases such as murder/homicide, injury, accident, suicide, rape, and other crimes, where it is required by the law. Forensic medicine is synonymous term with medical jurisprudence and denotes the use for application of principles and knowledge of medicine in the field of law. Few examples are given below:

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- a. If a person dies suddenly or without any apparent reason then his/her death may be considered suspicious and his body may be sent for autopsy to MLO (Medico Legal Officer) to determine cause of death such as violence or poisoning.
- b. If any person dies due to heart attack suddenly falls down on road and any vehicle runs over the person. In that case the driver may be charged with accident by negligent driving. Biochemical study of the injuries would establish that the injuries are sustained post-mortem, and medico-legal examination will reveal the presence of disease. Then results will be different.
- c. If any case of rape is reported by lady against any man. Medical examination will reveal that she is sexually assaulted by an accused or false accusation is being made by the women.

### **Research Methodology**

In this study qualitative method is adopted and relied on primary and secondary data collection. This study is conducted mainly for legal purpose. For this study, a thorough review of the published books and research articles along with case laws was carried out. The aim of the researcher was to find out description and lacunae in medicolegal practices. Primary data was collected through interviews with medicolegal officers (MLOs) and Police Hospital Surgeon.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **1.2 Documentation of Medico Legal Evidence**

- a. Medical certificates: it is issued for sickness, birth, death, age etc.
- b. Medico legal report: It is issued for Post-Mortem report or injury
- c. Dying declaration about cause of death of deceased

#### **Inquest Report**

(In=in Quest=to seek or to put in question)

In forensic it refers to judicial or police inquiry or investigation about cause of death which cases death is prima facie not natural.

Types of Inquests report:

- a. The Police inquest
- b. The Magistrate's inquest
- c. The coroner inquest
- d. The Medical examiner's inquest in USA

**a) The Police Inquest**

It only could be conducted by an Officer at least having an ASI Rank police officer not less than Assistant Sub Inspector. For the purpose to ascertain the cause of death and presence of injuries or any marks on the body. It is also called panchnama. It refers to the report about the cause of death as apparently judged by investigation officers and panch witnesses from appearance and surrounding circumstances and injuries on the body. Panch Witnesses or Panchayat Dars: Respectable witnesses from the locality, who help the investigation officer in making preliminary investigation to prepare punch-nama. The Punchnama will be written by the investigating officer and must be signed by two witnesses (panchas) and forwarded to the Magistrate. In homicidal cases Dead body after inquest report will be sent for autopsy to a Medico legal officer for post-mortem. In injury cases a person will go to a medico legal officer for medical examination. In both cases, the PM report and medical certificate will be sent to the investigation officer.

**b) The Magistrate's Inquest**

It is conducted by 1<sup>st</sup> class Magistrate, in exhumation cases and extra judicial killing cases specially. It is commonly held in following cases:

- i) Convicts' death in jail.
- ii) Death of a convict in mental Hospital.
- iii) Death of accused in police custody.
- iv) Death of a person under police investigation.
- v) Death by police firing.

**c) The Inquest Report of Coroner**

The coroner's office is the earliest office (about the year 1925) of the English common law, so-called. Because he was the keeper of the pleas of crown (corona curia Regis or custodies plectrum coronae). Coroner inquest is a type of inquest which is conducted by a coroner who is either a medical professional with legal qualification or a graduate in law.

Coroner is:

- (i) Appointed by the government.
- (ii) Usually an advocate, attorney, pleader, first class Magistrate with five years 'experience.
- (iii) Rank is of first-class judicial magistrate.

### **Importance of Autopsy Reporting in Criminal Cases**

Nowadays in the present situation and increasing crime rate science and technology plays a significant role in identifying suspects and cause of death. Medico legal jurisprudence has got great importance in all types of cases (civil and criminal cases). By getting help from medical forensic and conducting victim's post-mortem is necessary, easily cause of death could be determined and identification of the unknown victim by conducting DNA can be established. In this way Forensics plays the main role in safeguarding the life of each and every individual of the society (Mirza, Hassan, Naz, & Khan,2013). It also condemned the accused for his unjust acts. Meaning of An Autopsy (Post-mortem Examination) Autopsy is Greek word it means "seeing with own eyes" (Parekh, 1979).Interchangeably word post-mortem used for it and it is Latin word and it means Post=after, Mortem=death.

Post-mortem means, to examine a dead body by an MLO expert to determine cause of death. It is an extraordinary type of medico legal examination of a dead body according to laws to protect the citizens from any violent crimes and establish identification.

### **Objectives of Medico-Legal Autopsy**

- a. For making conclusion about cause or reason of death
- b. For deciding the mode, manner as well as cause of death either natural or unnatural
- c. To make evaluation about the time since death
- d. If the deceased is an unknown person to establish its identity.
- e. To record the wounds and to identify how the injuries caused
- f. For identifying the objects which cause the death and by collecting human body serum for DNA testing and recognise the real culprit.
- g. For preserving important sample of body organs, tissues and viscera for chemical testing
- h. For identifying and observing the possibility of live birth of new born babies or proving infanticide.

### **Rules of Medico-Legal Autopsy:**

- a. Autopsy should only be conducted on receiving a letter authorising post-mortem issued by police, magistrate or coroner.
- b. Body of the deceased should be recognised/identified by relatives/friends & police officials and the names of identifying persons should be kept in record. In case of unknown bodies and unidentified found corpse

identification marks, fingerprints, cloths, photographs, DNA testing results & collect all materials connected to identification.

- c. Autopsy must be performed only in mortuary and not at places like private hospitals anywhere else.
- d. Autopsy should be conducted 24/7 during all days of week whenever required even during vacations as there must be no interruption in the crime investigation even during public holidays and festivals.
- e. Any inquest-report regarding death inquest/lash chakas form, sheet of case prepared by police is brought or summary; doctor should read prudently and carefully register of accident.
- f. Post-mortem/Autopsy should be conducted just after receiving body and important requisition.
- g. Autopsy must be performed during day time in presence of sun light as artificial light identification of minor changes of colour is problematic to appreciate.
- h. In case if the body is received night-time or in evening then tentatively primary analysis should be done about external appearances, temperature of body, external injuries, extent of cadaveric spasm/rigor-mortis and post - mortem lividity. Detailed autopsy may be performed the following day in early time.
- i. No one should be allowed at the time of autopsy except authorised persons. Investigation Officers may be allowed to remain at the time of autopsy.
- j. In all cases post-mortem examination should be detailed and complete, and even minor details could be helpful and contributory in the cause of death so whole body cavities should every time be opened as matter about cause of death could be present in any organ.
- k. If a body found is damaged, disfigured or disintegrated post-mortem must be conducted, as definite proof or something evidentiary valuable may still be revealed.
- l. From the dead body nothing should be removed and no alteration could be made. In case of any change, it should be written in report and recorded.
- m. On completion of post-mortem the dead body firstly made normal after all formalities must be handed over to police officials or to relatives as the case may be.
- n. Autopsy or Post-mortem report must be issued to the Investigation officer and should not be handed over to a private party in any case.
- o. If MLO observe any discrepancies in noting injuries by IO in the inquest report and same injuries found on the body then it is the duty of the doctor

to show such injuries to IO and necessary correction should be made in the inquest report on the spot.

### **Following Cases Always Require an Autopsy**

Autopsy is not required in all cases but in some cases it's important to be performed (Autopsy..., 2001). The list of such cases as provided by law are as under:

- a. Deaths during fire burning area, when the body is in adjustment by fire or the carbon monoxide concentration is less than 20%.
- b. Homicidal and manslaughters or any cases in which someone else is in at any rate a potential factor in the death.
- c. Evident suicides that are without any clear intention or cause or away from of plan, for example, those without a note.
- d. Drivers in single vehicle accidents or benders.
- e. Pilots engaged with aeroplane crashes.
- f. Profession connected deaths.
- g. Un-witnessed "mishaps."
- h. Casualties in which common ailment can't be precluded as a factor.
- i. Situations where common prosecution may develop or civil litigation is under proceeding.
- j. Custodial killings or deaths in jail or police custody.
- k. Unexpected, shocking deaths of youngsters, particularly on the off chance that they are under two years old.

### **Establishing the Identity of a Dead Person in Criminal Cases**

Post-mortem report is most important in death caused by the injury cases and homicidal cases. Autopsy plays a countable and valuable part in establishing the burden of the accused during trial. Establishing the identity of victim means the determining the individuality of the dead body. Necessary requirement of identification is cases of insurance cases; murder cases disputed sex or body, etc. By conducting post-mortem, the body of dead person easily could be identified. In all criminal murder and injury cases Medico legal officer is considered an important witness to be examined before court of law. Each and every MLO is subjected to cross-examined by defence council; it means that his opinion is very valuable in cases.

### **Identification of accused**

Post-mortem procedure could be very helpful in identification of accused as we can trace fingerprints from clothes, other articles of deceased and body of deceased. If a bullet or pallet is recovered from the body then it will be helpful in

identifying the weapon of offence and such weapon recovered from any person then forensic laboratory easily can determine whether weapon used in offence or not. Post-mortem report tells us about the nature of the injury whereas the Arms expert discloses that what kind of weapon can cause what kind of injuries and the nature of injuries caused by the particular class of weapons.

#### **Evidentiary value of post-mortem report**

Post-mortem report is relevant under Article 46 of Qanun-e-Shahadat Order, 1983. Post-mortem is also relevant under Article 49 and 59 of the Qanun-e-Shahadat Order, 1984.

#### **Infanticide**

It means killing or unlawful abortion or destruction of unborn (during pregnancy) or newly born baby, according to law it is murder. It is punishable u/s 302 of the Pakistan Penal Code by death or imprisonment for life and compensation. Through the help of examination of body (post-mortem) we can come to the conclusion that infanticide was committed or not. That examination will reveal the real cause of death (Sullivan J, 2011).

#### **Determination of time of death**

In murder cases the question about time of death is countable and most important. The particular time of death is very important and can be used as circumstantial evidence and it is very essential in each murder trial. Post-mortem report importantly helps in determining the particular time of death and with the help of these circumstantial evidence the investigating officer can easily reach the main accused.

#### **Determination of age**

The post-mortem of body also helps in investigation to exactly determine the age of the deceased. The examination of dead body helps to explore the exact age of dead body which helps out to identify the deceased if unidentifiable body is recovered and its age cannot be easily explored or he hasn't any relevant document within his cloths or other relevant articles to the body. That is particularly important in the criminal cases but sometimes it also helps in civil litigations when question of age arises about any such type of deceased person. There are some other ways through which age can be determined especially by the help of post-mortem examination.

#### **Determination of sex**

If any unknown dead body found badly damaged then question of sex arises and it only could be determined by forensic examination of sample taken from dead body during post-mortem.

### **Cases of Apex Courts and Evidenciary Value given to Post-mortem Reports**

#### **Case law–PLD1965, Dacca 425**

It was held by the court in the above case that the post-mortem report itself is no evidence. It is corroborating piece of evidence and it is only relevant when Doctor (PLD1965,Dacca 425, 1965).

#### **Case law–PLJ1973 Lahore 257**

It was held by the Lahore High court in the above matter that if medical evidence is supporting a natural eye witness, then it is safe to rely upon natural evidence.

#### **Case Law–PLD1972, Peshawar 92**

It was held by Peshawar High court in the above case that the statement of expert stands on precisely the same footing about homicide post-mortem clearly telling court that death is due to strangulation (choking of air passages), suffocation, drowning then there is no need of any other evidence and examination of witnesses before the court. If a person has been killed by administration of poison, post-mortem examination would reveal the actual situation.

#### **Case law:- 1983 SCMR 1292, PLD1988 kar 521**

Conflict between medical evidence and ocular evidence held; medical evidence is to be preferred.

#### **Case Law–NLR 1994 SC 104**

In above case law it was held by supreme court that post-mortem report may confirm about ocular account in regard of nature of injury and its location, weapon used and the time duration between the injuries and the death as well as that the presence of witness were possible or not. However, it would not connect the accused person directly with the commission of offence.

#### **Case law–PLD 1965.Decca 425**

Held that the post-mortem report itself cannot be taken as a piece of evidence until and unless the doctor making it to be examined in the court.

#### **Case law– PLJ 1973 Lahore 257**

Held that the medical evidence having support with the natural and expert witnesses is safe and can be relied upon the testimony of those natural evidences.



**Case Law–PLD1972,Peshawar 92**

Held that the statement of an expert stands on precisely the same footings as that of any other witness and may not be accepted by Court.

**Case Laws and Discussion**

Post Mortem/Autopsy, If no post mortem, even then conviction. 2012 PCr.L.J 1959 and 452. Post mortem not mandatory. 1998 SCMR 1778. 2014 YLR 201 Lah (DB). FIR after PM, but FIR number mentioned on post mortem.

- 2007 MLD 34:post-mortem of deceased was conducted before recording the F.I.R.
- 2012 SCMR 172:PM no FIR number, not signed by Doctor, I.O suggested FIR Much after post mortem.
- 2011 SCMR 810. page 813:Dead body not identifiable, was at the stage of purification as skin and hairs were peeling off. Doubt.
- Oval shape injury, up to downwards. PLJ 2013 Cr.C Lah 428 DB
  
- 2010 Y L R 2035 [Lahore] (DB):Delay in lodging the F.I.R. and in conducting the post mortem examination of the deceased had indicated fabrication on the part of the prosecution and doubt about the prosecution story. Another aspect in this case indicates that even the FardBiyān was not recorded at the given time because the post mortem examination was conducted on the said date at 12-30 p.m. If FardBiyān was recorded at 8-00 a.m. then the post mortem examination must have been conducted immediately thereafter. It was argued by the prosecution that delay occurred due to the non-availability of the doctor but according to the doctor: "There was no delay on my part in conducting the post mortem examination and as soon as the police papers and the dead body was received, I started the post mortem examination on the person of the deceased." This fact indicates that the police papers i.e. Inquest report, the application for post mortem examination were presented to the doctor at about 12-30 p.m. and prior to that said papers were not available to the doctor. This fact further confirms that even F.I.R. was not recorded at the given time and the same was recorded with further delay.
  
- 2013 P Cr. L J 864 [Peshawar] (DB) ----S. 302(b)---Qatl-e-amd---Cause of death, determination of---non-conducting of post-mortem report---

Effect--When cause of death was apparent, then non-conducting of post-mortem examination was not fatal to the prosecution case.

- Delay: Is not fatal 2013 AC 92. 1995 SCMR 658, NLR 1995 Crm 324.
- 11 hours suggestive that eye witnesses were not present and FIR was not lodged at the time mentioned. 2011 SCMR 1190/1473/1026, 2015 YLR 1404, 2012 SCMR 419, 2012 SCMR 327/421. 2014 YLR 1 Lah (DB), 2015 YLR 1404 (DB) NEW
- 18-1/2 hours, doctor stated facility of post mortem in night not available and as per constable statement body was reached to hospital on 5:30 pm and sun sets on 7:00 pm. delay unexplained. 2014 YLR 514 Lah (DB)
- Dead body sent to hospital 9:00 am received by doctor 3:00 pm (when start post mortem).
- Delayed PM, inference that FIR was lodged after preliminary investigation. 2009 PCr.L.J 533:Delay in post mortem. time consumed by police in procuring and planting eye witnesses.
- 2011 SCMR 1190. PLJ 2013 Cr.C 879.Delayed post-mortem of the dead body of the deceased had indicated that the FIR is recorded after preliminary investigating. Acquit. 2009 PCr.L.J 533.
- Duration observed by the doctor between death and post mortem is 22 to 24 hours. Delay in conducting post mortem is sufficient to draw an inference that FIR is not recorded with promptitude. 2010 YLR 1303.

#### **Evidenciar Value of Prompt or Delay in Autopsy**

- Post mortem conducted on same night within 6 hours of death ( 2011 SCMR 683)
- Delay in postmortem not lead to inference that FIR is registered at a belated stage(2011 PCr.L.J 1261 Lah) .
- Doctor conducting the Post mortem, during cross doctor state, dead body was brought by police creates doubt on the story that complainant being at the spot and not taking his brother to hospital. Acquitted (2010 YLR 2400. Peshawar).
- Mouth open, 2015 YLR 1404. LAHORE: Opened eyes and mouth of deceased showed that deceased was not attended by any near and dear one for considerable period of time. DEATH SENTENCE WAS SETASIDE AND ACCUSED ACQUITTED.302 Injured was not well treated by doctors (2014 PCr.L.J 125).

### Islam and Autopsy

While analysing autopsy from religious aspect, we see that in many religions the autopsy is acceptable and it also retains support from many cultures worldwide, where religions hasn't strong roots in the society nonetheless in Islam, researcher cannot find any concrete answer in its support. Chaim (Rispler-Chaim, 1993) and Burton & Collins (Burton & Gurevitz, 2012) report according to the Islamic belief, the dead body of deceased person always belongs to the GOD and it must be returned to the GOD in its best condition and shape. While relying on that concept we can only reach the conclusion that Islamic culture does not encourages the post-mortem examination because of nonflexible customs and rituals regarding the funeral of dead person's body like burial of corps within specified time and strict rules regarding its preservation etc.

The *Shariat* only supports the maintenance of body till its burial in its genuine form without damaging or impairing it through autopsy or any other form of examination (Rispler-Chaim, 1993). According to the scholar Abd Al-Fattah the human body loses its dignity when it changes its original form and act of doing that is counted as a sin. The Islam takes strong argument on this point that the departed soul will perceives pain. Sheikh (Sheikh, 1998) had quoted the sayings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ that the "breaking of the bones of dead person is same as we had broken the bone of a living person" (Rispler-Chaim, 1993). The morality about the post-mortem examination is changed by Ijma in modern-day Islam. Sheikh (Sheikh, 1998) reports in Islam when Muslims does not find any concrete answer, they generally rely upon the Fatwa made by the renowned scholars or *Ulemas* who retain the special qualification in Fiqh, as a productive source for the solution of legal issues. He (Sheikh, 1998) further adds on that the subject was brought on the face of discussion autonomously in form of fatwas mostly after 20th century. Mohammed and Kharoshah (2014) said that the head of Islamic school of Jurisprudence situated in Egypt allowed autopsies in cases of suspicious death believing on principle of Maslaha "necessity permits the forbidden" and moral duty of taking care of dignity of deceased body could be ignored for public benefit and to provide justice and for advancement of medical sciences and training of medical to new generation. In addition, Davis and Peterson (1996) disclosed that "in 1982, Egyptian Legal committee also considered autopsies very important and useful if it could be well justified and benefits are more than harm".

In Muslim world presently exercised in majority of states including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Tunisia, Qatar and also in Pakistan (Mohammed and Kharoshah, 2014). In many of the Arab countries where Islam is the prevailing religion, it is practiced in concurrence with the international scientific benchmarks. Still, Muslims believed autopsy an unfavourable subject among the general population.

This attitude is maybe due to social concerns which are beached on religious doctrines and principles. Generally, Department of Forensic Medicine practices the procedure of autopsy and is regulated under the Ministry of Health (Mohammed and Kharoshah, 2014). The authors Davis & Pterson (1996) and ElHaka & El Ghazali (2009) mention that, “the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is completely governed on the basis of Islamic law derived from the teachings of Holy Quran and Hadith. Post Mortem Examinations are performed only if needed, and it can be even carried out without the consent of the family in doubtful cases”. In Egypt, autopsies are practiced under clinical forensic medicine and the facts related to its practice are published in international journals (Mghirbi T, 2004) which is significant evidence of these examinations being followed in Muslim world (Kharoshah, Zaki, Galeb, Moulana, & Elsebaay, 2011). In Tunisia and Qatar, it is practiced however; there are no statistics reporting the number and types of autopsies performed. On other hands in Pakistan in cases of violent and suspicious deaths the situation is handled by Police with the help of Medico-legal system. Hadi (2003) mentions that, presently in most of criminal death cases by law medico-legal examination and autopsy is made mandatory obligation to investigate the authentic cause of death. Post-Mortems are performed daily as a routine in various hospitals of Pakistan at district and Provincial levels.

### **Challenges in Sindh**

Autopsy has very much importance in criminal justice system even then there very much gap between city and remote areas. It was reported in Dawn news that in Sindh there are 4 division i.e. Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkar and Larkana. The medicolegal formalities in other than Hyderabad and Karachi, hospitals do with the help of their medical officers and issue the required certificates. The presence of medicolegal facilities is mandatory for a teaching hospital, for example as in the case of Jinnah postgraduate medical centre, Civil Hospital Karachi and the Liaquat University Hospital in Hyderabad, on other hand there are no sanctioned post for medicolegal officers in Sukkar despite the fact that Ghulam Mohammad Mahar College has been functioning for last 15 years. At the Sukkar civil Hospital, it is informed that under the charge of additional police surgeon (MLO) only two senior medical officers are working. In case of Karachi and Hyderabad they are urban divisions, only sixteen posts vacant and total available posts are 29 in Hyderabad and about 20 from total of 71 posts in Karachi’s medico-legal section are vacant.

### **Inadequate Workload**

In Karachi three medicolegal centres in major Government hospitals are working round the clock out of nine medicolegal sanctioned by Sindh Government. Except for the medico-legal centres at the Abbasi Shaheed, the Civil and the Jinnah hospitals, all other medicolegal centres have shortage of facilities either of staff or to deal with cases.

It is very interesting to mention here that the budget of medicolegal department of Hyderabad is high than of Karachi despite of post of medicolegal department are less in number than Karachi by 30%. It is disclosed by the D. Aslam Pechuho (Karachi Civil Surgeon) that total annual budget for Medico-Legal Dept is between Rs450,000 and Rs500,000,”. He further disclosed that he use to purchase office stationary from his pocket due to shortage of funds. But the budget for Hyderabad is about 70 per cent higher than that of Karachi’s” (Kalhor & Qureshi, 2013).

It was also reported by Dawn news that, total number of cases remain 31,046 in 2021 of medico-legal in all centers across Karachi in 2021. The cases dealt by Civil, Jinnah and Abbasi Shaheed Hospital remains higher while other centers dealt with only little bit of them. Out of the total cases, 12,704 were reported from the Jinnah hospital, 10,235 from the Abbasi Shaheed and 6,797 from the Civil hospital (Kalhor & Qureshi, 2013).

The number of women MLO officers in these three Hospitals is 9 while the women cases were more than 10,000 means more than one-third of total cases.

### **Situation in upper Sindh**

The Chandka Medical College and Hospital (CMCH) in Larkana is a 1,350-bed institution working to fulfil requirements of people from Larkana and Sukkur divisions, as well as parts of Punjab and Balochistan. Besides the shortage of medico-legal officers, it is further disclosed by Police Sugeon Saifullah Abbasi that mortuary has not space more than one body in cold storage room which is much lesser then required at CMCH mortuary. It is also revealed that post of additional surgeon is also laying vacant. It is disclosed by district health officer (Larkana) that a big number of medical officers along with 14 female doctors are deputed to work in health centers but practically many of them are only withdraw their salaries in Dokri, Ratodero and Naudero. It is also revealed during research that hospitals also lacked proper equipment use to perform autopsy even they don’t have jars to store samples of viscera (Kalhor & Qureshi, 2013).

### **Conclusion**

It is observed by researcher that there is a huge gap of forensic medico legal facilities between Karachi and other cities of Sindh and also between city

and village. Even if there is any facility of medical certification is provided then shortage of equipment is a big hurdle in providing proper reporting for Justice. Delayed autopsy could not give such results which could be obtained by prompt and early autopsy and reporting. Delayed exhumation because of extensive lawful techniques associated with completing this procedure prompting deterioration of bodies, bringing about unascertainable reason for death. Early decay of bodies because of various reasons like hot atmosphere, water logging and saltiness, inappropriate seepage of cemeteries and so forth is a bar to discover reason for death (PLJ 2006 Lahore 243).

It is observed by researcher that all autopsy centres are not properly equipped and there is a very miserable condition at autopsy centres even in rape cases medico-legal examination is done very carelessly and delayed by several hours due to non-presence of lady MLO and all evidence destroyed which results in injustice. These circumstances are responsible for lacunas in criminal justice system in Pakistan.

#### **Policy Recommendations**

1. Legislation to improve response of MLO in any situation is required.
2. In case of false certification punishment should be provided.
3. Post-mortem rooms should be updated.
4. Number of lady MLO should be increased due to increase in crime rate.
5. Medico legal officers are facing shortage of basic forensic equipment's so that chemical analysis may be carried out at centres
6. Ensure adequate transportation and storage facility according to requirement of times.
7. All centres should be made functional and modern.
8. Rape-kits should be provided for proper examination.
9. Budget of medico-legal sector should be separated from hospitals.
10. Comprehensive and standardised training and job description should be provided to all categories of MLOs
11. Institute specialised protocols for care of survivors of sexual violence victims.
12. Mechanisms for monitoring and proper evaluation of medico-legal sector personnel should be provided to ensure that protocols are being disseminated and followed properly.

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