



# Role of Forensic Science in the Administration of Justice: It is issues and challenges in India

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## Abstract:

*Forensic science is an indispensable component of the modern criminal justice system, serving as a powerful tool for uncovering the truth, establishing guilt or innocence, and ensuring justice is served. This abstract explores the multifaceted role of forensic science in the administration of justice, highlighting its significance in solving crimes, its impact on legal proceedings, and the challenges it faces. Forensic science encompasses various specialized disciplines, including DNA analysis, fingerprint examination, ballistics, toxicology, and digital forensics, each providing a unique perspective on the evidence presented in criminal cases. The application of these disciplines' aids law enforcement agencies in the collection, preservation, and analysis of physical evidence, enabling them to link suspects to crimes, identify victims, and reconstruct the circumstances of an incident.*

*Moreover, forensic scientists serve as expert witnesses in court, conveying complex scientific findings in a comprehensible manner to judges and juries. Their testimony helps ensure that evidence is properly understood and evaluated within the legal framework, contributing to the fair and accurate resolution of cases. While forensic science plays a crucial role in the pursuit of justice, it is not without challenges. Resource limitations, backlogs of unprocessed evidence, issues of standardization, potential subjectivity, and ethical considerations present ongoing hurdles. Addressing these challenges is essential to maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of forensic science in the legal system.*

*In conclusion, the role of forensic science in the administration of justice cannot be overstated. Its scientific rigor, objectivity, and capacity to provide concrete evidence are essential for upholding the rule of law and safeguarding individual rights. As forensic science continues to evolve, it promises to enhance the accuracy and fairness of the justice system, ultimately ensuring that justice is served for all.*

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**Keywords:** *Crime, Science, Forensic, Administration, Justice, and Legal System*

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## 1. Introduction

Forensic science is a fascinating and essential field that blends scientific knowledge with criminal investigation to solve crimes and bring justice to society. This multidisciplinary science is at the intersection of various scientific disciplines and the criminal justice system. Forensic science, often referred to as forensics, is the application of scientific principles and techniques to investigate, analyze, and interpret physical evidence from crime scenes. Its primary purpose is to establish facts and uncover the truth about criminal activities. The roots of forensic science can be traced back to ancient civilizations, where early methods were used to solve crimes and disputes. However, modern forensic science began to develop in the late 19th century with the pioneering work of individuals like Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (creator of Sherlock Holmes) and Dr. Edmond Locard (known for Locard's Exchange Principle). Forensic science draws upon various scientific disciplines, including biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, anthropology, and psychology. Experts in these fields collaborate to analyze evidence and provide insights into criminal cases. Forensic science plays a critical role in the criminal justice system. It helps law enforcement agencies gather evidence, identify suspects, and build

stronger cases. It also serves as a safeguard against wrongful convictions by providing objective, scientific evidence.

Forensic scientists are often called to crime scenes to collect and document physical evidence. They use specialized techniques and tools to ensure the proper handling, preservation, and analysis of evidence like fingerprints, DNA, firearms, and more. Once collected, evidence is subjected to rigorous scientific analysis in specialized laboratories. Different forensic disciplines focus on specific types of evidence, such as DNA analysis in forensic biology or drug testing in forensic chemistry. Forensic scientists may be called upon as expert witnesses in court to explain their findings and provide expert opinions on the significance of the evidence. Their testimony helps judges and juries understand complex scientific concepts. Forensic science encompasses a wide range of specialized disciplines, including forensic biology, forensic chemistry, forensic toxicology, forensic anthropology, digital forensics, and more. Each discipline has its own unique methods and expertise.

## 2. Evolution of forensic science

The evolution of forensic science is a fascinating journey that spans centuries. The roots of forensic science can be traced back to ancient civilizations. In China, as early as the 6th century, fingerprints were used for identification on clay tablets. In ancient Rome, forensic principles were employed in investigating crimes. However, these early methods were rudimentary compared to modern forensic science. 16th-18th Century: During this period, there were notable developments in forensic science. In the 16th century, Ambroise Paré, a French surgeon, made advancements in forensic medicine. In the 18th century, Mathieu Orfila, known as the "Father of Toxicology," pioneered the study of poisons and their effects on the human body.

19th Century: The 19th century saw significant progress in forensic science, driven by pioneering individuals. François Vidocq, a French criminal investigator, used various forensic techniques, including ballistics and shoeprint analysis. Sir Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin, conducted pioneering research on fingerprints. Dr. Edmond Locard, a French forensic scientist, developed Locard's Exchange Principle, which states that "every contact leaves a trace." This principle became foundational in forensic science. 20th Century: The 20th century brought about dramatic advancements in forensic science. The use of fingerprints for identification became widespread. The Bertillon system, which used anthropometric measurements, was replaced by fingerprinting as the primary method of identification. DNA profiling, one of the most revolutionary developments, was first used in the 1980s, allowing for highly accurate identification.

Digital Age: The advent of computers and digital technology created a new frontier for forensic science. Digital forensics emerged as a specialized field, dealing with the recovery and analysis of digital data from computers and electronic devices. This became crucial in investigating cybercrimes and other digital offenses. Modern Techniques: Today, forensic science employs a wide range of advanced techniques and technologies. These include advanced DNA analysis methods (such as STR analysis), automated fingerprint identification systems (AFIS), forensic imaging, gunshot residue analysis, and more. Interdisciplinary Approach: Forensic science has become increasingly interdisciplinary. It draws on expertise from various scientific fields, including biology, chemistry, physics, anthropology, psychology, and computer science, to analyze evidence comprehensively. Quality Control and Standardization: To ensure the reliability and accuracy of forensic evidence, quality control measures and standardization have been introduced. Accreditation bodies and guidelines help maintain the integrity of forensic laboratories and practices.

Challenges and Controversies: Forensic science has faced challenges related to the reliability and validity of some techniques. Controversies, such as those surrounding hair analysis and bite mark analysis, have led to increased scrutiny and efforts to improve forensic practices.

Ongoing Research and Innovation: Forensic science continues to evolve with ongoing research and technological advancements. Research in areas like trace evidence analysis, facial recognition, and digital forensics is pushing the boundaries of what is possible in solving crimes. The evolution of forensic science reflects the relentless pursuit of more accurate and reliable methods for solving crimes and ensuring justice. It has come a long way from its early beginnings and continues to adapt to the challenges and opportunities presented by advances in science and technology.

### 3. What is forensic science

Forensic science is a multidisciplinary field that involves the application of scientific principles and techniques to investigate and solve crimes. It plays a crucial role in the criminal justice system by providing objective and scientific evidence that can be used in legal proceedings. Forensic scientists work to collect, preserve, analyze, and interpret physical evidence from crime scenes to establish facts and link suspects to crimes. (1) Crime Scene Investigation: Forensic scientists are often called to crime scenes to collect and document physical evidence, such as fingerprints, bloodstains, hair, fibers, and firearms-related evidence. They use various techniques to ensure the proper preservation and analysis of these materials. (2) Evidence Analysis: Once collected, evidence is subjected to various scientific analyses in specialized laboratories. Different forensic disciplines, such as forensic biology, forensic chemistry, forensic toxicology, and forensic anthropology, focus on specific types of evidence. DNA analysis, for example, is a crucial tool in forensic biology for identifying individuals. (3) Expert Testimony: Forensic scientists may be called upon to testify as expert witnesses in court. They explain their findings and offer expert opinions on the significance of the evidence, helping judges and juries understand complex scientific concepts. (4) Criminal Investigations: Forensic evidence can link suspects to crimes, exonerate innocent individuals, and help law enforcement agencies build stronger cases against criminals. It can also provide valuable insights into the circumstances of a crime. (5) Forensic biology: The study of biological evidence, such as DNA, blood, and bodily fluids. (6) Forensic chemistry: The analysis of chemical substances, such as drugs, explosives, and arson-related materials. (7) Forensic toxicology: The examination of substances in the body to determine the presence of drugs, alcohol, or toxins. (8) Forensic anthropology: The identification of human remains, including age, sex, and ancestry. (9) Forensic odontology: The use of dental records and bite mark analysis in identifying individuals. (10) Forensic entomology: The study of insects and their life cycles to estimate the time of death. (11) Forensic ballistics: The analysis of firearms, bullets, and gunshot residue. (12) Digital forensics: The recovery and analysis of digital evidence from computers and electronic devices. (13) Forensic science is continually evolving with advancements in technology and scientific methods, and it plays a crucial role in the pursuit of justice by helping to solve crimes and ensure the fair and accurate administration of the law.

### 4. Role of forensic science in administration of justice

Forensic science plays a crucial role in the administration of justice by providing scientific and technical support to the criminal justice system. Its primary objective is to uncover and analyze physical evidence to aid in the investigation, prosecution, and defense of criminal cases. Here are several key ways in which forensic science contributes to the administration of justice:

A. Crime Scene Investigation: Forensic experts are often the first on the scene of a crime to collect and preserve physical evidence. This evidence can include fingerprints, DNA samples, trace evidence, and more. Properly collected and preserved evidence is essential for building a strong case.

B. Identification of Suspects: Forensic science helps in identifying suspects through methods such as fingerprint analysis, facial recognition, and dental records comparison. DNA profiling is particularly powerful in establishing the identity of individuals involved in a crime.

C. Evidence Analysis: Forensic scientists analyze various types of evidence, such as blood, hair, fibers, ballistics, and drugs, to determine their significance and relevance to a case. They can establish links between the evidence and the suspect, victim, or crime scene.

D.Cause of Death Determination: In cases of suspicious deaths or homicides, forensic pathologists perform autopsies to determine the cause and manner of death. This information is crucial in criminal investigations and court proceedings.

E.Expert Testimony: Forensic experts often serve as expert witnesses in court. They provide testimony based on their specialized knowledge and analysis of evidence, helping judges and juries understand complex scientific concepts and evidence.

F.Exoneration of the Innocent: Forensic science can also play a role in exonerating individuals who have been wrongfully convicted. DNA evidence, in particular, has been instrumental in overturning wrongful convictions and securing the release of innocent individuals.

G.Quality Control: Forensic laboratories have quality control measures in place to ensure the accuracy and reliability of their analyses. This helps maintain the integrity of the criminal justice system.

H.Cold Case Resolution: Forensic science can be used to re-examine cold cases, sometimes leading to the identification and prosecution of previously unsolved crimes.

I.Crime Database Management: Forensic databases, such as the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), allow law enforcement agencies to share and compare DNA profiles, which can lead to the identification of suspects and the resolution of cases.

J.Criminal Profiling: Forensic psychologists and profilers use psychological and behavioral analysis to create profiles of unknown suspects, aiding in investigations and suspect identification.

K.Training and Education: Forensic scientists and experts often provide training and education to law enforcement personnel, attorneys, and judges to ensure that they understand the latest scientific techniques and their application in the justice system.

In summary, forensic science plays a vital role in the administration of justice by providing objective and scientific methods for investigating crimes, identifying suspects, and presenting evidence in court. It helps ensure that the criminal justice system operates fairly and accurately, leading to more reliable verdicts and outcomes.

## 5.Forensic science versus criminal justice system

Forensic science and the criminal justice system are two distinct but closely related components of the process of investigating, prosecuting, and adjudicating crimes. While they have different roles and functions, they work in tandem to ensure the fair and effective administration of justice. Here's a comparison of forensic science and the criminal justice system:

### Forensic Science:

Nature: Forensic science is a multidisciplinary field that involves the application of scientific principles and techniques to analyze and interpret physical evidence from crime scenes.

Role: Forensic scientists collect, preserve, and analyze evidence to provide objective and scientific information relevant to a criminal investigation or legal case. They use specialized methods to uncover facts, identify suspects, and establish the truth.

Tasks: Forensic scientists work in laboratories and crime scenes, conducting examinations on various types of evidence, such as DNA, fingerprints, firearms, toxicology samples, and more. They generate reports and may testify as expert witnesses in court to explain their findings.

Goals: The primary goal of forensic science is to provide accurate and reliable evidence that can support the criminal justice system in solving crimes, prosecuting offenders, and ensuring the fair treatment of all parties involved.

Independence: Forensic scientists are typically independent experts who are not directly part of the law enforcement or legal system. Their role is to provide impartial analysis and interpretation of evidence.

### Criminal Justice System:

Nature: The criminal justice system is a broader framework encompassing various institutions, agencies, and processes responsible for the investigation, prosecution, defense, and adjudication of criminal cases.

Role: The criminal justice system is responsible for maintaining law and order, ensuring public safety, and upholding the rule of law. It includes law enforcement agencies, courts, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, and correctional facilities.

**Tasks:** Law enforcement agencies investigate crimes, gather evidence, and make arrests. Prosecutors represent the state or government in charging and prosecuting individuals accused of crimes. Defense attorneys represent the accused. Judges oversee legal proceedings, and juries or judges determine guilt or innocence. Correctional facilities house and rehabilitate convicted offenders.

**Goals:** The criminal justice system's primary goals include determining guilt or innocence, protecting society, safeguarding individual rights, and delivering fair and just outcomes. It seeks to ensure that those who commit crimes are held accountable for their actions.

**Adjudication:** The criminal justice system is responsible for the adjudication of cases through a structured legal process that involves the presentation of evidence, examination of witnesses, legal arguments, and the rendering of judgments or verdicts.

Therefore, forensic science is a specialized field within the criminal justice system that provides essential scientific support and evidence analysis. While forensic scientists focus on the objective analysis of physical evidence, the criminal justice system, as a whole, manages all aspects of criminal cases from investigation to adjudication. These two components work collaboratively to ensure the fair and effective resolution of criminal matters and to uphold the principles of justice.

## **6. Issues and challenges in implementation of forensic science in criminal procedure:**

The implementation of forensic science in criminal investigations and the legal system faces several challenges and issues, which can impact its effectiveness and reliability. Some of these challenges include:

1. **Resource Constraints:** Many forensic laboratories and agencies face resource limitations, including inadequate funding, outdated equipment, and a shortage of trained personnel. These constraints can result in backlogs of unprocessed evidence and delays in case resolution.

2. **Backlogs and Delays:** The backlog of unprocessed evidence, including DNA samples and other forensic materials, can lead to significant delays in investigations and court proceedings. This can affect the timely administration of justice and may result in lost or degraded evidence.

3. **Quality Control:** Maintaining high standards of quality control is essential in forensic science. Errors in evidence collection, preservation, analysis, or documentation can lead to unreliable results. Ensuring the integrity of evidence throughout the chain of custody is crucial.

4. **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Forensic science often requires collaboration among various disciplines, such as biology, chemistry, and digital forensics. Effective communication and coordination among experts from different fields are essential for accurate analysis and interpretation of evidence.

5. **Subjectivity and Bias:** Some forensic techniques, such as fingerprint analysis or bite mark analysis, have faced criticism for their subjectivity and potential for bias. Efforts are underway to establish more objective and scientifically validated methods in these areas.

6. **Lack of Standardization:** Standardization of methods and protocols across different forensic disciplines and laboratories is crucial for consistency and reliability. Variability in practices can lead to inconsistencies in results and interpretations.

7. **Training and Education:** The field of forensic science is rapidly evolving, and ongoing training and education are necessary to keep forensic scientists up to date with the latest techniques and technologies. Ensuring the competence of forensic experts is essential for reliable results.

8. **Admissibility of Evidence:** Ensuring that forensic evidence meets legal standards for admissibility in court is a complex challenge. Legal requirements for the admissibility of certain types of evidence, such as expert testimony, can vary by jurisdiction and case law.

9. **Ethical Considerations:** Ethical issues, such as conflicts of interest, can arise when forensic experts work closely with law enforcement agencies or prosecutors. Maintaining objectivity and impartiality is essential to uphold the integrity of the forensic process.

10. **Privacy and Data Protection:** Digital forensics and the analysis of electronic evidence raise privacy and data protection concerns. Balancing the need to investigate crimes with protecting individuals' privacy rights is a delicate challenge.

11. Emerging Technologies: Rapid advancements in technology, such as deepfakes and encryption, present new challenges for digital forensics and evidence collection. Criminals can exploit these technologies to hide their activities or manipulate evidence.

12. Expert Testimony: Presenting complex scientific findings to judges and juries in a way that is understandable and persuasive is a constant challenge. Miscommunication or misinterpretation of evidence in court can have significant consequences.

13. Efforts are ongoing to address these challenges and improve the reliability and effectiveness of forensic science in the criminal justice system. These efforts include increased funding, research to validate forensic techniques, improved training and standards, and the development of best practices to enhance the field's overall integrity and impact on criminal investigations.

## 7. Cases related to forensic science in administration of justice system in India

Forensic science has played a crucial role in numerous criminal cases in India, helping to solve crimes, secure convictions, and ensure justice. Here are a few notable cases where forensic evidence played a significant role in the administration of justice in India:

1. Aarushi-Hemraj Double Murder Case (2008): The murders of Aarushi Talwar and her family's domestic help, Hemraj, in Noida, Uttar Pradesh, received widespread attention. Forensic evidence, including DNA analysis, fingerprint examination, and bloodstain pattern analysis, played a pivotal role in the investigation and subsequent trial. The case involved complex forensic findings and multiple theories, leading to a high-profile trial.

2. Nithari Serial Killings (2006-2007): The Nithari serial killings, which occurred in Noida, involved the gruesome murders of several children and young women. Forensic experts played a significant role in identifying the victims and analyzing evidence such as skeletal remains and DNA samples. The evidence led to the conviction of the main suspect, Moninder Singh Pandher, and his accomplice, Surinder Koli.

3. Sheena Bora Murder Case (2015): The Sheena Bora murder case in Mumbai gained national attention. Forensic evidence, including DNA tests, bone fragment analysis, and mobile phone records, was crucial in identifying the victim and establishing the timeline of events. This evidence contributed to the arrest and prosecution of the accused, including Indrani Mukerjea.

4. Jessica Lal Murder Case (1999): The Jessica Lal murder case, which occurred in New Delhi, involved the shooting of a model named Jessica Lal. Forensic evidence, including ballistics analysis, helped establish the link between the accused, Manu Sharma, and the murder weapon. The evidence played a crucial role in securing a conviction.

5. Mumbai Terror Attacks (2008): The coordinated terrorist attacks in Mumbai in 2008 involved multiple crime scenes and complex forensic investigations. Forensic analysis of explosive residues, ballistics, and other evidence was crucial in identifying the perpetrators and understanding the nature of the attacks.

6. Serial Killer Cyanide Mallika (2003-2006): In the southern state of Karnataka, a serial killer known as Cyanide Mallika was convicted of murdering several women by administering cyanide. Forensic evidence, including toxicology reports and autopsy findings, played a key role in linking the deaths to the same perpetrator and securing her conviction.

7. Harshad Mehta Securities Scam (1992): In one of India's most infamous financial scams, forensic auditors played a significant role in uncovering the irregularities and fraudulent practices of stockbroker Harshad Mehta. Forensic accounting and financial analysis helped authorities understand the extent of the scam.

These cases illustrate the importance of forensic science in the Indian criminal justice system. Forensic experts and evidence have been instrumental in solving a wide range of cases, from murders and terrorist attacks to financial frauds. Advances in forensic technology and techniques continue to enhance the capabilities of forensic science in India's legal system.

## 8. Conclusion

Forensic science plays a pivotal role in the administration of justice around the world, contributing to the fair and effective resolution of criminal cases. Its impact is profound, as it helps establish the truth, identify suspects, exonerate the innocent, and safeguard the integrity of the legal process. Forensic science encompasses a wide range of disciplines, from DNA analysis to ballistics and digital forensics, each providing specialized tools and techniques to aid investigations and court proceedings.

However, the implementation of forensic science in the administration of justice is not without its challenges. Issues such as resource constraints, backlogs, the need for standardization, and concerns about subjectivity and bias require ongoing attention and improvement. Despite these challenges, the pursuit of justice relies heavily on the continued advancement and ethical practice of forensic science. Ultimately, forensic science serves as a critical bridge between the scientific community and the legal system, enabling both the prosecution and the defense to present objective evidence, and ensuring that the rights of individuals are upheld. As technology and research continue to advance, forensic science will continue to evolve, offering new possibilities for solving crimes, protecting the innocent, and maintaining the principles of justice in societies around the world.

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