Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 3, Issue 10 (2025)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189

http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

Public Interest Litigation in Pakistan: Evolution, Key Cases, and Constitutional Implications

Naveed Hussain
Assistant Professor, School of Law, University of Gujrat
Email: naveed.hussain@uog.edu.pk

Rao Qasim Idrees
Associate Professor, School of Law, University of Gujrat
Email: qasim.rao@uog.edu.pk

Yasir Arfat
Lecturer, School of Law, University of Gujrat
Email: yasir.arfat@uog.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

The Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in Pakistan has become one of the leading tools of human rights, environmental protection, and accountability of the government. The paper will discuss how PIL has been formed within the constitutional framework of Pakistan and how the upper courts and, specifically, the Supreme Court, which has the original jurisdiction over the cases under the 1973 Constitution, Article 184(3), have opened the gateways to accessing the justice system through the allowance of traditional locus standi requirements. It gives a brief but strict examination of landmark cases, such as Benazir Bhutto v. Shehla Zia v. Federation of Pakistan (1988), which allowed PIL by allowing challenges in the interest of the people; Federation of Pakistan (1988). WAPDA (1994) broadening the meaning of the right to life to include a healthy environment; the Panama Papers Case (Imran Khan v.). Nawaz Sharif, 2017), a prime example of PIL in the high accountability space; and the Dam Fund Case (2018), a case that led to the discussion of judicial overreach. The paper moves through the academic arguments over the merits and flaws of judicial activism under the banner of PIL with the paper observing that PIL has helped the less privileged gain strength and impact the public policy as well as bringing about the concern of separation of power, judicial over-reach and political abuse. The analysis of the constitutional principles involved is done with the help of a doctrinal methodology relying on case law and academic commentary. It finishes by suggesting ways to perfect the PIL structure, including to clarify admissibility standards, reform the procedures and balance between activism and restraint so that the litigation by the public interest is still a device of justice and governmental accountability without obstructing democratic governance.

Keywords: Public Interest Litigation; Pakistan; Judicial Activism; Article 184(3); Supreme Court; Fundamental Rights; Constitutional Law; Case Law

Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 3, Issue 10 (2025)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189

http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

Introduction

Public Interest Litigation (PIL) enables individuals or groups of people to file court cases on behalf of the society to tackle the social issues like human rights violations, environmental degradation and corruption. PIIL has become a major tool of judicial regulation in Pakistan to enjoy fundamental rights and curtail government authority. With PIL, unlike in ordinary litigation, courts may accept cases when the petitioner to have the case does not have a direct when the matter is in the enforcement of the constitutional rights of public concern. This standing innovation was assisted by the Article 184(3) of the Constitution of Pakistan (1973) which gave original jurisdiction to the Supreme Court to inquire issues of public significance concerning the application of fundamental rights.[1]

PIL in Pakistan can be dated back to the late 1980s when martial law was abolished, and constitutionalism renewed. The judiciary, in a bid to reestablish its position as the protector of the Constitution after several years of authoritarianism, came to the interpretation of the Article 184(3) more liberalized and purposive. In 1988, a historic decision was reached by the Supreme Court under the leadership of Chief Justice Muhammad Haleem, in a case named Benazir Bhutto v. Federation of Pakistan (PLD 1988 SC 416). Here, the opposition leader Benazir Bhutto appealed restrictive amendments to electoral legislation on the political participation in elections and the Court gave Public Interest Litigation a green light in Pakistan by liberalizing the traditional locus standi prerequisite in Article 184. In letting a political leader make a petition on behalf of the general population (freedom of association and equal treatment of political parties under Articles 17 and 25 of the Constitution), the Court indicated that any bona fide citizen petitioner could go to the highest court to protect the rights of the masses. This established a very strong precedent, that procedural technicalities of standing, could not defeat the enforcement of fundamental rights to open up the era of PIL in Pakistan.[2]

PIL in Pakistan has grown in size and strength over the next few decades. The higher judiciary, commonly on the petitions of citizens, non-governmental organizations, or even under their own initiative (suo motu notices) have intervened in such issues as the bonded labor and environmental risk, the misconduct of the government, and the constitutional crisis. The first PIL cases in the 90s concentrated on the social justice and rights of marginalized groups, case in point being the Darshan Masih v. The Court used a letter by bonded laborers as a petition in State (PLD 1990 SC 513) and eventually ordered the release of hundreds of enslaved brick kiln workers. In the long term, the PIL docket was expanded and now included environmental law (such as the Shehla Zia case), matters of public health and city (such as the fight of pollution in Islamabad or smog in Lahore by taking suo motu action), and anticorruption and governance cases (as exemplified by the Panama Papers case). It is through PIL that the judiciary, in many cases, has intervened where legislative or executive action has

[1] Khan, M. S. (2014). Genesis and evolution of public interest litigation in the supreme court of Pakistan: toward a dynamic theory of judicialization. *Temp. Int'l & Comp. LJ*, *28*, 285.
[2] Hussain, Z., Xiab, Y., Akhtar, N., Ali, S., & Ibrahim, S. (2024). Exploring the Evolution of Public Interest Litigation in Pakistan: From Origins to Present-day Challenges through Critical Legal Theory. *International Journal of Social Science Archives (IJSSA)*, *7*(3).

Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 3, Issue 10 (2025)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

failed to act and sought to empower the vulnerable layers in society and keep those in office responsible. In fact, their advocates believe that PIL has already become a tool of social change and responsibility in Pakistan, pushing the state institutions closer to achieving better adherence to the rule of law and basic rights.[3]

Similarly, the emergence of PIL has also generated a heated argument on whether the judiciary should pursue its constitutional scheme in Pakistan or not. Critics have indicated that a judicial system that is too interventionist may disrupt the separation of powers since it would be meddling with the functions of the executive and legislature. They warn that judicial activism can easily degenerate into populism or partisan politics particularly when courts address high profile political issues or government matters without the traditional restraint of a trial and appeal process. The removal of elected Prime Ministers and the intervention of the judiciary in the affairs of administration via PIL has made some question the fact that the judiciary is crossing its constitutional limits. There have been occasional calls in the Supreme Court of late to restrain the exercise of Article 184(3) powers. PIL in Pakistan is, therefore, in a dilemma that it is both a formidable but uneven protector of rights and that it is a possible undermine of judicial decency and democratic rule.[4]

This paper will give a detailed discussion of Public Interest Litigation in Pakistan which will be of relevance to an academic legal reader. It follows the development of PIL on important case studies and academic views and examines how in the PIL context, the constitutional principles; fundamental rights, judicial review, and separation of powers have been construed and challenged. This paper is organized in a traditional manner. The Literature Review is a summary of academic arguments and available literature on the development and effects of PIL in Pakistan. The Methodology section gives an outline of the doctrinal and analytical approach that is used to base this research. The Research Findings section is a coherent account of the application of PIL in the superior courts of Pakistan, accompanied by the focus on some landmark cases (Benazir Bhutto, Shehla Zia, Panama Papers, Dam Fund, and others) and the jurisprudential changes they reflect. The implications of these findings are discussed in the Discussion, as well as the advantages of PIL to public accountability and its traps on the legal consistency and institutional tensions. This paper subsequently provides Recommendations as to how the practice of PIL can be refined with a view to making it sustainable and legitimate before finally giving some thoughts as to the future direction of Pakistan public interest litigation. The analysis will remain law focused and academically clear recognizing the dual nature of PIL as an instrument of justice and a controversial issue in the constitution of Pakistan.

Literature Review

Pakistan Public interest litigation has been informed by both local jurisprudence and comparative influence, especially that of an early experience of PIL in India in the

[3] Hussain, Z., Sultan, M. S., Sarwar, M. W., Hassan, M., & Ali, S. (2024). Public Interest Litigation in Pakistan Landmark Cases and Judicial Influence on Governance. *International Journal of Social Science Archives (IJSSA)*, *7*(3).

[4] Tariq, M., Azeem, H. M., & Rafique, M. Z. (2024). Public interest litigation in Pakistan: Unveiling its features, roles, and potential for ensuring justice for all. *Qlantic Journal of Social Sciences*, *5*(1), 298-306.

Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 3, Issue 10 (2025)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189

http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

1980s. The Pakistani Supreme Court has only entered into the realm of PIL within recent years, and according to commentators, this step started with two landmark cases in the late 1980s: Benazir Bhutto v. Darshan Masih v Federation of Pakistan (1988). State (1990). Such cases, which were determined just a few years ago, established the basis of a separate PIL jurisprudence in Pakistan. In Benazir Bhutto, as it was mentioned, a top-level politician was able to confront legislative acts that exploited the democratic rights of the populace, whereas in Darshan Masih, the Court interfered in the human rights issues by responding to a letter by a poor bonded laborer. PIL demonstrated its ability to focus on issues on both ends of the socio-economic spectrum by the contrast between a high-profile politician on one side and voiceless workers on the other. It has been noticed by legal scholars that these pioneer cases were borrowed and adapted to the Indian Supreme Court relaxation of the standing and epistolary jurisdiction, what Indian judges often said was letting little Indians in big numbers seek justice, into Pakistani circumstances of letting little Pakistanis in big numbers seek justice. PIL in either of both nations was a response to injustice that is otherwise unredressed, by making a publicly-minded individual or organisation an aggrieved party to represent the wronged.[5]

Different stages of PIL jurisprudence development in Pakistan have been reported in scholarly literature. Initially, PIL has been well-received in early commentary (e.g. Hussain 1993) as a constitutional regime of access to justice, and as to how Article 184(3) offered an opportunity to those who could not access regular courts because of poverty, illiteracy or systemic restrictions. According to the scholars, the use of purposive interpretative paradigm was embraced by Chief Justice Muhammad Haleem and his successors of the 1990s (particularly, Justice Nasim Hasan Shah and others), broadening the application of fundamental rights. As an example, academic critics pointed to the case of Benazir Bhutto, where the Supreme Court overrode technical objections (such as standing and justiciability) on the basis of preserving the ideals of democracy and basic rights, presenting a change in the direction of judicial activism rather than legal formalism.[6]

Mid-period scholars (2000s) was a response, now making a critical gaze upon judicialization of politics that PIL had wrought. It was found by authors such as Tasneem Kausar and Charles H. Kennedy that the Supreme Court of the late 1990s and 2000s began to intervene in the governance process more and more often through PIL. An empowered judiciary to check the executive has been heightened by the Lawyers Movement of 2007-09 that brought back the Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry. Empirical research noted a steep rise in PIL and suo motu cases since 2009, between difficulty and economic decision-making (e.g. the privatization of Pakistan Steel Mills in Watan Party v. Federation of Pakistan, 2006) to questioning the actions of the government officers (as observed in dozens of Human Rights Cases that have been taken up in the suo motu by the Court of Justice headed by Justice Chaudhry). Although other scholars talked of this as the pinnacle court becoming the court of the

[5] Ali, B., & Aziz-ur-Rehman, H. (2021). Protection of Fundamental Rights in Pakistan: A Study of the Development of Pubic Interest Litigation. *Al-Qamar*, *4*(1), 19-30.

[6] Shah, N. H. (1987). The Objectives Resolution and its Impact on the Administration of Justice in Pakistan. *Islamic Studies*, *26*(4), 383-394.

Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 3, Issue 10 (2025)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

people or a much needed check in the corrupted state, others feared that the judiciary would be involved in political issues and lose its impartiality. The Supreme Court has been praiseworthy in defending the rights of mankind, but the Commission International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) in a report published in 2013 has praised its strong performance but stated that its inconsistency and lack of accountability were critical as without clear standards, PIL would turn into an instrument of arbitrary power.[7]

A more recent scholarly discussion (2010s to 2020s) has been on the topic of balancing PIL. Both works by Moeen Cheema (2022) titled Courting Constitutionalism and the article by Maryam S. Khan (2018) point out the necessity of institutionalizing PIL in a structure of judicial norms. They note that, as much as the PIL has become an established practice, to the extent that the Court has even gone as far as developing procedural vehicles such as suo motu notices and special human rights benches, its success has brought about issues of overuse and abuse. The main aspects of the literature are: no appellate process is available to Supreme Court PIL decisions (articles in article 184(3) cases do not go through the High Courts but directly to the highest court); the concentration of power in the office of the Chief Justice to initiate and assign PIL cases; and the possibility of abuse of PIL to serve political purposes (e.g. disentry of elected officials or populist agendas that receive press coverage). Procedural reforms, including what should be the definition of the public importance, and possibly the establishment of intra-court appeal mechanism, have been advocated by scholars such as Faisal Siddiqui and others, to give such reviews more consistency and right of review. The comparative perspective, on how the experience of PIL in Pakistan is similar and different than that of the Indian, also is abundantly discussed. To take an illustration, the Indian Supreme Court ultimately put in place measures to sieve PIL petitions and stamp out frivolous claims, Pakistani jurists are now considering corresponding steps to ensure that PIL remains a vehicle of collective grievance and does not turn into a grand-standing instrument and a vehicle to score political points.[8]

To conclude, the literature demonstrates a pattern whereby, the concept of the public interest litigation in Pakistan became a down-to-earth method instead of a new judicial innovation representing both aspirations and dangers. It is agreeable that PIL has increased access to justice and has come up with landmark rulings that have enhanced rights (women rights, environmental rights, anti-corruption enforcement etc.). But another school of thought is also gathering momentum that unregulated PIL in the absence of clear boundaries may put credibility and upset the constitutional equilibrium of the judiciary. The academic debate therefore preconditions the analysis of the given paper: the recognition of the contributions of PIL should be made, and the necessity of the reforms, to make sure that it would be beneficial to the people in accordance with the principles of constitutionalism.

[7] Khan, M. S. (2014). Genesis and evolution of public interest litigation in the supreme court of Pakistan: toward a dynamic theory of judicialization. *Temp. Int'l & Comp. LJ*, *28*, 285.
[8] Cheema, Moeen. (2022). Courting Constitutionalism: The Politics of Public Law and Judicial Review in Pakistan. Cambridge University Press.

Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 3, Issue 10 (2025)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189

http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

Methodology

The research paper applies a qualitative approach of the doctrine to examine Public Interest Litigation in Pakistan. It is based on a critical interpretation and analysis of primary legal materials, especially constitutional clauses and major judicial decisions, which is complemented with secondary materials, including scholarly commentary, journal articles and reports. The foundation of the research is the case law analysis since PIL in Pakistan is a matter mostly developed through the interpretation of the courts. The main targets are the cases that have been deemed to be of prominence to the jurisprudence, or represent various stages or aspects of PIL: the Benazir Bhutto case because of its contribution to the weakening of standing requirements; the Shehla Zia case because of its expression of the environmental rights as fundamental rights; the Panama Papers case due to its demonstration of the role of PIL to the high-level accountability and the controversies that have surrounded it; and the Dam Fund case because of comment on understanding the scope and the boundary of suomotu powers. These instances are considered as case studies to a larger narrative on doctrines where an analysis of the legal rationale used by the courts and the constitutional principles applied can be done.

When carrying out the research, every case was considered based on the applicable constitutional articles (particularly, Article 184(3) and the provisions associated with the fundamental rights) and on the context within which the case was resolved. Judicial opinions were examined to know how the courts explained the need to consider the issues of public interest and how they balanced (or not) between the requirements of justice and judicial restraint. Comparative and historical analysis was further employed where it was applicable- e.g. mentioning how ideas of other jurisdictions experiences of PIL (particularly that of India) were borrowed or modified by courts in Pakistan.

Academic discussions are also incorporated in the study owing to the literature review to contextualize the results. Academic views offered critical evaluative requirements: e.g., the research employs the problem of scholars that is concerned about the separation of powers to determine whether or not some PIL cases crossed into the political domain, and relies on the arguments of supporters to determine how PIL has advocated social justice. The methodology guarantees a balanced approach to the analysis that considers both normative aspirations of PIL and the practical implications that are reflected in the legal system of Pakistan by triangulating both the case law and the commentary.

No human participants or empirical research was used; therefore, the concern of ethical clearance was not an issue other than due attribution of sources. It is a research methodology that is analytical and library-based, and has the objective of drawing a logical narrative between legal texts. It is a very appropriate method to use in an academic enquiry into law as it involves interpreting authoritative texts (statutes, constitutional provisions, judicial decisions) and putting them in context within a larger constitutional theory and judicial conduct. Through this methodology, the paper aims at providing a rigorous and well-referenced description of the Public Interest Litigation in Pakistan which would pass the test of scholarly scrutiny of a law journal.

Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 3, Issue 10 (2025)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

Research Findings

Evolution of PIL and Expansion of Standing

The results indicate that Public Interest Litigation in Pakistan has been through an extensive development since its establishment in the late 80s of the previous century. Benazir Bhutto v. decision by the Supreme Court. A very crucial turning point appears to be Federation of Pakistan (1988). In that instance, the Court was confronted with a dilemma of whether Benazir Bhutto as an opposition leader could have a standing to respond to laws that did not concern her directly but which impacted on the democratic rights of the citizens generally. This judgment was unanimously decided by Chief Justice Haleem in the affirmative, that is, in other words, liberalizing the locus standi requirement to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court under Article 184. The Court argued that in cases where basic rights of the people were involved in matters of social significance, the technical provisions that usually limit petitioning the court by only a limited number of persons should not render justice being defeated. This determination included that any individual who acted in good faith would be a party aggrieved under Article 184(3) as long as the case was the implementation of constitutional rights. This Benazir Bhutto case therefore established a precedent of a more liberal interpretation of standing, which would subsequently permit even letters, media reports and petitions made by NGOs to instigate judicial inquiry in the interest of the people.[9]

After this, the Supreme Court continued to embrace PIL steadily during the early 1990s. One of the outstanding facts is that the Court started taking up cases initiated by vulnerable or marginal groups who could hardly access the judiciary themselves. As an illustration, in Darshan Masih (1990), the Court observed a simple postcard wherein bonded laborers were begging to be released off bondage. The Court interpreted the letter as a petition and not only liberated the laborers but also set down the guidelines on abolishing bonded labor, and the constitutional assurance of liberty (Article 9) applied to the socio-economic emancipation. These moves expressed the readiness of the judges to create epistolary and representative status, which is consistent with the notion that justice must be offered proactively to those who require it. By the mid-1990s PIL had become a part of the legal environment, and even High Courts exercising Article 199 (the constitutional writ jurisdiction) jurisdiction were adopting the lead of the Supreme Court by dropping standing prerequisites in cases of public interest.[10]

Landmark Cases and Jurisprudential Shifts

A number of precedent cases are illustrations of ways PIL has been used to promote all sorts of causes, and each of them represents a jurisprudential change or broadening of constitutional interpretation:

Shehla Zia v. WAPDA (PLD 1994 SC 693) -This is a landmark environmental PIL case in Pakistan. The case was fought by Shehla Zia and other locals in Islamabad

[9] Munir, M. A. (2007). Public interest litigation in Supreme Court of Pakistan. *Available at SSRN 1984583*.

[10] Abbas, M. S. (2021). The dynamics of public interest litigation (PIL) in the perspective of adversarial legal system of Pakistan. *Available at SSRN 3760303*.

Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 3, Issue 10 (2025)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

with the construction of high-voltage electricity grid station being built in a residential neighborhood, claiming it might cause health risks due to electromagnetic radiations. The petition was accepted by the Supreme Court under Article 184(3) since it concerned the issue of national significance, and the basic right to life (Article 9 of the Constitution). The Court in an unprecedented decision gave the right to life a broad interpretation, and stated that the term life in the Constitution encompasses all those amenities and conditions which enable a person to live with dignity, such as a clean and healthy environment[18][19]. The Court had it that life is not simply animal existence but life entails all those amenities and facilities which when born in a free country, a person has a right to enjoy with dignity and not be subjected to any exposure to hazards of electromagnetic fields or any other hazards that can be encountered by anyone [20][21]. The Shehla Zia judgment made the right to life implicit with environmental protection and citizens allowed to sue on matters of environmental protection on behalf of the community, firmly established the existence of environmental PIL in Pakistan. It resulted in the increased vigilant application of environmental regulations and the opening of the door to later cases of public interest on such issues as pollution, deforestation, and urban public health.[11]

The case that was presented was Pakistani Steel Mills Case Watan Party v. Federation of Pakistan (PLD 2006 SC 697) - it was a pioneer application of PIL in the sphere of economic governance. The privatization of state-owned Pakistan Steel Mills was challenged by a political party and trade union on the ground that the privatization was not transparent and it was against the national interest. The Supreme Court, which assumed cognizance of Article 184(3) overturned the privatization. The ruling underlined the fact that the Court does not interfere in policy per se, but rather it will do so when the decision-making is against the law or is reeking of mala fide. The case of Steel Mills marked a change whereby the Court had endorsed its position in regulating economic transactions of a large scale in the public interest. It also attracted criticism as judicial overreach, however, as critics put it the Court was encroaching into the policy arena of the executive. According to one commentary, this case (along with the Court preventing a large mining contract in the Reko Diq case) was subsequently considered even by some judges to be acting beyond the reasonable scope of judicial intervention in the economic policy.[12]

Imran Ahmed Khan Niazi v. Panama Papers Case. Mian Nawaz Sharif (PLD 2017 SC 265) - This case, based on the 2016 Panama papers leaks, was perhaps the most politically significant PIL in Pakistan in the history of the country. Opponition leader (and future prime-minister) Imran Khan, and others, petitioned under Article 184(3) requesting the Supreme Court to investigate the alleged corruption and treachery by Sharif towards the nation. The case was a matter of public importance in 2017 to an especially constituted Supreme Court bench that addressed the enforcement of fundamental rights (the interpretation of the right to honest governance and accountability as the unarticulated constitutional expectations). It was a historic affair of the Court level as a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) was created by the Court in order to gather facts, its rights to find facts were applied, and finally, Nawaz Sharif

[11] PLD 1994 SC 693.
[12] PLD 2006 SC 697.

Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 3, Issue 10 (2025)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

was disqualified in his post and quality under Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution (which states that parliamentarians must be honest and ameen/trustworthy). The ruling was a controversial one. Those in favor rejoiced that it was a victory of accountability and the rule of law, that even the highest of the highest officials cannot be above the Constitution. The opponents however, claimed that the Court had exceeded the original scope of the petitions to discover a comparatively technical omission (Sharif failing to reveal receiveable salary of a foreign company) on which the disqualification could be based[14]. Also, the case was decided by Article 184(3) and thus, the aggrieved Prime Minister had no right of appeal, which some jurists considered as refusal to provide due process[14]. The case of Panama papers shows how powerful PIL can be in the fight against corruption and issues to do with due process when the Supreme Court exercises this original jurisdiction power in a direct manner. It shows how PIL can bring dramatic political consequences, in this case, the overthrow of an elected official, to the matter of judicial neutrality and the separation of powers.[13]

The Dam Fund Case (2018) - In 2018, Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar, without needing a reference to a specific case, had initiated a project of raising funds among the population to construct two large dams (Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand Dam) to solve the water crisis in Pakistan. Not only did the Supreme Court issue a special bank account under the name of the Dam Fund, but the court also issued directives to request the general population to make donations and directly managed the advertising of the project. In different hearings which were conducted under Article 184(3), the Court presented water security as a national interest of right that concerns the future of the country. Although the cause was noble, to address an immediate national issue, the approach taken by the judiciary was very uncatholic. The Dam Fund drive is a grey area between adjudication and administration: the Court was arguably exercising an executive role in conducting a fundraising campaign. We observe that this case was a lightning rod on judicial overreach. Indicatively, in certain cases, convicted persons or litigants were reportedly requested to make payments to the Dam Fund as Restitution or to evade fines a practice that was likened by critics to extortion under the law. The project, however supported by a form of official ruling, was being viewed by people, with more popularity as an initiative of the Chief Justice Nisar himself, in fact, his name turned into the Dam Fund. This has since been viewed, even by other judges, as a warning case: that the Court in the Dam Fund case had gone too far in the cure of the common good by interfering in the activities that this Court was not supposed to do. Justice Nisar retired, the dams still well out of sight, and some 10 billion rupees collected (and invested in government securities by Court order), by the time he retired. The legacy of the fund has now become a frequent reference point in arguments as to how to limit the powers of suomoto and the possibility that judicial zeal will overcome institutional constraints.[14]

Other interesting results: The study also brings out other illustrations and trends in the PIL trend in Pakistan. The activism of the Supreme Court reached its height in the

[13] PLD 2017 SC 265.

[14] Tareen, S. (2022). Crowdfunding Nayā Pakistan: Development, Nationalism, and the Diamer-Bhasha Dam. *The Muslim World*, *112*(1), 151-166.

Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 3, Issue 10 (2025)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

tenure of Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry (20052013), when the Supreme Court issued dozens of suo motu notices over matters related to missing persons (enforced disappearances) to unsafe drugs and election anomalies. In the case of Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani (Contempt case, 2012), a sitting Prime Minister was convicted of contempt (defiance of a Court order to answer a corruption case) and forced to resign - an indirect upholding of the Court in enforcing accountability in the public interest. PIL has also been practiced at High Courts, albeit to a smaller amount; the Lahore High Court entertained petitions on education rights and health crisis in the country. Later in 2010s and early 2020s, the pushback can be observed however. The results observe that the judiciary voices, including the voices of Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Athar Minallah in 2023, openly requested the review of the internal procedures of the Court on PIL. They pointed out that what was problematic was the daily application of Article 184(3) in issues which could be settled in political arenas or lower courts. These trends show that PIL in Pakistan is now self-consciously engaged in a period of self-correction and institutional introspection, although it is still a medium of felt claims of a certain type.[15]

Discussion

The combination of Public Interest litigation with the constitutional and political situation in Pakistan has been a two-sided affair and the debate needs to balance the laudable success against the controversial consequences. On the one hand, PIL has definitely contributed to the cause of justice in a society where the traditional channels have predominantly failed the general citizen. Conversely, it has come with complications of judicial power and responsibility.

Improvement of Rights and Accountability:

PIL has a positive influence that is observed in a variety of areas. PIL cases have provided concrete meaning to fundamental rights that would otherwise have been a mere abstract element. As I have discussed, the case of Shehla Zia has changed the right to life to become a right to healthy environment which opened the path to environmental jurisprudence that has helped numerous citizens to breathe clean air, clean water, and have a general understanding on the risks of the environment. Similarly, PIL has been used as an instrument of power control in situations where other normal systems failed. PIL has been applied in combating corruption and state malfeasance which is deeply rooted in the polity, whereby political will was wanting. The Panama Papers lawsuit, however scandalous, was one of those warning signals to the population that claims of high scale corruption among the highest ranks will not pass unimpeded. PIL also facilitated an intervention in the matters of human rights crisis such as the suo motu activity of the Supreme Court on the issue of missing persons which compelled security agencies to explain illegal detentions. In a nation where the executive may be either either in preference or slow to act on rights abuses, the judiciary (through PIL) became a regulator and a punitive body. This is frequently referred to by scholars as the mobilization of the civil society through the bench, courts responding to media reports, NGO requests or even letters by prison prisoners,

[15] Abbas, M. S. (2021). The dynamics of public interest litigation (PIL) in the perspective of adversarial legal system of Pakistan. *Available at SSRN 3760303*.

Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 3, Issue 10 (2025)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

and thus democratizing access to the process of justice. In addition, PIL opened the process of legal action by the masses - locus standi was abolished, NGOs, activists, and other citizens interested in a particular cause or issue became sources of legal change, whether they were women's rights to consumer protection, and their means of transport was constitutional petitions.[16]

Judicial Activism vs. Separation of Powers:

But there are trade-offs in these acquisitions in terms of jurisprudence. The diminishing distance between the powers is one of the main issues. As any other modern constitution, the Constitution of Pakistan provides various roles of a legislature, executive, and judiciary. These boundaries have to be pushed to their limits by PIL since it frequently forces the judiciary to decide in a policy-like manner or even to supervise the operations of the executive. The Dam Fund fiasco is one such example: the Supreme Court was acting on good faith by intervening as it did but the act of directly raising and administering funds towards an infrastructure project was far too executive to be constitutional. As was noted in 2023 as Article 184(3) by Justice Athar Minallah, Article 184(3) was occasionally applied to legitimise the dismissal of two prime ministers in a manner that actually enabled an army-led change of government rather than safeguarding vulnerable individuals. This is a sober observation in the Court that indicates a fear that PIL may lead to a power change orchestrated by the courts and hence an upheaval of the political process. The question arises: in case the Supreme Court intrudes in such a way, what will make the Court accountable? The judiciary does not have a direct mechanism of being accountable to the people unlike the political branches and therefore, it is important that the judiciary is restrained.[17]

The other concern is the consistency and principle in the use of PIL. Critics complain that the Supreme Court has been ad hoc or personality driven in its approaches to assuming PIL matters. The priorities of different Chief Justices have been different, one may be keen to achieve, say Chief Justice Chaudhry with his emphasis on corruption cases, or Chief Justice Nisar with his social concerns such as healthcare and education which the other may not give serious attention or may otherwise do. Such inconsistency may cause an uncertain legal environment. As an illustration, thousands of petitions are submitted to the Human Rights Cell of the Supreme Court annually, however, only a few of them are successful, and that too, usually with the help of media or individual interest of a judge. There has been a debate in the legal circles concerning the absence of clear and transparency in the criteria used to admit PIL cases. There are also cases when issues that could be a question of personal interest or lack of a direct violation of rights have been addressed and this waters down the seriousness of PIL. On the other hand, there are issues that the court may not attend to because of the capacity or reluctance. The fact that an appeal against an Article 184(3) decision was previously unavailable until recently meant that a

[16] Razzaque, J. (2004). Public interest environmental litigation in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

[17] Ullah, A. (2018). Public Interest Litigation: A Constitutional Regime to Access to Justice in Pakistan. *Journal of Pakistan Vision*, *2*.

Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 3, Issue 10 (2025)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

decision by a bench (how innovative or controversial it was) was final, except at the discretion of the Court itself. This irreversibility enhanced the effect of any PIL decision and the danger of making a mistake or going overboard. Interestingly, attempts (including a new law, the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act) have been made as of 2023 to bring a right to appeal to sou motu cases and to democratize the bench-forming power of the Chief Justice. Even these reforms were controversial and controversial, with the litigation, which shows how hot the matter of PIL has been in the institutional politics of Pakistan.[18]

Risk of Political Instrumentalization:

The second aspect that can be discussed in more detail is the possibility of using PIL as a political instrument or populism. Since PIL cases often attract a large amount of attention from audiences, there is a motivation to politically actors to take their fights to the court when they cannot succeed in their legislative or electoral fields. During some periods, the Supreme Court has not been very shy in arbitrating such disputes such as deciding the legitimacy of government actions, disqualification of election, etc. Although this may serve as a check against the executive power (whereby unconstitutional acts of a ruler may be prevented), it may also drag the judiciary into partisan politics. It has been seen with the Panama Papers case, initiated by opposition politicians, and previously with the Memogate case (2012, involving the claim that the government was seeking U.S. assistance against the military), the court became a platform of high-stakes political games. The judicial system can lose credibility by being seen as being on the side of certain groups within the population or ease of the other.[19] Moreover, a series of PIL-inspired ejections or legal setbacks against current regimes may encourage the opposition to avoid political dispensation and settle scores with their opponents through the judicial system, so-called lawfare. The chorus of Justice Minallah that politicians succeed or lose the case, but the court is always the loser when political issues are brought to the courtroom, rings deafeningly in this respect. It sums up the conflict: the court risks losing its image as apolitical and losing the trust of the population in the future, by meddling into political affairs.[20]

Public Expectations and Judicial Load:

It is also noted in the discussion that the PIL has put a high level of expectations on the judiciary making the Supreme Court appear more of an ombudsman to all the grievances that could be ever imagined including potholes in streets to mega corruption cases. This anticipation may cause a huge load to the courts whose main role is not to govern but to adjudicate the disputes. The greater the attempt of the court to resolve the general social issues, the greater its likelihood to have to observe

[18] Jatoi, S. A., Mustafa, G., & Kataria, M. S. (2022). Judicial activism and democracy in Pakistan: A case study of chief justice Saqib Nisar era. *Pakistan Journal of Social Research*, *4*(2), 1-11.
[19] Mahmood, Z., Rathore, K., Ahmad, E., & Zaheer, L. (2019). A Reappraisal: Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan, 2008-2013. *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, *56*(2), 131.
[20] Bakhsh, F., Abbasi, S., Abbasi, W. A., & Hashmi, M. A. I. (2025). Judicial Activism vs. Judicial Restraint in Developing Democracies: A Comparative Study. *Social Science Review Archives*, *3*(3), 2319-2329.

Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 3, Issue 10 (2025)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

the adherence, make follow-up orders and spend time on supervisory jurisdiction. This managerial position is difficult to maintain considering the scarce resources of the judicial branches and may become a burden on the court to issue verdicts on routine cases. It also raises a legitimacy issue: extended participation in what effectively becomes administrative oversight work (such as serving on committees to manage medical waste or to reform traffic, as it has been the case) is queasy to the counter-majoritarian character of the judiciary. Judges are not elected nor specialists in the field of administration to people, and yet PIL occasionally places them in the position similar to policymakers or crisis-managers. This debate in the literature has therefore been tending to advocate that the judiciary exercise caution in its boundaries when it comes to intervening, namely to strongly intervene where the fundamental rights of vulnerable groups are at risk and where state authorities are blatantly failing to do what they are constitutionally obligated to do or which they have a constitutional duty to do.[21]

PIL in Pakistan is not an unqualified good or an unqualified bad. It is in fact a mighty instrument of the law that must be exercised with discretion. The issue lies in the fact that it needs to maintain the credibility of the courts and utilize PIL to promote justice. The results and the discussion that follows lead to the implication that the PIL-direction has to turn towards institutionalization and moderation. Luckily, some indications of course correction do exist, such as the Supreme Court in extremely recent decisions has indicated readiness to subordinate elected authorities in what are strictly speaking political questions, and internal debate is considering the institutionalization of a system of rules on PIL admissibility as well as composition of the bench. The experience of Pakistan, as addressed, would make a good case study to the other jurisdictions: it shows how an empowered judiciary can correct the wrongs, and at the same time, how necessary it is to balance that right so that a system of justice turns into a cause of instability.

Recommendations

To maintain the benefits of the public interest litigation in Pakistan, whilst limiting the disadvantages, this paper will give some of the primary recommendations. These proposals are intended to create a balance between judicial activism and restraint, but so that PIL would continue to be a credible and effective means of justice to the people:

Establish Coherent Rules of Admissibility:

The Supreme Court ought to develop and publicly declare some rules on what is considered a case of public importance in which there was enforcement of fundamental rights under Article 184(3). Obvious standards would assist in weeding out careless or strictly personal consideration. To illustrate, petitions ought to reflect a veritable collective harm or rights problem and not an undercover personal grievance or political vengeance. By instituting a type of screening system (such as a preliminary hearings panel), one could be certain that only the bona fide cases of PIL

[21] Khan, A., Naseem, I., & Inamullah, M. (2025). Constitutional Dynamics and Judicial Autonomy in South Asia: A Comparative Study of Pakistan and its Neighbors. *Al Manhal Research Journal*, *5*(1).

Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 3, Issue 10 (2025)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

arrive at the bench and thus judicial time is conserved to be used at areas of more significant concern.

Procedural Reforms and Right of Appeal:

It is important to mention that there is a gap in the procedures in which the decisions of the Supreme Court PIL are not subject to appellate review. A change in the structure of the Supreme Court, either by self rule or by legislation, should permit some sort of intra-court appeal or broadening of bench of Article 184(3) cases. This would improve due process and uniformity of PIL jurisprudence. Alternatively, codification of the so-called suo motu notice (i.e. the need to have a panel of several justices agree in order to receive a suo motu case) would also avoid the accretion of unchecked power in the hands of one judge (usually the Chief Justice). Such recent developments as the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act that presuppose other high-ranking judges to make benches to hear, are in the right direction and, thus, must be supported and improved.

Target Marginalized and Core Rights:

The judiciary must actively work towards focusing on steering PIL cases concerning the rights of the oppressed communities and major human rights challenges. It is in accordance with the original moral rationale behind PIL, namely, giving power to people who may not readily resort to justice themselves. PIL can be of most help in environmental issues, rights of detainees, rights of women and children, and various problems such as access to clean water or education by the poor in the society. Conversely, those cases that are essentially political issues or questions suited only to legislative branch (i.e., power struggles between the branches of government, or policy choices which do not involve obvious rights violation) must be treated with extreme caution, and left to their own devices. Selective restraint enables the Court to focus its energies on those matters that it can accomplish most, and to avoid getting involved in partisan wrangles.

Empower Lower Courts and Alternate Remedies:

This is one reason why litigants seek to go to the Supreme Court through PIL because their confidence in the lower courts, or even the slow executive reaction, is poor. There should be an initiative of enhancing the ability and authority of the lower levels of judicial forums and administrative justice. The pressure on the Supreme Court to intervene directly will be less in case the High Courts have a vibrant consideration of the public interest issues under the Article 199 (that they are authorized to have) and also in case specialized tribunals or ombudsmen are operating efficiently. Additionally, under suitable circumstances, even the Supreme Court can refer positions to competent authorities or create implementation commission instead of to micromanagement of the relief. This does not violate the principle of subsidiarity in justice - that the most immediate appropriate institution should deal with a situation, and the highest court in common law should give direction, but not day-to-day supervision.

Transparency and Reasoned Judgments:

Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 3, Issue 10 (2025)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189

http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

The Supreme Court must enhance legitimacy by making sure that PIL decisions are supplemented with an in-depth explanation of the reasons which covers not only the legal rationales but also the issues of separation-of-powers. When the Court is engaged in an unprecedented measure (such as controlling a fund or a project) it must explain why it had to do so and in how respects it was consistent with the Constitution. In making the explicit recognition of counter-arguments in judgments, such as having that the judicial intervention was necessary because the executive did not act, the Court can demonstrate that it recognizes that the scope of its position even as it performs the action. The next benches and litigants are also led by detailed, principled judgments, which make the PIL doctrine appear more coherent.

Encourage Public Education and Legal Help:

Based on the recommendations of law specialists, it is proposed to enhance the level of legal awareness of people regarding their basic rights and appropriate application of PIL. The use of PIL can be made responsible by educating citizens on how and when to approach courts to address issues of interest to the people. On the same note, providing better access to legal aid services or pro bono structures of PIL can assist in directing grievances through competent counsel who could galvanize issues professionally instead of leaving it to the excessive media attention or politically agendas driven actors to shape the PIL agenda. An educated civil society along with a professional bar would help the judicial system with actual causes supported by concrete evidence and the Court will be able to make its decisions properly.

Through these suggestions, the legal system in Pakistan can make the judiciary and legislature institutionalize PIL as a constant attribute of the legal system. This is aimed at maintaining the spirit of PIL its accessibility and its interest in justice but in a way that limits abuses and makes certain that judicial interventions are subjugated to, not to replace, democratic governance. Overall, the changes in the way and the area of the public interest litigation will contribute to its strength (safeguarding of rights, accountability of the government) and reducing its drawbacks (unpredictability, overreaching, politicization).

Conclusion

Public Interest Litigation in Pakistan has made a special and memorable mark in the history of the country in terms of law and politics. During the past thirty years, what seemed to be a bold judicial experiment to increase access to justice has turned into a commonplace aspect of Supreme Court practice. The case between the challenge made by Benazir Bhutto in 1988 and the Panama Papers verdict in the headlines in 2017, and the controversies of the Dam Fund in 2018, depict a dynamic game between the commitment of the judiciary to exercise the rule of law and the necessity to act within institutional limits. As seen in this paper, the discussion of PIL in Pakistan highlights the fact that this has been a positive force of change in Pakistan - it gave power to citizens, instituted fundamental rights, and held public officials accountable to the law. The historic decisions in the political participation, environmental protection and accountability have had their impacts on the society which in most cases have been used to fill the gaps in the other arms of government.

However, it is also apparent in the analysis that PIL is not a panacea and has to be

Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 3, Issue 10 (2025)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

used with care. The Pakistani experience demonstrates how fragile constitutional democracy needs to be: a judiciary that is both prolific in safeguarding its rights and protecting its Constitution, but not invading the functions of the legislative or executive branches of government. When this equilibrium is struck too far, in the instances where the perceived judicial overreach occurs, the legitimacy of the judiciary may be called into question and the constitutional order may be disrupted. The internal introspection in the recent self-reflection by the Supreme Court and the initiating push towards procedural changes suggests that the discourse has reached the stage of maturation - that the long term legitimacy of PIL will be conditional on how it is used. Not to mention that as one Justice pointed out, when all issues of a political nature are taken to court, the triumph of one party in a court of law is oftentimes at the expense of the court itself. Hence, caution and reversion to the old values are equally essential as activism in the drafting of the course ahead.

It has to be conceded in the conclusion that the conquest of the Pakistani population by the public interest litigation is a part of a larger story of the changing constitutionalism. It is a mirror of the prosperity and decline of a society that attempts to use standards of justice and responsibility in the confrontation with the difficulties of governance. PIL has turned out to be a two-sided object - on the one hand, the kind of angel that protects the masses, and, on the other hand, a possible intruder of the political sphere. The remaining part is to make sure that the angelic face of PIL is dominant. That will demand unremitting vigilance: conscientiously minded judges who understand their constitutional charge, legislators who are receptive to the systemic problems which give rise to PIL, and a citizenry who uses this instrument not to effect spectacle but to achieve some real public benefit.

Finally, with proper reforms and proper principles, it will continue to be a vital source whereby the expectation of the Constitution of Pakistan, which is that of the assurance of basic rights, and social justice can be achieved to all citizens. As far as constitutional limits permit, the quest to fulfill that pledge is the noble goal, which should become the core of the path of PIL in the future. To do this, Pakistan might provide an example of an active but still disciplined judiciary that most constitutional democracies are still searching.

References

Abbas, M. S. (2021). The dynamics of public interest litigation (PIL) in the perspective of adversarial legal system of Pakistan. Available at SSRN 3760303.

Ali, B., & Aziz-ur-Rehman, H. (2021). Protection of Fundamental Rights in Pakistan: A Study of the Development of Pubic Interest Litigation. Al-Qamar, 4(1), 19-30.

Asma Jilani v. The Government of Punjab, PLD 1972 SC 139 (Supreme Court of Pakistan, 1972).

Bakhsh, F., Abbasi, S., Abbasi, W. A., & Hashmi, M. A. I. (2025). Judicial Activism vs. Judicial Restraint in Developing Democracies: A Comparative Study. Social Science Review Archives, 3(3), 2319-2329.

Benazir Bhutto v. Federation of Pakistan, PLD 1988 SC 416 (Supreme Court of Pakistan, 1988).

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189

Cheema, Moeen. (2022). Courting Constitutionalism: The Politics of Public Law and Judicial Review in Pakistan. Cambridge University Press.

Darshan Masih v. The State, PLD 1990 SC 513 (Supreme Court of Pakistan, 1990).

Dawn. (2023, March 29). A wake-up call (Editorial on Justice Minallah's note).

https://ijssa.com/index.php/ijssa/article/view/497

https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/37ec/77ef36d4cffacb4b285d8a3dc7cabe0414c0.pdf

https://sites.temple.edu/ticlj/files/2017/02/28.2.Khan-TICLJ.pdf

https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1063010-news-analysis-saqib-nisar-s-dam-fund-an-exercise-in-judicial-overreach

Hussain, Faqir. (1993). Public Interest Litigation in Pakistan. Journal of Law & Society, 12, 11-28.

Hussain, Z., Sultan, M. S., Sarwar, M. W., Hassan, M., & Ali, S. (2024). Public Interest Litigation in Pakistan Landmark Cases and Judicial Influence on Governance. International Journal of Social Science Archives (IJSSA), 7(3).

Hussain, Z., Xiab, Y., Akhtar, N., Ali, S., & Ibrahim, S. (2024). Exploring the Evolution of Public Interest Litigation in Pakistan: From Origins to Present-day Challenges through Critical Legal Theory. International Journal of Social Science Archives (IJSSA), 7(3).

Imran Ahmed Khan Niazi v. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif (Panama Papers Case), PLD 2017 SC 265 (Supreme Court of Pakistan, 2017).

Jatoi, S. A., Mustafa, G., & Kataria, M. S. (2022). Judicial activism and democracy in Pakistan: A case study of chief justice Saqib Nisar era. Pakistan Journal of Social Research, 4(2), 1-11.

Khan, A., Naseem, I., & Inamullah, M. (2025). Constitutional Dynamics and Judicial Autonomy in South Asia: A Comparative Study of Pakistan and its Neighbors. Al Manhal Research Journal, 5(1).

Khan, M. S. (2014). Genesis and evolution of public interest litigation in the supreme court of Pakistan: toward a dynamic theory of judicialization. Temp. Int'l & Comp. LJ, 28, 285.

Khan, Maryam S. (2018). Genesis and Evolution of Public Interest Litigation in the Supreme Court of Pakistan: Toward a Dynamic Theory of Judicialization. Islamabad: Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives.

Mahmood, Z., Rathore, K., Ahmad, E., & Zaheer, L. (2019). A Reappraisal: Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan, 2008-2013. Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan, 56(2), 131.

Miss Shehla Zia v. WAPDA, PLD 1994 SC 693 (Supreme Court of Pakistan, 1994).

Munir, M. A. (2007). Public interest litigation in Supreme Court of Pakistan. Available at SSRN 1984583.

Nadeem, Mohammad, Qasim, Maryam, & Ibrahim, Shazia. (2023). Original Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of Pakistan under Article 184(3): Expanding Horizons and Institutional Challenges. Journal of Social Sciences Review, 3(2), 1049-1064.

PLD 1994 SC 693.

PLD 2006 SC 697.

PLD 2017 SC 265.

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189

Razzaque, J. (2004). Public interest environmental litigation in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Shah, N. H. (1987). The Objectives Resolution and its Impact on the Administration of Justice in Pakistan. Islamic Studies, 26(4), 383-394.

Tareen, S. (2022). Crowdfunding Nayā Pakistan: Development, Nationalism, and the Diamer-Bhasha Dam. The Muslim World, 112(1), 151-166.

Tariq, M., Azeem, H. M., & Rafique, M. Z. (2024). Public interest litigation in Pakistan: Unveiling its features, roles, and potential for ensuring justice for all. Qlantic Journal of Social Sciences, 5(1), 298-306.

The News International. (2018, Feb 24). Judicial Imperialism? (News report on debate over PIL).

The News International. (2023, Apr 21). News Analysis: Saqib Nisar's dam fund, an exercise in judicial overreach by Shakir Hussain Baresli.

Ullah, A. (2018). Public Interest Litigation: A Constitutional Regime to Access to Justice in Pakistan. Journal of Pakistan Vision, 2.

Watan Party v. Federation of Pakistan, PLD 2006 SC 697 (Supreme Court of Pakistan, 2006).

Yasir, Qureshi. (2022). Judicial Activism in Pakistan: Dilemmas of Judicial Power and Democratic Accountability. (Referenced in Justice Shah's note, quoted in The News, April 21, 2023).

Zulfiqar, Hussain et al. (2024). Public Interest Litigation in Pakistan: Landmark Cases and Judicial Influence on Governance. International Journal of Social Science Archives, 7(3), 1-13. (September 2024).