

Police Torture Cases

by

District Medico Legal Officer
(DMLO), Faisalabad

Torture in the Past

- ▼ The Romans used torture only for interrogation before judgement
- ▼ In the Roman Republic, a slave's testimony was admissible *only* if it had been extracted by torture, on the assumption that slaves could not be trusted to reveal the truth voluntarily.
- ▼ In the Middle Ages especially and up into the 18th century, torture was deemed a legitimate way to obtain testimonies and confessions from suspects for use in judicial inquiries and trials.

Methods used in the Past

- ▼ **Strappado:** (most common) Torturers bound the accused's hands behind the back with a rope, then the torturer suspended the accused by hauling up the hands, painfully dislocating the shoulder joints.

Methods used in the Past

- ▼ **Squassation:** The torturer could add weight to the legs, dislocating their joints as well. The prisoner and weights could be hauled up and suddenly dropped. This refined torture (with dropping added) was called squassation

Methods used in the Past

- ▼ **The rack** (stretching the victim's joints to breaking point), the thumbscrew, **the boot** (some versions of which crushed the calf, ankle, and heel between vertically positioned boards,

Methods used in te Past

- ▼ **Water** (massive quantities of water forcibly ingested—or even mixed with urine, pepper, feces, *etc.*, for additional persuasiveness), and red-hot pincers (typically applied to fingers, toes, ears, noses, and nipples, although one tubular version [the "**crocodile shears**"] was specially devised for application to the penis

Laws against torture

- ▼ On December 10, 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Article 5 states, *"No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."*
- ▼ United Nations Convention Against Torture and the Geneva Conventions III & IV

Torture

- ▼ Word came from latin word *tortura* for "torque-tura", originally meaning "act of twisting arm"
- ▼ Definition:
 - *"Torture is any act by which severe pain, whether physical or psychological, is intentionally inflicted on a person as a means of intimidation, deterrence, revenge, punishment or information gathering"*

Effects of torture

- ▼ Physical problems
 - Sexually transmitted diseases
 - Musculo-skeletal problems
 - Brain injury
 - Post traumatic epilepsy
 - Dementia or chronic pain syndromes

Effects of torture

- ▼ Mental health problems
 - Post traumatic stress disorder
 - Depression
 - Anxiety disorder

Types of torture

- ▼ Physical torture
- ▼ Psychological torture
- ▼ Pharmacological torture
- ▼ Electrical shocks

Psychological torture


- ▼ Blackmail
- ▼ Being urinated on or covered with fecal matter
- ▼ Exploitation of phobias
- ▼ Kept in confined places
- ▼ Extended sleep deprivation
- ▼ Total sensory deprivation
- ▼ Head shaving (specially women)
- ▼ Forced labor
- ▼ Threats to family members
- ▼ Being stripped naked in public
- ▼ Constant shouting (verbal abuse & taunting)

Pakistani police torture techniques

Pakistani police says

- ▼ We use,

*chittar, manji
rolla, danda*



- ## Techniques
- ▼ Sustained beatings
 - ▼ Suspension & trussing
 - ▼ Asphyxiation
 - ▼ Threats of violence

- ## Few irregularities
- ▼ Without FIR
 - ▼ How released?
 - through court
 - on their own
 - any other
 - ▼ Result of torture?

- ## Common Sites of Police Torture
- ▼ Buttocks & Thighs
 - By shoe sole beating (Chittar)
 - Ruler
 - Injuries: Bruises or abrasions, pain & tenderness
 - ▼ Soles of feet & Palms of hands
 - Repeated beating by lath (baton)
 - Swellings, bruises & discolouration
 - Circumferential abrasions around wrist & ankles



Common Sites of Police Torture

- ▼ Back of Chest & Shoulders
 - Linear, healing bruises
 - Tram line pattern bruises
- ▼ Ears, Eyes & Face
 - Slapping of face may cause rupture of tympanic membrane
 - Injury to eyeballs or teeth or mucous membrane of oral cavity
- ▼ Nails
 - Pulling of nails



Common Sites of Police Torture

- ▼ Open wounds are in-frequent in police tortures
- ▼ Self suffered & self inflicted injuries to be distinguished
- ▼ Clothes to be examined specially in case of a firearm injury



Examination of a Suspected Case

- ▼ Like any other medico legal examination
- ▼ *Authority* to carry out examination
 - Court orders
- ▼ *Date, time & place* of examination
- ▼ *Consent & identity* of the examinee
- ▼ *History* of the incidence by the examinee
- ▼ *Date & time of police arresting* the examinee

Examination of a Suspected Case

- ▼ Before starting examination,
 - Read carefully all documents
- ▼ Printed prescribed proformas should be used
- ▼ Each case should be assigned an individual yearly number for reference
- ▼ 3 copies should be made,
 - 1 for Record, 1 for Authority ordering the examination & 1 for Surgeon Medico Legal Punjab

Examination of a Suspected Case

- ▼ Each & every column to be filled
- ▼ If any column is inapplicable, that space should be written as 'not applicable'
- ▼ In case of physical trauma,
 - Full body examination after removal of clothes in good light
 - Each visible injury should be noted with all dimensions
 - Note carefully presence of any marks of tattoos and/or healed scars or self inflicted injuries

Examination of a Suspected Case

- ▼ If the injured has been referred for hospital admission,
 - Date of admission & discharge
- ▼ Relevant investigations must be done before declaring injuries
- ▼ For crushing of muscles without any external marks of violence, urine examination to be done for myoglobin & casts

Examination of a Suspected Case

- ▼ Treatment notes & reports of investigation,
 - Radiology
 - Dental examination
 - Chemical examination
 - Ballistic expert should be entered with their date & number
- ▼ No medico legal cases should be left pending without valid reason
- ▼ Photographs are valuable record