

STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO CONSUMER JUSTICE IN PAKISTAN, THE CASE FOR INCORPORATING MEDIATION WITHIN THE CONSUMER PROTECTION FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

The Consumer Protection Act, 2005 was made to help people get quick and low-cost justice when they face problems as consumers. It provides consumers the right to recover their losses and claim damages from the defendant for providing defective services or products. The law ensures that consumers are protected from unfair trade practices and fraudulent business conduct. Consumers may file a complaint in the Consumer Court to enforce their rights and obtain redressed for any harm suffered. Although consumer courts exist in Pakistan, many cases still take a long time and are complicated. There are 302 fresh cases are filed before the Consumer Court Lahore In 2024 and 1436 cases are pending before the Consumer Court Lahore. The case trial process is very long, and it takes a lot of time to resolve their issues. Consumer Courts in Pakistan have received cases involving minor issues, including claims related to defective shoes, bulbs, fans etc. and other low-value goods and services. These matters could have been resolved through mediation, but due to the absence of a formal mediation process, consumers often resort to litigation. This research suggests that both parties in a consumer dispute should first try to resolve the issue through mediation. The Consumer Court should refer the cases to ADR at settlement stage. This step should be made compulsory by law. By studying how other countries i.e India and United Nations Guidelines deal with such disputes and analyzing Pakistan's current legal system, the research provides suggestions on how to introduce mediation in Punjab Consumer Protection Courts. It shows that making mediation mandatory can reduce the number of consumer cases, provide faster justice, and improve public satisfaction. The research also presents a clear plan for these changes, considering Pakistan's legal and social realities.

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1) Introduction

Consumer rights protection is a fundamental aspect of any equitable legal system. In Pakistan, the Consumer Protection Act, 2005 have laid the foundation for a specialized legal regime. However, systemic delays, lack of awareness, and procedural formalities limit the effectiveness of consumer courts. The Provincial Assembly of Punjab Government has amended the Punjab Consumer Protection Act 2005 and introduces law Known as Punjab Consumer Protection (Amendment) Act, 2025. According to these

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amendments all Consumer Courts have closed due to high operational costs. It has been proposed that the Lahore High Court, Lahore, in a district, designate a District Judge or an Additional District Judge of that district, as Consumer Court to try the claims, to be filed after the commencement of the amending Act or pending in the existing Consumer Courts.³

Pre-trial settlement is a beauty of this Act. Parties can resolve their dispute make a firm written offer of settlement by the defendant before court proceedings. This settlement proceeding is helpful in minimizing undue litigation. As a result, people are getting relief. However, there is no proper mediation system available at this stage.⁴

In contrast, many countries have embraced Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), especially mediation, to resolve disputes efficiently. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) offers a practical and efficient way to resolve disputes without going to court. ADR is generally faster, less expensive, and more flexible than traditional litigation, making it accessible to a broader range of people. In Pakistan, laws such as the Alternative Dispute Resolution Act 2017 and the Punjab Alternative Dispute Resolution Act 2019 support the use of ADR, aiming to reduce the burden on courts and provide timely justice.⁵ As S. Gul (2019) has pointed on the resolution of disputes with the resolution and has emphasized on the timely and safe withdrawal of disputes known that if the disputes are not well handled, they cause havoc and the wrong results. In addition, he has used a lot of time and length discussing the dispute resolution procedures within tribal and indigenous societies. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) covers several mechanisms designed to facilitate the resolution of disputes outside the traditional courtroom setting.

These mechanisms include negotiation, mediation, arbitration, conciliation, and hybrid forms. Each of these mechanisms offers distinct approaches to resolving conflicts in an efficient and collaborative manner.

It is tailored to the needs of the parties involved. Mr. (J) Jillani, is of the view that a fair procedural law tries to attain three objectives; truth finding, resolution of disputes without delay and cost-effective process in achieving these⁶.

Unfortunately, Pakistani Court working under Punjab Consumer Protection (Amendment) Act, 2025 failed in attaining all of these objectives. There has been delayed justice. To all this a practical and viable solution is, in the shape of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

Overall, ADR serves as a valuable tool in Pakistan's legal system, promoting quicker and more amicable dispute resolution.

This study focuses on how Consumer Court of Pakistan can adopt mandatory mediation for consumer disputes, especially before litigation, to foster quicker, consensual, and cost-effective resolutions.

³ Punjab Consumer Protection (Amendment) Act 2025.

⁴ Section 29 of The Punjab Consumer Protection Amendment Act, 2025.

⁵ Dispute Resolution Act 2017 , Punjab Alternative Dispute Resolution Act 2019& Arbitration Act 1940.

⁶ Farooqi, M. A. & Rizvi, A. (2024). Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Pakistan: Bridging Gaps to Ensure Justice. *Social Sciences Spectrum*, 3(4), 81-95.

2) Research Objectives

- I. To evaluate the existing consumer protection legal framework in Punjab i.e Punjab Consumer Protection (Amendment Act) 2025.
- II. To examine The Consumer Protection Act 2019 (India) and United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection, 1985 of mandatory mediation in their consumer disputes.
- III. To propose legal and institutional reforms for incorporating mediation into Pakistan's consumer justice system.

3) Problem Statement:

It is a fact that the Punjab Consumer Protection (Amendment Act) 2025 protects the right of the consumers. Before the commencement of the Punjab Consumer protection Act 2005, there is no proper law available for the protection of the rights of consumers. People have filed a civil suit for redressal of their grievance. The Punjab Consumer Protection (Amendment Act) 2025 provides relief to consumer if he has faced defective services and product from manufacturer or service provider. The complainant filed his claim before the Consumer Court under Section 25 of Punjab Consumer Protection (Amendment Act) 2025 but it takes many of years for redressal of his grievance. Many countries Like India have embraced mediation to resolve disputes efficiently⁷. The President of India gave his assent to the long-awaited Consumer Protection Act, 2019 ("Act") on August 9, 2019, and it went into effect on July 20, 2020. Chapter V of the Act emphasizes the importance of mediation in consumer related disputes, which encourages the parties to participate in mediation once the complaint has been admitted or at any later point. The process of mediation has been added under the Consumer Protection Act 2019, let us discuss the provisions in detail with the practical aspect.

As section 37 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 has increased its ambit and welcomed the provisions of the mediation. It includes the "Reference to Mediation". It states that in case the District Commission thinks or it appears from the case to the commission that settlement is possible though the settlement, then they may direct the parties to settle the dispute through mediation.

The provision of section 37 of CPA is as under:

"At the first hearing of the complaint after its admission, or at any later stage, if it appears to the District Commission that there exist elements of a settlement which may be acceptable to the parties, except in such cases as may be prescribed, it may direct the parties to give in

8. The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 (Chapter-IV Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission) Section 37: Reference to Mediation.

writing, within five days, consent to have their dispute settled by mediation in accordance with the provisions of Chapter V.⁸

Where the parties agree for settlement by mediation and give their consent in writing, the District Commission shall, within five days of receipt of such consent, refer the matter for mediation, and in such case, the provisions of Chapter V, relating to mediation, shall apply.”

Since mediation is amicable settlement of the disputes, using mediation to settle the disputes has been proved very satisfactory because of very high rates of success. Parties’ themselves deciding the outcome of the dispute is a notable feature of the mediation. An achieved result acceptable to both the parties of the dispute, gives no scope for further litigation on the decided subject unless there is serious violation in the procedure adopted for the mediation. Considering its time & cost advantage and unstructured procedure, mediation has been recently introduced for resolving the consumer disputes to provide win-win situation to the consumer & business entities. However, still there is scope for creating awareness

among the consumers & business entities to popularize mediation and make them use the mediation as an effective tool of ADR. The term mediation can be defined as a voluntary dispute resolution process where the third party facilitates negotiation between the disputed parties to negotiate for their rights and interests by themselves. The third party who facilitates the negotiation between the disputed parties is called mediator. As described by the Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee of Supreme Court of India, ‘Mediation’ is a voluntary, binding process in which an impartial and neutral mediator facilitates disputing parties in reaching a settlement. A mediator does not impose a solution but creates a conducive environment in which disputing parties can resolve all their disputes.⁹

The United Nations guideline for Consumer protection, 1985 also provides the guidelines and recommendation regarding the redressal of the grievance expeditious through formal or informal procedures.¹⁰ The United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection are a valuable set of principles that set out the main characteristics of effective consumer protection legislation, enforcement institutions and redress systems. Furthermore, the Guidelines assist interested Member States in formulating and enforcing domestic and regional laws, rules and regulations that are suitable to their economic, social and environmental circumstances. They also help promote international enforcement cooperation among Member States and encourage the sharing of experiences in consumer protection.¹¹ Article 37 to 41 of The United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection deals with the dispute resolution and redressal. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) offers a practical and efficient way to resolve disputes without going to court. Mediation is generally faster, less expensive, and more flexible than traditional litigation, making it accessible to a broader range of people.

However, there is no proper mediation system available in the Punjab Consumer Protection (Amendment) Act 2025. The systemic delays, procedural formalities and lack of ADR system

⁸ Jagdish Chander v Ramesh Chander, [2007] 5 SCC 719, ADR can be referred under section 37 only if both the parties agree to it.

⁹ ‘Mediation’ as an Alternative Dispute Settlement Mechanism under the Consumer Protection Act 2019: An Analysis. Sangeeta Taak. Rajiv Gandhi DOI: 10.52028/rbadr.v4i8.10

¹⁰ United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection, 1985. The guidelines were first adopted by the General Assembly in *resolution 39/248 of 16 April 1985*.

¹¹ Preface of United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection, 1985.

limit the effectiveness of the consumer courts. In Pakistan, laws such as the Alternative Dispute Resolution Act 2017 and the Punjab Alternative Dispute Resolution Act 2019 support the use of ADR, aiming to reduce the burden on courts and provide timely justice.

Therefore, mediation serves as a valuable tool in Pakistan's legal system, promoting quicker and more amicable dispute resolution. This study focuses on how Consumer Court of Pakistan can adopt mandatory mediation for consumer disputes, especially before litigation, to foster quicker, consensual, and cost-effective resolutions.

4) Research Questions:

- i. What problems exist in the current consumer court system in Punjab?
- ii. How have other countries i.e India and United Nations Guidelines used mandatory mediation in consumer cases successfully?
- iii. What changes in law and institutions are needed to use mandatory mediation in Pakistan?

5) Literature Review:

Several studies highlight the inefficiency of Pakistan's formal judicial processes, particularly for civil and consumer disputes. The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 (India) and United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection, 1985 demonstrate how structured ADR i.e mediation has resolved consumer disputes faster. However, few studies in Pakistan address mediation specifically in the consumer law context, indicating a gap this research aims to fill. Many scholars such as Azeem Farooqi and Malaika Moiz have emphasized the transformative potential of mediation.¹² The term mediation can be defined as a voluntary dispute resolution process where the third party facilitates negotiation between the disputed parties to negotiate for their rights and interests by themselves. The third party who facilitates the negotiation between the disputed parties is called mediator. The scholars Affia Jabeen, Maryam Aleem, Samra Shaukat and Khurram Shahzad Bhatti *proposes a mandatory comprising automated negotiation, platform-hosted mediation, and a specialist Digital Commerce Tribunal, as the essential missing pillar of Pakistan's e-commerce legal infrastructure.*¹³ The Author Tehseenullah Khan, Muhammad Hamza Zakir and Muhammad Zafar Iqbal has make a comparative analysis of Consumer Law between Pakistan and India and highlighted the gaps in consumer laws. The strengthening consumer awareness, enhancing institutional capacities, streamlining dispute resolution processes, and expanding access to redressal mechanisms are key areas that require attention to ensure effective consumer protection. The Consumer Protection Rules, 2020, India framed under the Consumer Protection Act, provide detailed

¹² Farooqi, M. A. & Rizvi, A. (2024). Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Pakistan: Bridging Gaps to Ensure Justice. *Social Sciences Spectrum*, 3(4), 81-95

¹³ Justice Without a Forum: The Online Dispute Resolution Vacuum in Pakistan's Digital Commerce and the Architecture of a Mandatory ODR Framework. (2026). *The Critical Review of Social Sciences Studies*, 4(1), 2205-2218.

<https://doi.org/10.59075/s24hjs42>

procedures and guidelines for consumer disputes, mediation, product liability, and ecommerce. These rules aim to enhance consumer protection mechanisms and streamline the redressal process. Mediation is an informal process where a neutral third party assists the parties in reaching a mutually acceptable settlement.¹⁴ The Punjab Consumer Protection (Amendment Act) 2025 provides relief to consumer if he has faced defective services and product from manufacturer or service provider. The complainant filed his claim before the Consumer Court under Section 25 of Punjab Consumer Protection (Amendment Act) 2025 but it takes many of years for redressed of his grievance. Many countries Like India have embraced mediation to resolve disputes efficiently.¹⁵ The President of India gave his assent to the long-awaited Consumer Protection Act, 2019 (“Act”) on August 9, 2019, and it went into effect on July 20, 2020. Chapter V of the Act emphasizes the importance of mediation in consumer related disputes, which encourages the parties to participate in mediation once the complaint has been admitted or at any later point. The process of mediation has been added under the Consumer Protection Act 2019, let us discuss the provisions in detail with the practical aspect. As section 37 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 has increased its ambit and welcomed the provisions of the mediation. It includes the “Reference to Mediation”. It states that in case the District Commission thinks or it appears from the case to the commission that settlement is possible though the settlement, then they may direct the parties to settle the dispute through mediation.

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The Autor Muhammad Danyal Khan dissects the existing consumer protection framework and demonstrates how the ADR framework could enhance consumer protection in Pakistan.¹⁷ The author Sangeeta Taak and Rajiv Gandhi discussed the importance of mediation and how it can be helpful or the consumer commission and consumers both to solve the dispute in less time and lower cost.¹⁸ As described by the Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee of Supreme Court of India, ‘Mediation’ is a voluntary, binding process in which an impartial and neutral mediator facilitates disputing parties in reaching a settlement. A mediator does not impose a solution but creates a conducive environment in which disputing parties can resolve all their

¹⁴ Khan, T., Zakir, M. H., & Iqbal, M. Z.s. (2023). Comparative Analysis of Consumer Laws in Pakistan and India. *Journal of Social Sciences Review*, 3(2), 1162-1175.
<https://doi.org/10.54183/jssr.v3i2.363>.

¹⁵ The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 (Chapter-IV Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission) Section 37: Reference to Mediation.

¹⁶ Jagdish Chander v Ramesh Chander, [2007] 5 SCC 719, ADR can be referred under section 37 only if both the parties agree to it.

¹⁷ <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781032689739-16/consumer-adr-pakistan-muhammad-danyal-khan>

¹⁸ Mediation’ as an Alternative Dispute Settlement Mechanism under the Consumer Protection Act 2019: An Analysis. Sangeeta Taak. Rajiv Gandhi DOI: 10.52028/rbdr.v4i8.10.

disputes .¹⁹

The Author Ibrar Hassan Khan, Dr. Muhammad Khalid Sohail, Dr. Muhammad Arif Khattak and Dr. Syeda Faiza urooj reconnoitred the mediating roles of digital consumer protection and digital financial literacy in the connection between mobile money adaptation and financial inclusion in Pakistan²⁰. The author Abdus Samad Khan, Ashraf Ali, Muhammad Saleem, Shaista Naznin and Muzammil Shah are guided the Consumer protection laws, in general, are meant to endorse fair competition, passing of candid information, availability of quality goods and services, and endow rules for prompt and due justice. Consumers, in Pakistan, are the feeblest faction of people. Lack of awareness of consumer rights, gap between the available consumer laws and the lack of determination to implement those laws play important role in their vulnerability. The aim is to educate people about his consumer rights and available courses of redress with the help of consumer protection laws in Pakistan .²¹ The United Nations guideline for Consumer protection,1985 also provides the guidelines and recommendation regarding the redressal of the grievance expeditious through formal or informal procedures .²²The United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection are a valuable set of principles that set out the main characteristics of effective consumer protection legislation, enforcement institutions and redress systems. Furthermore, the Guidelines assist interested Member States in formulating and enforcing domestic and regional laws, rules and regulations that are suitable to their economic, social and environmental circumstances. They also help promote international enforcement cooperation among Member States and encourage the sharing of experiences in consumer protection.²³ Article 37 to 41 of The United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection deals with the dispute resolution and redressal. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) offers a practical and efficient way to resolve disputes without going to court. Mediation is generally faster, less expensive, and more flexible than traditional litigation, making it accessible to a broader range of people. The literature on the following themes is reviewed: consumer vulnerability and access to justice; development of consumer law in Pakistan and Punjab; case law finding the procedural barriers; the nature of mediation from a legal perspective; the ADR system in Pakistan; benefits and limitations of consumer mediation; the consumer mediation system in India; international consumer redress standards; online dispute resolution; gaps in the research; and theoretical and conceptual foundations of the study.

6) Rational and Benefits:

The effectiveness of any legal system is measured by its ability to provide timely, affordable, and accessible justice to the public. In Pakistan although consumer rights are formally recognized within the legal framework, their practical enforcement remains weak due to

¹⁹ Mediation' as an Alternative Dispute Settlement Mechanism under the Consumer Protection Act 2019: An Analysis. Sangeeta Taak. Rajiv Gandhi DOI: 10.52028/rbadr.v4i8.10

²⁰ The Mediating Role of Digital Consumer Protection and Digital Financial Literacy with Mobile Money Adaptation and Financial Inclusion in Pakistan. (2024). *Journal of Business and Management Research*, 3(2), 66-90. <https://jbmrresearch.com/index.php/Journal/article/view/214>.

²¹ Understanding and Analysis of Consumer Protection Laws in Pakistan. J. Appl. Environ. Biol. Sci., 4(12)92-98, 2014

²² United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection, 1985. The guidelines were first adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 39/248 of 16 April 1985.

²³ Preface of United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection, 1985.

procedural delays, high litigation costs, and institutional inefficiencies. As a result, consumers often face significant barriers in obtaining effective remedies against unfair trade practices, defective goods, and deficient services. This gap between legal recognition and practical enforcement provides the primary rationale for the present study. This research is further justified by the growing international shift towards alternative dispute resolution (ADR), particularly mediation, as an efficient and cost-effective mechanism for resolving consumer disputes. India has successfully integrated structured mediation frameworks within their consumer protection systems, thereby enhancing access to justice and reducing the burden on courts. These developments offer a valuable model for Pakistan, where dispute resolution still relies heavily on formal adjudication. The rationale of this study is particularly strengthened in light of recent legislative developments, including the Punjab Consumer Protection (Amendment) Act, 2025. The abolition of specialized consumer courts has raised serious concerns regarding procedural efficiency, accessibility, and the capacity of general courts to handle consumer disputes effectively. In this context, it becomes necessary to explore alternative mechanisms that can address these shortcomings and ensure the protection of consumer rights. There exists a noticeable gap in the existing academic literature regarding the practical integration of ADR within Pakistan's consumer protection framework. While previous studies have addressed consumer rights and judicial reforms independently, limited attention has been given to the role of mandatory mediation as a solution to procedural and court inefficiencies. This study seeks to fill this gap by providing a critical and comparative analysis of ADR mechanisms i.e Mediation in consumer dispute resolution. This study is justified on broader policy grounds. An effective consumer protection regime is essential for promoting fair market practices, enhancing consumer confidence, and strengthening public trust in legal institutions. By examining the potential of mandatory mediation, this research aims to offer practical and policy-oriented recommendations for developing a more efficient, accessible, and consumer-friendly justice system in Pakistan.

7) Limitations and Delimitations:

The research is delimited to the Punjab Consumer Protection (Amendment) Act 2025 and incorporating mediation system in that Law for speedy and quick justice. The Limitations of the study:

- I. Limited from The Islamabad Consumer Protection Act, 1995, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province Consumer Protection Act, 1997, The Balochistan Consumer Protection Act, 2003, The Sindh Consumer Protection Ordinance, 2007 etc.
- II. Other ADR modes Like Negotiation, Arbitration and Conciliation not explored.

8) Issues:

I. Inefficiency of Consumer Courts:

One of the major reasons of inefficiency of Consumer Courts is delay in case resolution. It is pertinent to mention that there is no reason for prolonged delays in consumer cases. The Act mandates that the court is bound to decide the claim within six months after the service of summons on the respondent.²⁴ Whereas, the Presiding Officers of these

²⁴ The Punjab Consumer Protection Amendment Act of 2025 Section 30(5).

Consumer Courts never adhere to this provision of the Act, instead, they keep on prolonging cases on one pretext or other. Despite the presence of six months mandatory provision, there are a lot of cases which are pending beyond the limit. This attitude and behavior of the Presiding Officers also discourage the consumer from filing of claims before Consumer Courts. Therefore these issues can be solving through mediation. Several countries have implemented mandatory mediation in consumer disputes with notable success In 2019, India amended its Consumer Protection Act 1986 to make mediation a mandatory step before filing certain consumer law suits. This initiative aimed to reduce the burden on courts and expedite dispute resolution. The UK has increasingly adopted mediation, especially for small claims. Mediation boasts a high success rate, with 92% of cases settling, 72% on the day of mediation and an additional 20% shortly after. This approach has significantly reduced litigation costs and eased the load on courts.²⁵

II. **lack of public awareness:**

Pakistan's consumer courts face several significant challenges that hinder their effectiveness. One major issue is the lack of public awareness about ADR i.e Mediation, Consumer rights and the existence of these courts. In the country's most populated province, a law to protect customers was introduced in 2005 know as PCPA (Punjab Consumer Protection Act 2005) with its rules being framed in 2009 i.e (Punjab Consumer Protection Rules 2009) .As per the available record only a measly 1,200 to 1,400 approach the consumer courts in Punjab annually. Moreover, data obtained by The Express Tribune shows that for a province whose population has grown exponentially since 2007, only 48,740 cases have made it to the various consumer courts in the province in the same time frame - 46,624 of the total number of cases has been decided, while 2,300 are still pending.²⁶

III. **Lengthy & Expensive Litigation:**

The litigation of the consumer court is very expensive. The case trial is very lengthy and due to this reason complainant has faced financial problem. It has taken many of years for justice. Mediation helps in this regards.

IV. **Procedural inefficiency:**

There is much procedural inefficiency in the Punjab Consumer Protection Amendment Act (2025). One of the major issues is abolition of Consumer Courts in Pakistan. The Provincial Assembly of Punjab Government has amended the Punjab Consumer Protection Act 2005 and introduces law Known as Punjab Consumer Protection (Amendment) Act, 2025. According to these amendments all Consumer Courts have closed due to high operational costs. Now the District Judge or an Additional District Judge of the district, as Consumer Court deals with the consumer cases. Therefore there is huge of burden impose upon the judicial system.

V. **Need for Legal Reforms:**

²⁵ The Times Newspaper dated 03.05.2024 Mediation on the rise as couples and companies try to avoid court.

²⁶ Published in *The World Press*, October 23th, 2024 Written By Abeer Sharma titled as; *Consumer Protection Act mediation (Section 37 (A) and Section 37(B)).*

The absence of mandatory mediation provisions within the consumer protection framework. The Limited infrastructure and trained mediators hinder ADR implementation.

9) Significance of the Study:

This study is among the first to advocate for structured and mandatory mediation within the consumer court system in Punjab. It aligns with global trends and responds to the need for reforming a slow and adversarial litigation system. The research contributes to academic discourse, informs legal reform initiatives, and offers practical solutions for policymakers and judicial administrators.

10) Submission

To integrate mandatory mediation into Punjab consumer justice framework, several legal and institutional reforms are necessary:

I. Legal Amendments:

Consumer protection laws should be revised to require mediation as a preliminary step before court proceedings. This change would formalize mediation in the legal process.

II. Establishment of Mediation Centers:

Dedicated mediation centers should be set up within or alongside consumer courts to facilitate the process. These centers would provide a structured environment for dispute resolution. The cases should refer to it at settlement stage.

III. Training of Mediators:

A pool of qualified mediators needs to be developed through comprehensive training programs. This ensures that mediators are equipped to handle various consumer disputes effectively.

IV. Public Awareness Campaigns:

Efforts must be made to educate consumers about their rights and the benefits of mediation. This can be achieved through media campaigns, workshops, and inclusion of consumer rights education in school curricula.

Implementing these reforms would create a more efficient and accessible consumer dispute resolution system in Pakistan.

11) Methodology:

The research adopts a qualitative legal research methodology, combining doctrinal and comparative analysis:

I. Doctrinal Analysis:

Examination of statutes, rules, case law, and legal commentaries related to consumer protection and ADR in Pakistan

II. Comparative Study:

Analysis of consumer mediation practices in India, and United Nations Guidelines for Consumer protection.

III. Empirical Input:

Semi-structured interviews with legal practitioners, judges, and consumer protection officers (optional/future work).

IV. Policy Review:

Evaluation of judicial and governmental policy documents such as the National Judicial Policy and Supreme Court judgments.

12) Expected Outcome:

The study is expected to:

- I. Propose specific amendments to the Punjab Consumer Protection (Amendment) Act 2025.
- II. Recommend the creation of Consumer Mediation Centers (CMCs).
- III. Present a pilot model for mandatory mediation in major urban centers.
- IV. Contribute to judicial and legislative debate on ADR integration.

13) Conclusion:

This research shows that adding mandatory mediation in consumer courts can help solve disputes faster, reduce costs, and lessen the burden on judges. It will also build better trust between consumers and businesses. Countries i.e India have already used mediation successfully in consumer matters. Pakistan can learn from their models and improve its own system.

To make this possible, the government should take some key steps. First, laws must be changed to make mediation a required step before going to trial. Second, proper training should be given to mediators so they can handle cases fairly. Third, awareness campaigns should inform the public about the benefits of mediation.

With these changes, mandatory mediation can become a strong tool for consumer justice and help reform the entire consumer protection framework in Pakistan.

13)Reference:

- I. Punjab Consumer Protection Act, 2005 (Pakistan)
- II. Punjab Consumer Protection Rules, 2009
- III. PLD 2016 SC 730
- IV. Azeem Farooqi & Dr. Aatir Rizvi (2024), "ADR in Pakistan"
- V. Moiz, Malaika et al. (2024), "Legal Framework of Mediation in Pakistan"
- VI. Muhammad Danyal Khan (2023), *Consumer ADR in Pakistan*, Taylor & Francis
- VII. United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection, 1985
- VIII. Indian Consumer Protection Act, 2019

- IX. Mediation' as an Alternative Dispute Settlement Mechanism under the Consumer Protection Act 2019: An Analysis. Sangeeta Taak. Rajiv Gandhi DOI: 10.52028/rbadr.v4i8.10
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- XI. Khan, Hamaish et al. (2022), "Comparative Analysis of ADR Laws in Pakistan"