



# Praja Foundation annual report, 2021: '98% cases of serious offence pending trial'

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In the six-year span between 2016 and 2021, trials (judgment/withdrawal) were completed in, on an average, only 2,401 cases of Class II serious offences in Mumbai, according to the Praja Foundation's annual report, 'State of Policing and Law and Order in Mumbai, 2022', released on Tuesday. The report states that at this pace, it will take another 34 years to provide judgment in all the cases pending for trial as on 2021.

The report is based on information obtained under the Right to Information (RTI) Act and data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

Class II serious offences include murder, murder attempt, crimes against women and cases under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, among others.

As of 2021, a total of 82,108 Class II serious offences, or 98% of total cases, were pending for trial. Trial was completed in only 1,240 cases and 485 cases were either withdrawn, transferred, abated or quashed. In the 1,240 cases where trials were completed, 86% ended in an acquittal or discharge. While the rate of conviction was only 14%, conviction rates for crimes like murder was comparatively better at 45%, rape at 24%, molestation at 21% and kidnapping/abduction at 20%.

Further, the report on Class II serious offences states that another 25,841 cases are pending at the police investigation stage, including 16,713 from the previous year. This

means 68% cases are pending and the pendency has increased by 8%, compared to 2017 when it was 60%. Vishwas Nangre Patil, joint commissioner of police, law and order, told The Indian Express, "This year (2022), we have disposed of pendency on a large scale."

Apart from the backlog in the judiciary, the pendency due to police investigations can also be attributed to vacant posts in Mumbai Police. Sources in Maharashtra Police said the sanctioned strength for the entire force was increased for the last time between 2007 and 2012.

"The vacancy in Mumbai Police increased from 22% in 2018 to 28% in 2022. The vacancy in posts of police officers who investigate cases is also worrying. It's 24% for police sub-inspector posts and 13% for assistant police inspector posts. The manpower crunch affects the duration and quality of investigation," said Milind Mhaske, CEO of Praja Foundation.

Link: <https://cs-admin.co.uk/praja-foundation-annual-report-2021-98-cases-of-serious-offence-pending-trial/>