



Healing Community-Based Criminal Victimization Practicing Restorative Justice in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The article presents healing approaches through restorative practices and motivations related to community-based criminal victimization in Bangladesh, gathering various strategies and interventions. Community members engage in different events and functions, motivating themselves to perform good works for the broader interest of the community. Community rules and regulations guide individuals in maintaining communal harmony and discipline. However, various forms of criminal victimization have occurred in community settings for different reasons. The community members have been provoked to violate legal orders and social rules that are considered ‘crime’ in Bangladesh. This study traces and understands the underlying causes and contexts of these criminal incidents, exploring the role of restorative practices in healing and alleviating trauma. Insights into community-based criminal victimization are drawn from interviews with victims in community settings. This study is a qualitative effort to explore the changes and dimensions of crime within the community. Victims have been interviewed using the Case Study Method, with eleven individuals from different criminal victimization cases following an interview checklist. In contrast, Restorative Justice Practitioners (RJPs) have been interviewed through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Through KIIs, six RJP have been questioned to understand restorative practices and motivations. The major findings reveal that community members are motivated by different perspectives and reasons to violate the rules and community-based Livelihood Instructions (CLI). The study problem presents various insights and considerations emphasizing the importance of maintaining community rules and instructions.

Keywords: *Criminal Victimization; Healing Approach; Restorative Justice; Criminal Funnel; And Community Involvement*

Introduction

Introduction and Logical Framework of the Study

The lifestyle of a community's people is significant in controlling criminal victimization and disputes. These disputes hinder the normal lives of community members and create various questions and situations. These circumstances can compel individuals to engage in criminal activities and violate community and legal codes. Karmen (2003) mentioned that community matters and life-related issues influence people. Community-based gatherings and interest-oriented movements create an uncontrollable force in an unsystematic community that compels individuals to undermine others' rights and positions within the community. Restorative interventions are applied in many communities to restore lost relationships and understandings. The genesis of restorative justice makes a unique illustration for restoring damaged situations by managing or providing community-based supports through legal and community commitments.

The community's people have been provoked by various factors and issues that have led them to violate regular rules and customs for different purposes. Lanier, Henry, and Anastasia (2015) mentioned that the lifestyle of the community members has been compelled to incorporate criminal actions and events. Due to these lifestyle factors, community members have encountered various individuals and situations that involve criminal attitudes and processes. Sarker (2008), argued that the people of the community have experienced criminal victimization influenced by numerous factors: financial scarcity, moral degradation, absence of justice, untrustworthy relationships and bonds, lack of community-based preventive measures against crimes and unethical issues, excessive discrimination in various matters, lack of solidarity and togetherness, and the desire to gain benefits without ownership and legitimacy. Due to the effects of post-modernization, the context of life has become more complicated, compelling individuals to be self-centered and interest-oriented. As a result of their circumstances, community members have committed various criminal victimizations for their own interests and intentions.

In Bangladesh, some legal initiatives have been undertaken by the government and development agencies to resolve the petty crimes that are considered compoundable and easy to solve within the community. The Village Court Act 2006 and the Arbitration Act 2009 have been passed to resolve petty crimes within the community through a recognized process. The functions of the village court and customary justice approach have been practiced in Bangladesh for a long ago by considering the nature and severity of a criminal victimization. Sarker (2008) conducted a study and mentioned that the characteristics of the lifestyles of the people of Bangladesh are interconnected and dependent on different interests and support. This dependency on each other complicates the comforts and demands that are relevant to survival. The surviving mechanism of this community has influenced people to control the situation and relationships by hampering others' social status and human position. Restorative justice (Marshall: 1999) is exposed here to deal with undesirable situations satisfactorily by maintaining all needs and requirements.

The community-based criminal victimization in Bangladesh's society has exhibited various characteristics and natures. Hassan and Ali (2008) conducted a study on community-based victimization to determine what approaches have been utilized to address these incidents with appropriate treatment. They noted that community members are influenced by various factors and demands. After victimization, the cases have been reported by victims to restorative agencies or the police to resolve through appropriate actions. Considering all factors and issues related to criminal victimization, the present study has been designed to explore the healing approaches and interventions implemented through restorative justice. The following dimensions are deemed particularly relevant to the present study: (a) identify the nature and execution process of criminal victimization that occurs in community settings; (b) the community members have been driven by numerous factors and reasons to harm others for their interests

and needs. By conducting the present study, the underlying causes of crime have been identified and explored thoroughly; (c) the restorative interventions used to resolve the incidents, bringing together victims and offenders in the presence of community members to achieve a win-win situation. All the aforementioned considerations have guided the continuation of the study.

Research Questions

The present study has been conducted following these questions:

- (a) Why have victims chosen restorative agencies to resolve their disputes?
- (b) What restorative actions were applied by restorative justice practitioners (RJP) to heal the reported disputes?
- (c) How were the healing approaches decided by RJP considering the nature of victimization?
- (d) What impacts were made in the victim's life to readjust within the community?

Objectives of the Study

The principal objective of the study is to explore and narrate the approaches used in restorative justice healing community-based criminal victimization. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- (a) Unearth the nature of community-based criminal victimization and disputes;
- (b) Explore the causes of reporting victimization in the restorative agencies by victims and their families;
- (c) Unveil the action(s) taken by the restorative agencies healing the criminal victimization;
- (d) Reveal the way of application of the healing approaches by the restorative justice practitioners;
- (e) Disclose the impact of restorative justice to ensure the victims' satisfaction; and
- (f) Present the policy recommendations to extend the interventions of restorative justice within the communities.

Understanding Concepts Used in the Study

The present study conceived several concepts that have different meanings. These concepts have been considered by following the explanation mentioned below: (a) *Criminal Victimization* is defined as a term that indicates a situation in which a person has been victimized and harmed by another person who is called an offender. Langford (2022) defined criminal victimization as an intentional action taken by someone to harm others' property, valuable goods, and social position. According to Hall (2012), criminal victimization is considered a process that influences people to commit destructive acts against persons and property. In the present study, criminal victimization is defined as a process by which a criminal incident is committed by violating legal and social norms. Through this process, some are harmed, and some are identified as criminals. (b) *Restorative Practice* refers to this process or approach that is applied to resolve and heal the harms and damage caused by criminal victimization. Restorative justice is a community-based justice approach that involves the community in administering justice to reach an appropriate verdict and decision. Restorative justice broadens the scope for resolving incidents through accepting responsibility and fostering reconciliation.

Used Methods and Approaches

The present study has been conducted to unearth the healing approaches used in the restorative actions in Bangladesh. As a qualitative study, eleven victims have been interviewed using a semi-

structured interview checklist. All queries of restorative actions have been included in the interview checklist, focusing on open-ended and closed-ended views. The post-experience of victims has been noted in the present study. Two areas of Bangladesh have been selected as research areas where restorative justice is being practiced. Pirojpur and Madaripur were selected as the research area. The restorative experiences of victims are pivotal for continuing the restorative actions for any community. Through the methodical actions, restorative efforts (Hass-Wisecup and Saxon: 2018) should be applied in the community settings, resolving all compoundable disputes and victimization. The victims' views and post-victim life are significant to promote restorative justice by correcting the local loopholes and challenges. Exploring the in-depth insights of restorative actions, the qualitative design (Creswell: 2007) has been chosen for the present study. The selected victims have been interviewed through the *Case Study Method (CSM)*.

By contrast, Restorative Justice Practitioners (RJP) have been interviewed through *Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)*. Through KIIs, six RJP have been questioned to understand restorative practices and motivations. What healing actions has been used by RJP to resolve the disputes? These issues have been assessed and understood through the present study. From two research areas, six RJP were interviewed to realize the impact of healing approaches and strategies used. An interview checklist was used during the interview and discussion with the RJP. All contents were included to understand the healing approaches imposed by the RJP. The collected data were described using techniques like narrative analysis, conceptual interpretation, verbatim quotations, and thematic analysis. These techniques were considered by Creswell (2007) the best way to analyze the qualitative data and contents.

Understanding the Gaps Reviewing Literature

Restorative justice is a relatively new concept in Bangladesh, but its practices within the community have been ongoing for a long time, drawing upon the faith and wisdom of community members. Recognized as a community-led approach to justice, restorative justice is practiced in various forms and structures. This study has identified restorative approaches implemented through interventions aimed at addressing criminal victimization, which is characteristically 'petty.' The following literature review explores the approaches to restorative justice applied in Bangladesh:

The growth and development of restorative justice in Bangladesh have progressed slowly; nevertheless, it is practiced steadily. Shalish (customary justice), Village Court, and arbitration within the local government structure are prime illustrations of restorative justice in Bangladesh. However, all forms of restorative justice should be implemented within the legal framework and structure. Asadullah and Morrison (2021) explore the growth and development of restorative justice by collecting key informant opinions and reviews. Through a community-based approach, the concept of restorative justice has been applied in Bangladesh for a long time, defining the community-based framework and resolutions. Reliable individuals in the community serve as focal persons (FP) for restorative justice in Bangladesh, resolving community-based criminal offenses. Academic initiatives, NGO and INGO interventions, and government efforts have yielded significant progress in restorative justice. The Village Court is one such example of restorative justice. National NGOs and INGOs are funded to implement restorative justice within the framework of the Village Court and the healing strategies they established.

The authors (Asadullah and Morrison, 2021) have identified the starting point of restorative justice in Bangladesh, mentioning various examples that have been practiced for a long time. The rural and urban populations of Bangladesh have become accustomed to receiving the verdict of the community-based justice system. Restorative justice is known as a community-based justice approach that brings together the victim(s), offender(s), and community stakeholders to resolve any disputes and non-serious criminal victimizations. The reviewed study argued that restorative justice is growing rapidly with the support of community members. At the same time, the relevant legal framework for restorative justice has

been passed in Bangladesh, promoting restorative actions to heal criminal victimizations within community settings. The study also mentioned that the restorative idea for resolving compoundable criminal victimization is gaining ‘popularity’ and is acknowledged by notable persons and authorities.

A study *‘Community and Restorative Justice Practices in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh: A Comparative Overview’* has been conducted by Kashyap, Asadullah, Tiwari, and Sakafi (2021) in order to present a comparative overview on the practices of restorative justice in South Asia particularly India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. The reviewed study has been conducted on the basis of comparison overview following some specific objectives focusing the restorative experiences of three countries. These are to: present the functions and historical blooming of restorative justice in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh; search the variation of community-based victimizations which have been occurred repeatedly within the community; know the applied model and approaches to repair the happened criminal victimizations within the community; identify the community performance for resolving the criminal events and role of community to deal the post-victim situations; and suggest how the restorative justice will be more applicable within the community and to share the knowledge and practice wisdom among three counties of India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

The history of restorative justice in India had been practiced from the very beginning of the community and still now is practicing to heal the community-based injustice and harms in different name and models. India is a large country considering the geographical boundary and its population. The people of India are facing different problems and injustice regularly and noted complaint is reported as cases in the police station are solved but doesn’t look the quick responses for all victims. The variations of identity and cultural gap among the community people are making stressed on the people thinking, behavior and festival. The reviewed study mentioned that community-based social discrimination in different affairs in the community settings are pressurized the people not to follow the community customs and regulations. One of the significant causes for this situation is that community people don’t get the proper guideline and feedback from the government equally to run the life and fulfill the basic demands. The community people are engaged in different criminal activities for their own interest and question of life. The reviewed study argued that a culture of cheating and stressful obedience among people have been made and few people with anti-social brain and intention have been guided the mass people wrongly and the situation of violating the rules and community issues have been hampered and distressed.

The concept of *‘Gram Panchayat’* (village court) is working in different communities of India to deal the community-based disputes and to ensure the justice with victim satisfactions. The idea of *‘justice pluralism’* is accepted by the legal authority of India and a paralegal professionalism has been practiced in different communities to promote the community solidarity and *commitment towards people by people*. The village court of India has repaired the minor crimes of the community which is compoundable in nature and both parties are agreed to minimize the criminal matter with satisfactory conclusion. The minimizeable criminal victimizations within the community have been resolved within the community intervened by the community-based authority known as restorative interventions and the all parties have been gathered for concluding the criminal matter with win-win approach. The community people are desired to solve the community-based disputes within the community showing the situation of all parties and stakeholders who will take the risk and vulnerabilities of happened victimizations.

The restorative justice is applied in Nepal for same reasons and that is to repair the community disputes and injustice. The experiences of South Asian countries to practice the restorative justice is almost same more or less. The community composition, people in nature, and the types of criminal victimization of South Asia is comparatively similarities and related. The factors behind the criminal victimizations are stressed the people in different ways and the coping mechanisms of stress by people is distinctive from person to person. The reviewed study mentioned that the community disputes and criminal activities of Nepal’s community have been repaired locally and used the formal interventions.

The formal legal interventions of Nepal is confined to heal the criminal victimizations which have been reported to the police office and any court. A number of huge victimizations have been committed within the community which would be unreported and unnoticed by the law enforcement authority. The community-based criminal victimizations particularly non-serious crimes have been restituted within the community through indigenous interventions and approaches. The reviewed study opined that the community people of Nepal are interested highly to accept the verdict through restorative interventions. The reviewed study mentioned the feedback of the respondents as follows:

As a community member, we have noticed that some criminal victimizations have been committed within the community which hampered the normal life settings and destination. The formal legal approach is worked to solve the criminal activities but within the community some disputes have been committed by someone which hampered the community life and reaction among the community members. As a community mates, we use the intervention of restorative approach to repair the non-serious crimes and disputes. The people of community have to follow the community rules and obligations for own interest and purposes. We are agreed to look after the each other problems and forward the life with peaceful fragrance and taste.

The community disputes of Nepal have been resolved following the *HEART model* which invites the community people to bear the mentality for sharing and compromising. The community related violence and disputes have been resolved by the people eagerness and co-operation. The community people of Nepal are interested to reconcile the criminal victimizations within the community in front of community and distribute the responsibilities for recovery among all stakeholders. The study mentioned that some social philanthropists in Nepal have been established some restorative justice agencies for ensuring justice for poor and disadvantaged people by providing the legal supports and safety. The model of *HEART* has been applied within the community resolving the criminal events and injustice. The idea of *HEART model* is described by restorative agencies of Nepal as follows:

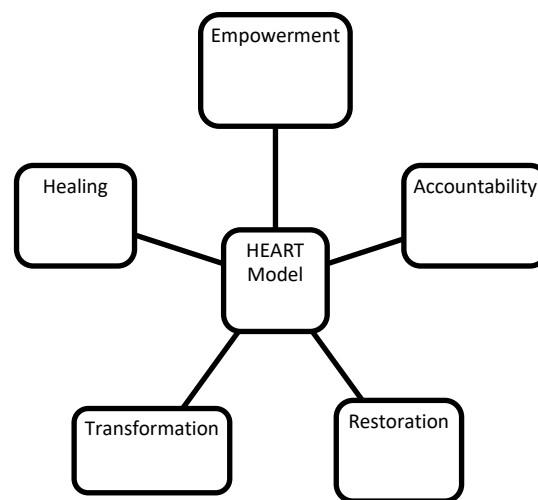


Diagram: Thematic Components of HEART Model

Source: Developed by Researcher

Through the *HEART* model, the community-based disputes and criminal victimizations have been resolved and re-integrated the community relationship among the community people. Aftermath of any victimizations hamper the possibility of normal life for victim, and the offender has been stigmatized socially. Restorative justice as an approach for reconciliation has to promote the *HEART* model to resolve the events of victimizations using the components of *victim empowerment, pressurized the offender to be*

accountable in front of community paying the compensations, transformation of hidden conflicts and build a progressive relationship between victim and offender, heal the matter of victimizations with traumatization and restore the harms, and pains as well. The HEART model of restorative justice in Nepal is very popular and well-practiced to resolve the criminal victimizations and inspires the community people to move in together and to establish a mutual bonding for each other. Restorative justice has guided the community people for their emergency and needs. Restorative interventions opens different scopes to work with the community people and by which the community people can report about the criminal victimizations to the authority for solution and recovery as well. The study noted that the community people of Nepal are interested to apply the restorative interventions for resolving their disputes and non-serious criminal victimizations within the community settings.

Restorative justice in Bangladesh has been operated through different agencies which are known in different name. The community-based disputes and injustice have been repaired through restorative interventions gathering all parties and stakeholders. There are some agencies in Bangladesh which are worked as a restorative approach to repair the community disputes. Village Court, Local *Shalish System*, Arbitration Council, *Arbitration unit of City Corporation*, Family Court are known as alternative dispute regulation (ADR) and which are introduced as restorative justice literally in Bangladesh. The compoundable criminal victimizations (CCV) in the community settings have been resolved by restorative interventions and model which are recognized by the community and alternative disputes regulation authority. The Village Court Act-2006 (amendment in 2013) has been passed by the government to repair the local disputes locally and to motivate the community people to follow the rule of legislation as well as maintain the community manner as law.

The reviewed study mentioned that the community-based disputes and harms happening among the people have been solved through the local interventions and approaches which are acknowledged by the government and people. The local people are interested to repair the committed criminal victimizations within the community and the local people are agreed to bring the community solidarity and togetherness among the people. The author of the reviewed study argued that restorative justice not only repairs the community disputes but also aware the people about their rights and duties within the community and towards people. Restorative justice tries to establish the philosophical basement of justice within the mind and response of the people and inspires to follow as per the community demand as well. Restorative justice follows different models for healing the community harms and injustice which has hampered the regular life of victim and stigmatized the offender. The reviewed study expressed that community people are desired to accept the warming by people and to live with trust and integration. Restorative justice in Bangladesh has been practiced for different reasons and accepted by people for many causes within the community.

The reviewed study mentioned that restorative justice has applied different models to repair the happened disputes and harms. Victim-Offender Mediation (VOM), peacemaking Circle, and Group Conferencing are the main models which have been applied more to resolve the criminal victimizations. The agencies which work for restorative justice by using the mentioned models and theoretical dimensions to repair the community-based criminal victimizations. Restorative justice arranges the community dialogue on different issues to aware the community people and to promote the community integration for inspiration and building community bonding. According to the reviewed study, restorative justice has achieved different level of satisfaction among the community people through repairing the community disputes and injustice. As alternative dispute regulation (ADR), restorative justice vibrates within the people of community to accept the restorative interventions for repairing the community disputes and various violence. Restorative justice promotes the good faith among the community people not to violate the community manners, not to break the legal obligations, and not to create the noise within the community which hamper the regularity of the community and sense of safety for community feelings as well.

A study has been written by Akram (2017) in daily newspaper in the title of ‘**The Benefits of Restorative Justice**’ to share the benefits and nature of restorative justice which solves the community disputes without intervening of formal justice procedure. The reviewed study mentioned that restorative justice is considered as a process which resolves the criminal victimization outside the formal justice system and invites the all parties to discuss and selects how to solve the matter and which model will be followed. The author noticed that formal justice system in Bangladesh has emphasized on the punishment for offenders. The re-integration for victim and related people has been unnoticed and avoided. Through the formal justice system either the victim party or offender parity will win. The win party will enjoy the benefits of the law and assigned resources. The alleged party (offender) will be stigmatized within the community and spoil the social dignity and reputation. The study mentioned that restorative justice doesn’t believe on the win or lose proposition, but welcomes the collaboration between victim and offender.

Bankhead and Brown (2023) have conducted a study to explain the restorative interventions to heal the community-based criminations. As a community-based justice approach, restorative justice repairs the criminal victimizations following the four recovery aspects namely mediation, reconciliation, restitution, and compensation. Restorative justice decorates the community frame to protect the all parties from post-inconvenience and re-offending. The community is invited in the process of restorative justice to solve the criminal matter and performed some roles prescribed by the restorative agency for the well-being of victim and offender in the broad context. The community is prepared the platform for restitution through different interventions with the restorative body where people gather freely and live with trust and confidence. Restorative justice focuses on the people collaboration and motivational bonding and by which people have to right to share the ideas and thoughts to the community forum for getting a better result. Restorative justice tries to extent the community spirit among the people for the better environment and a bonded relationship among the people to fight against of any discrimination and victimizations. Restorative justice practices the common strength of community people for repairing the disputes and conflicts. The reviewed study noted that *conflict transformation* is one of the main themes of restorative justice which applies in different aspects and affairs to make a new shaking among the people for law-abiding life and community festivals.

Restorative Justice to Address the Causes and Consequences of Sexual Harassment

‘Bangladesh Context’ has been studied by Eva and Urbi (2021) in order to aware the crime prevention authority and community people to resolve the sexual harassment through the intervention of restorative justice. The sexual harassment as a social issue has been happened frequently for many reasons. The community people are not interested to support the person who are engaged in the anti-social activities. Sexual harassment is a sensitive criminal victimization which spoils the regular life of victim and her family. Considering the socio-cultural context of Bangladesh, the sexual harassment is such a social problem which is not discussed openly and further investigation to prove the harassment is very complex due to the existing process and system. The victim and her family (stakeholders) are not interested to file a case in the court or police station to get the justice and recovery. Out of the formal justice system, an initiative has been taken by the restorative authority taking the permission of nearby police stations or court for resolving the matter through collaborative intervention among restorative agency, victim, and offender. In the reviewed study, the authors mentioned that:

Traditional justice system considers crime as a violation of law and it focuses on the punishment of offenders. In broad context, certain crimes are not only against of law, but also against of individuals and relationships in the community. The socio-cultural dimensions of any community influence the anti-social people to violate the community obligations and violate the rights and personal position of people. Sexual offence is sensitive due to its socio-cultural nature. The victim is traumatized for whole life for the social context and faced challenges for justifying any

criminal victimizations. Traditional justice system offers to arrest the accused person(s) for giving punishment. In some cases, demand by the community and people desire to punish the offender through the process of restitution and compensation as recovery and another objective is that to re-build the relationship between victim and offender and with stakeholders. Restorative justice is such a justice approach which deals the criminal victimizations for repairing and reduce the harms for strong bonding and ties.

Restorative justice is treated one kind of justice approach which welcomes all parties for restoration and move with peaceful mentality within the community. The reviewed study mentioned that restorative justice only repairs the compoundable criminal victimization happened within the community. Considering the content and context of the criminal victimizations, the formal court has to appoint any local body or restorative agency to deal the criminal victimizations with reasonable verdict and conclude the events with joyful mentality. The authors noticed that the strength and procedural mechanism of restorative justice to reconstitute the criminal matters within the community is inviting the all parties and to make dialogue for searching solutions. Restorative justice thinks both parties protections with social dignity and honor. The community is involved herewith to save the victim and to make stress the offender for paying the compensations and reconstitute supports as recovery. Restorative justice is well-known in different name in different countries and serves the purpose is to stop the recidivism and reduce the crime mentality.

The reviewed study noted that restorative justice addresses the needs and demands of victim with required protection. At the same time, restorative justice offers the offenders to compensate the damaged goods and resources. Restorative agency has decided the level of compensation through dialogue and sharing with the community. The community is considered as an important stakeholder in the process of restorative justice. The victim and the related stakeholders are facing different challenges in their community life. The offenders are pressurized the victim and the family-relatives for mutualize without compensation and makes stress to withdrawal the case or complaint. Restorative justice makes an environment to empower the victim. The victim empowerment is one of the significant tasks of restorative justice in the question of repairing the criminal victimization. By the victim empowerment, victim will fight against of any devil force and anti-social activities. Restorative justice has to emphasize on the victim's improvement considering the situation of victim. The victim has faced lot of complexities in the aftermath situation of criminal victimization and restorative justice promotes the position and status of victim by anyhow. The model of victim-offender mediation, family group conferencing, peacemaking circles have been applied to repair the harms of criminal victimizations.

Sexual harassment in workplace is a common scenario in Bangladesh perspective for many grounds. Victimized in workplace sexually is tried to hide the event for continuing the job and personal reputation. The victimized person is not interested to go police station or court for justice. Restorative justice is dealt the matter of victimizations keeping the event of harassment in hidden position and to save the victim's status and professional position. In another light, victim blaming is a common phenomenon which hampers the regular life of victim and makes different complexity for further position and status. In Bangladesh, the women victim blaming is going more and victimized women have been faced lot of problems and abandoned from the community and family.

The reviewed study (Marwah: 2024) mentioned that victimization by family members and relatives is another issue of criminal victimization that has been avoided by the family guardian for different reasons. The family doesn't publish the victimizations due to family reputation and position within the community, the family guardian does not desire to break the relationship among the family members due to victimizations, and the family guardian has to hide the event of victimizations for the marital occasion of the family members. This trend of victimization has been increasing day by day due to the hiddenness and tolerance of the consequences of victimization within the family. The reviewed study

opened that eve-teasing is another victimization for women. The male community has teased the womenfolk in different places from a sexual point of view. The punishment for teasing in law is acknowledged, but the implementation is not in good standing. In most cases, the victims have avoided the event for personal dignity and position within the community. Molestation of womenfolk is increasing rapidly due to a lack of justice, and to establish an example in front of the community.

The reviewed study (Marwah: 2024) concluded the statement in favor of restorative justice and mentioned that restorative justice is one of the significant justice approaches that promotes relational progress by mending the broken relationship and by minimizing criminal victimization, providing different services and supports as per situations. Restorative justice deals the criminal victimization by keeping the position of victim and offender. Both parties have to get the rights and lost status within the community where nobody blames the victim and offender for their criminal activities and involvement. Restorative justice *concludes the criminal victimization with a responsive ending and a smiling beginning between the victim and the offender.*

A research book titled “A Review of the Village Courts in Bangladesh” has been authored by Talukdar (2014) to examine the performance of village courts in Bangladesh as a form of restorative justice and interventions. The book focuses on how the RJ system in Bangladesh can be practiced correctly to address crime-victim issues. The main objective of the book is to identify the mechanisms of RJ for controlling community crimes as an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) method. The supplementary objectives are to: (a) identify the criminal victimizations occurring within the community life of Bangladesh; (b) present a tentative method for interpreting local crimes and facilitating dialogue to reduce the caseload in the criminal justice system; (c) advocate for the Village Court (VC), which is already operational in the rural community under the Village Court Act-2006; and suggest the monitoring process and supervision from the government, as well as identify local resources and the preparedness of VC to sustainably reduce recidivism in rural communities. The mentioned book employs content analysis methodology using secondary data. In conducting the study, the researcher sought to uncover the realities of the restorative justice system in Bangladesh. The author notes that the number of pending cases in the criminal procedure is significantly high and requires substantial time for resolution. The author observed that restorative justice is systematically practiced in many countries to minimize conflicts between offenders and victims. Restorative justice employs strategies such as mediation, conferencing, problem-oriented policing, and institution-based rehabilitation programs to address criminal victimization.

The reviewed book (Talukdar: 2014) suggested unique contextual observations in favor of restorative justice such: (a) judicial system in Bangladesh is facing serious challenges for not having the regular amendment of existing legislations, as well as not having enough financial allocation for providing legal aid for poor people; (b) insufficient cooperation among relevant authorities make enormous overburden of pending cases; (c) according to Law Commission report, 19,13,633 cases were pending from 2009 to 2018, and only 7,19,770 cases may have been settled through formal procedure; (d) Law Commission report demanded that need to launch the Alternative Dispute Regulation (ADR) immediately to settle the pending cases and that might be possible through restorative justice process.

Village Court, an indigenous form of restorative justice in Bangladesh, operates under the Village Court Act of 2006 and resolves local non-serious disputes. The reviewed study (Asaduzzaman: 2015) argues that restorative justice, often referred to academically as justice for restoration, promotes various community-based justice approaches in different countries. According to the reviewed book, restorative justice can serve as a dynamic model if the Village Court is activated with sufficient manpower, logistics, and support from the local administration. The mission of the Village Court posits that local conflicts among residents can be resolved by addressing the wishes of the authorities. Community members can achieve a better environment by applying the restorative model for justice, involving the concerned parties, such as the victim, offender, and community, as stakeholders.

The reviewed study (Asaduzzaman: 2015) suggested some potential recommendations for developing the village court system, repairing the criminal victimizations committed by community people within the community, keeping the dignity, respect, and considering the post-consequences of the crime(s). Author recommended such proportions: (a) village court is one of the most significant restorative justice institutions in Bangladesh repairing the harm of victims, ensuring the rehabilitation victim, correction for offender, and re-justified the community feelings among victim, offender, and the community; (b) restorative justice will take the institutional interventions to minimize the pending load of cases in Bangladesh; (c) by applying the restorative approach, family and relational victimizations will be resolved easily through preserving the human dignity, respect, and maintaining the relationship structure within community through interventions of re-relationships module; and (d) Victim-Offender Mediation and conferencing as a model of RJ might be changed the wrongdoing tendency of juvenile and crime tendency of adult in community life.

The reviewed study (UNDP:2022) focused on the objectives of VCs in the rural community, and their functions are to resolve the community-based disputes, injustice, harms, damages, and other victimizations, which are compoundable and can be resolved within the community professionally. The community structure is not made in a proper way, which guides the people to avoid the violation of community manners and customs. The author strongly mentioned that the correctional steps for criminal behavior are not highlighted in the research objectives. Lastly, mentioned by author mentioned that RJ is practiced based on the nature of criminal victimizations, and the justice composition is different due to crime nature and recovery as demanded.

The reviewed study (UNDP: 2022) mentioned some challenges for practicing RJ in Bangladesh such as: (a) limited coverage of RJ approach, and a narrow outlook to RJ by formal jurisdiction; (b) the local community and affiliated agency which has no capacity and strength to apply RJ model; (c) overlap between the law of Village Court Act-2006 and Alternative Dispute Regulation-2001 that hampers the practice of RJ in the community of Bangladesh; (d) referral services in Bangladesh for applying restorative justice not prescribed by police force and law-enforcing agencies for the cases of compoundable and not to provide supports to arrange a justice of RJ; (e) lack of trained manpower to conduct the restorative justice known as RJ mediator; (f) resolve the disputes committed by children (juvenile delinquent) is not accepted by the VC and local justice authority professionally. The reviewed study provides an overview of VC as an institution of restorative justice based on secondary data, particularly contextual analysis. The reviewed study argued that restorative justice in Bangladesh is practiced following the local format, but no coordination and supervision are provided by the supreme authority of the government. It is believed that criminal victimizations committed by community members can be resolved positively, involving the victim, offender, and community in the RJ approach.

A research *“Dispensing Justice Locally: A Study of Two Village Courts in Bangladesh”* was conducted by Hossain (2012) to show the diversity of justice in local territory through village courts of Bangladesh. The reviewed study traced out the following the objectives about the village courts as a form of restorative justice: (a) know the community disputes and injustice by community people against of community people has been resolved through village courts and community interventions; (b) assess the perceptions of community people about the functions of village courts; (c) identify the post-consequences of victimizations which has been repaired through village court and supervision; and (d) present the ideas and thoughts of community people about village court as recommendations. The reviewed study mentioned that restorative justice emphasizes the satisfaction of the victim and influences the offender to perform the essential activities that are required to satisfy the victim and the family. By the direct intervention of restorative justice, the offender has to get the opportunity to be corrected and become a law-abiding citizen of the community. Restorative justice invites the community stakeholders in the discussion and decision process, and a holistic decision will take into consideration all factors that promote a friendly atmosphere to be cooperated and minimized.

Restorative justice is accepted globally, though there are some questions about it, and these queries must be addressed through willingness and government initiatives. The practice of restorative justice varies from country to country. Under the visionary framework of alternative dispute resolution (ADR), the village court serves as a form of restorative justice in Bangladesh, addressing community disputes and harms through the legal authorization provided by the Village Court Act of 2006. The reviewed study notes that the Village Court project is established to empower women, the poor, and disadvantaged groups seeking remedies for injustice, harm, and property damage caused by offenders. Restorative justice respects the social status of both victims and offenders, honoring them as individuals while considering all characteristics of both parties as members of the community in its reparative approaches and mental recovery efforts. The reviewed study (Hossain: 2012) employs a mixed-methods approach to assess the effectiveness of village courts in Bangladesh. According to the study's objectives, three Union Parishads (a form of local government) were conveniently selected to collect field data from respondents who had undergone the village court process for their cases. The revised study maintained gender balance by conducting face-to-face interviews using a structured questionnaire that included both open-ended and closed-ended questions.

The reviewed study (Hossain: 2012) mentioned that 62% civil cases and 38% criminal cases have been solved by village courts. The following civil offences of the respondents repaired by village court are seen: family matter (27%), land dispute (21.6%), property crime (13.5%), and extra marital relation (8.1%), and divorce cases (18.9%). On the other hand, village court has been resolved some criminal cases such theft (30.4%), eve teasing (21.7%), rape (8.7%), cheating (4.3%), group fighting for coalition in political aspects (4.3%), and various mischief (4.35%). The reviewed study also mentioned that in Bangladesh, village court works to heal the civil cases mainly, but the village court deals criminal cases in some special position that is mentioned in the law and having scope to resolve the cases by village court. The reviewed research mentioned that 43.33% of the respondents have been taken shelter from village court through an application paying nominal money. The village court authority forms a list of official stakeholders such as chairman and members of the Union Parishad to operate the justice. Village court selects the stakeholders of the offender and victim, community people, and witness for justifying the matter of criminal victimizations. The reviewed study referred that the respondents have been applied towards village court to resolve their victimization and the author mentioned some background behind this tendency: near to house and lower distance, easy access to justice, members of the court are known and having rights to take the assistance, and possible to make speedy disposal.

The reviewed study noted that punishment structure by the village court to control the recidivism and to maintain the community order is ruled very strongly and taking the assistants from the local authority. The study showed that 57.00% of the respondents have been got punishment through the interventions of village court and 43.00% not punished for many reasons such misuse the power and bribing, showing the muscle power, and impose negative intervention by family. The reviewed study noticed that 44.19% of the respondents have been punished by physical hitting in different level, and 25.58% of the respondents faced financial compensation, 25.13% of the respondents asked apology for misconduct, and 5.1% cases have been mutualized between victim and defender *without give and take policy*. The revised study argued that village court has responsibility to collect the compensation from offender and submit to victim. But some respondents claimed in the in-depth interview that village court authority has made negotiation with offender and not to provide full range of compensation which has been decided in the process of justice by village court.

The conducted study (Hossain: 2012) showed that 32.00% of the respondents have been appealed to the higher court for getting concrete judgments. The study also mentioned that 42.11% of the defendants have been appealed to the higher court or make objection against of village court, and 57.89% appealed after judgment for lack of satisfaction and manipulated role of village court. The reviewed study declared that decision of 48% cases in village court have been unchanged in the high court, 36%

decisions changed, and 16% cases referred again to the village court for resolving. The study explained some dysfunctions of village court system of Bangladesh. The reviewed study mentioned that 53.00% respondents are not satisfied by the judgment process of village court, and 47.00% opined their responses under the below of average category. The reviewed study suggested that village court as an agency of restorative justice in Bangladesh might be changed the statistical figure of criminal victimizations controlling the recidivism in the community settings. The reviewed study recommended some guidelines for ways of improving the functions of the village court as follows:

- a. To appoint the professional manpower (RJ facilitator, trained in the process of village court, an expert lawyer in ADR) in the village court to operate the justice professionally;*
- b. To restructure the present formation of the village court to ensure accountability, and reform the functions of the village court as demanded by the community people;*
- c. To add the expenditure of the village court in the national budget as another legal body; and*
- d. To reform the village court procedure, considering the time and facts that are happening within the community life.*

The reviewed study mentioned that the village court is an effective agency within community settings in rural Bangladesh for controlling re-offending. For this purpose, the concept of the village court should be practiced throughout Bangladesh. The village court system reduces the backlog of cases from the formal justice system and handles both civil and criminal cases. Among civil cases, the village court addresses family matters, land disputes, property crimes, marriage, and divorce. Criminal cases addressed by the village court include theft, cattle theft, teasing, threat to rape, fraud, conflicts within the rural community, and damage to goods and products. The village court concept in Bangladesh fosters community harmony among members by repairing the harm between the offender and the victim. The reviewed study strongly believes that community chaos creates disturbances in relationships and leads to various injustices and unrest. The village court serves as the best agency in rural communities for resolving disputes and addressing injustices that disrupt normal community life. Additionally, the village court promotes community collaboration among members to advance community life with peaceful attention and dedication toward all.

Reviewing the above literature, it is strongly suggested that community-based disputes and criminal victimization have been resolved through restorative actions and interventions in many forms. *Shalish* (customary justice approach), village court, ADR operated by local government agencies, and any other mutual understanding to resolve disputes are recognized in Bangladesh. The present study has sought to unveil the restorative interventions to heal the criminal victimization committed in community settings. What actions and approaches have been taken by the restorative agencies in Bangladesh to resolve criminal victimization? To answer this question, the present study has been designed and conducted.

Findings and Interpretations

The collected data from the two types of respondents have been classified according to their characteristics and natures. Following the technique of Content Analysis, the data have been displayed and interpreted. The respondents of the victims have been identified following pseudonyms like A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, and K. On the other hand, the RJP has been exposed using the pseudonyms like a, b, c, d, e, and f. The interpretations of findings are mentioned below:

Involvement of Restorative Agency to Resolve Criminal Victimizations

The victim of criminal victimization has reported their harms and sufferings in the agencies of police station and the restorative agency. The victim has tried to find out the ways of reconciliation and how to resolve the matter. As per the experiences of the victim, some are informed the cases of victimization in the police station for better result. On the other hand, some are gone to the restorative agency for a peaceful solution. Two respondents (A and D) of victims found who are informed the matter of victimization in the police station for resolving as per the process of legislation. Another three respondents (B, C, and E) have gone to the restorative agency for solving the matter within the community.

The respondents have opined different statements why to choose a different agency for resolving the matter of victimization as ways:

informed police station including reasons

We have visited police station informing the matter of victimization. From the community reconciliation process, we didn't get the better response at the previous case of victimization. But the matter that has been done, for that not need to go police station. The local authority of police station has referred the case to local member of law-enforcement agency. By the contribution of local member, we are agreed to sit in a table for discussion how to solve it preserving our dignity, respect, and social position. At last, the local member of law-enforcement agency called a meeting to repair the harms that are operated in front of us. So, we went police station due to our community experiences and get result quickly.

informed restorative agency including reasons

We know that restorative agency is working in the field of victimization reconciliation within the community level. For that, at the beginning we communicate with the local justice institution to solve the matter. Our feelings is that community disputes and misunderstanding is resolved within the community. Restoration is the best policy. Restorative process re-builds the social relationship with the community people properly. We look that justice is dealt within the community people who are near and dear. At the same time, the bargaining process is argued in front of us (victim and offender), and our supporters of both.

Strength of Restorative Agency Mentioned by Respondents

The respondents as victim have been asked why to choose restorative agency to repair the case of victimization. The respondents particularly victims claimed that their rights and compensation for lost property and other destroyed resources have been gained through the process of restorative justice. The victim as a part of restorative justice has chosen restorative agency to get quick response for compensation and repairing the harms gathering the community people. The restorative justice deals the whole nature of victimizations using a holistic approach by which the victim, offender and the community are come in a place repairing the harms of victim and take reformative action how to re-integrate the victim through the responsibilities by offender. The community plays a sensitive role in the question of repairing and restitution process. The victim of different victimizations has been affected in different ways and how the respondents (victim) have been benefitted through restorative interventions that mentioned as bellows:

Through the process of restorative justice, victims got multi-level benefits. The restorative agency has called one more meeting with offenders and community making dialogue how to solve the matter of victimizations.

Through the approach of restorative interventions, victims have been benefitted for reducing the revenge desire by offender, the post-traumatic symptoms have been reduced by the meeting, and the required counseling has been provided by the restorative agency.

The integration for mutuality between offender and victim has been worked again through the interventions of restorative practitioners. The relationship with offenders by victims has started as previous style maintaining the cordiality, trust, and community vigilance.

Victims benefitted more within the local territory not to go the formal court and also bearing all types of confidentiality, and social position.

Strategy and Interventional Approaches for Repairing Harms and Sufferings

The restorative justice agency has taken different strategy and interventional approaches for reconciliation between victim and offender. The nature of strategy for reconciliation would be different as per the condition of victimizations. In the restorative justice approach, the suitable strategy and interventional approach has taken discussing with multi-level stakeholders as like victim, offender, and community people, near and dear of victim and offender, and related persons who could be helped to reconcile. Harms and sufferings that have been made due to victimizations that should be healed with proper interventions and empathetic norms and actions. The respondent of 'a' mentioned that:

“Restorative justice agency has guided me to settle the matter of victimization and taken steps how to re-establish myself within the community. For doing that, RJ agency has called different meeting with different stakeholders and reconciliation body within the community people. Through the meeting, the RJ agency has decided the level and amount of compensations, process of payment, and community interventions. The RJ agency has taken steps to reduce the angry feelings, mitigate the revenge attitude between me and accused, and to involve the family and relatives for resolving the conflicts. The RJ practitioner has devoted himself to take care the post-justice behaviors of both me and offender. At last, for conflict transformation, the RJ agency has involved me and accused by giving priority the demand and needs which promoted the better reconciliation and relational re-gaining.”

The strategy and interventional approaches that have been practiced by restorative justice agencies shown as follows:



Diagram-1: Strategy and Interventional Approaches Practiced by Restorative Agency

Source: Developed by Researcher

According to the comments of victims, the RJ agency has taken those types of interventional actions to heal the victimizations and these described as ways:

Table -1: Nature of Interventional Actions for Repairing the Sufferings

Nature of interventional actions	Level of benefits through actions and healing the sufferings
Introducing victim and offender	• Start the process of healing • Mentioned hidden sufferings • Re-gaining the social relationship between victim and offender • Involving relational stakeholders to minimize the matter of victimizations
Dialogue between victim and offender with the presence of community people	• Victim and offender as respondents have described their speech and affected situation • Respondents have mentioned the causal factors of committing crimes • Offender mentioned the process of doing victimization • Victim mentioned the level of sufferings and sorrows due to victimization • Community people have raised their voice and comments on the discussing topic of victimization (experiences as witness) • Community people noticed the anti-social criminal offences
Community involvement for cooperation and strategic actions	• Guided the offender to repair the criminal behavior • Suggested the victim for reconciliation • Community expanded the community support as <i>community care</i> • Community offered the resources for community based affiliation
Set-up the methods of reconciliation and relational regaining	• RJ agency has settled the method and approaches how to be solved the case of victimization • RJ agency has set-up the responsibilities of offender, and victim rights and needs • RJ agency has also decided that how it would be operated within the community settings • RJ agency has observed that how the repairing process would be proceeded and improved the situation of victim and see the involvement of offender in the reconciliation process
Follow-up by RJ agency and community authority	• Community people have noticed the movement of victim and offender • Community has followed the nature of progress of victim and offender and noticed the violation of decision which has been accepted by the agency of restorative justice.

Source: Developed by Researcher

Types of Actions Taken for Reconciliation between Victim and Offender

The restorative justice agency has taken different actions as per the condition of victimization. The restorative agency has to think before taking actions for healing that the nature of victimization has demanded that actions which would be applied for settle the matter. The respondents have mentioned that restorative agency have applied so many *action oriented approach* how to reconcile between victim and offender. It is very difficult to make re-integration between victim and offender but following some actions the task of reconciliation is being easy and implemented by the direct interventions of community people. Respondent ‘A’ mentioned that:

“The restorative agency has called more meetings including me for reconciliation. I have been invited to discuss how the case of victimization has been done. By a systematic approach, the RJ practitioners have listened to my speech and caused harm. The RJ practitioners have discussed how to compensate. Total discussion has been done in front of me and the offender and the community. The community people have allowed the decision by a restorative body that has taken for re-integration and relational smoothness. I feel better that the community is with me and feel happy that I am not alone in the community.”

As per the comments of victims, the actions taken by the restorative body are according to the nature of victimization, which is described as follows:

Table-2: Taken Actions According to the Nature of Victimizations

Respondent Identity	Reactions regarding Actions
Respondent-A: Property Disputes	The restorative agency has arranged first meeting with the offender who captured my land illegally. With the presence of a land related expert, the RJ agency has discussed properly who will be owner of the dispute land. The participating people in the restorative justice have decided that the captured land is of mine that illegally captured by the offender. The community people have ordered the offender not to disturb me and abandon the land that captured by offender. Through the process, my case of victimization has been solved and right now maintain a friendly relation with my neighbor who has captured my land. But doing it, the restorative agency had to work very actively. Through the process, the problem of mine has been solved and got a satisfactory response from restorative justice.
Respondent-B: Family Related Disputes	The restorative agency has invited me and my husband how to settle the matter with the presence of our relatives. A long discussion has been done and the RJ facilitator has welcomed us and requested to me to say the story of victimization. The idea regarding family and conjugal well-being by mine is changed after attending the meeting of restorative justice. By the grace of community people and the facilitator of RJ agency, the knowledge of me for family management is changed and taught by them how to maintain the family related issues without conflict and chaos. The RJ practitioner has opened the session to say something from the community people, and they have described the importance of family. From that, I have maintained the rules of family and conjugal welfare techniques.
Respondent-C: Threat to Harm	Some bad people of my community have committed violent attitude to me for spoiling my property and threat for my life and family. After complaining to the restorative agency, the facilitator of RJ has called them (offender) why they have done this types of behavior. Community people have been invited by RJ agency to share the matter and through a long meeting, the participants have decided that no conflict should be welcomed within the community by someone (offender). Through the restorative process, threat of harms has been stopped and the community order has been established in our territory.

Respondent-D: Forceful Teasing and Dating	A vagabond has disturbed me at the time of going college. Some days I have tolerated it. But when it has crossed the limit, I have informed my family members. The family members of mine have noticed the matter to local justice unit who have called him (offender) and asked why he was doing it. There is no logical answer submitted by accused person (offender). The RJ facilitator of restorative justice has invited the core members of both parties and the participants have discussed. And teasing and forcing to dating has been stopped. In that session, the RJ facilitator and the senior participants have alerted him not to involve this type of behavior and anti-social activities
Respondent-E: Accused of Mass Theft by a Previous Enemy	A mass thefting has been committed by some bad people in my community. I have not involved for this work. But I have been recognized guilty for that incident. Few community people have asked me so many questions how I did use the stolen money and materials. The community people have doubted me for that work. But I did not do it. A long meeting has done by the presence of local justice body and RJ agency has investigated the matter. But RJ agency didn't get my involvement. The people who have been committed the criminal activities have been identified. RJ agency with good local people have decided the compensations and punishment for whom, who have done this. This way, I have been relaxed from the incident.

Source: Developed by Researcher

Strategies for Overcoming Traumatization Undertaken by Restorative Justice Practitioners

The respondents who have interviewed in the victim category knowing the existing situations of traumatization. The respondents are affected by *post-traumatic syndrome* and the livelihood pattern has been hampered due to the traumatic behaviors. The respondents are controlled their traumatic situations taking the assistance from the restorative agency as like restorative counselling, restorative interventions, and well-being interventions by community. The respondents have got relief from the traumatic situations and inspired by the RJ practitioners to move for re-gaining the lost strength and capacity. The respondent 'D' mentioned that:

"I have overcome the traumatic pains that has been made due to the case of victimization and that turned into post-victimization symptoms. This types of symptoms have been hampered the normal and smoothie life of me within the community settings. I have faced the traumatic challenges by using my knowledge, resources, and taking advices from the adjustment counselor as well as from the RJ practitioners. The restorative agency has initiated so many interventional steps to overcome the situations such as involved the community people in the reconciliation process, provide supports for social strength, refer to the resource agency and personnel, and initiate to reduce the gap between me and offender. One thing which has been inspired me that the case of victimization has not confined in my house only. It has been spread out and known by all and made forced towards offenders. I have moved myself to face the situations by taking supports from restorative agency and people as community support."

On the other hand, three respondents have found who are facing traumas right now and this types of symptoms are hampering their life and makes threats and question of security. The respondents of B, C, and E noticed that:

We are facing and fighting against of traumatic symptoms. The offender and their supporting persons have made different types of fear against of us. We feel horror for movements outside of the house. We think that we may be attacked again by offenders and/or their supported persons at the duration of outside movement such as going market, attacked may be done on our kids and family members going school and college, relative and neighbors are being threatened by offender not

to come our house. We are under threats and the situation is not safe. But the intervention of restorative agency known as local Salish body has taken some significant roles to save us from the fear and threats. Right now, we are passing the unpleasant situation for fearing declared by offender. The situation demands one more social meeting and conference involving the community people with good intentions. But, we think that the offenders may be searched any scope to attack us and harms our resources, relationship with community, damaged property, and thrown potential horror at all time for unsafe and unsecured movement.

According to RJP, the restorative agency has initiated different types of actions to heal the traumatization and progress relational growth within the community settings. The actions which have been taken by the restorative agency that presented as follows:

Table-3: Actions taken by Restorative Agencies Recovering Traumatization

- | | |
|--|--|
| • <i>provide counselling supports to minimize the harms and traumas</i> | • <i>request the community people to observe the activities of victims and offenders</i> |
| • <i>link with the resource agency getting the logistic supports and guidelines</i> | • <i>at the pre-moment of reconciliation, RJ agency has involved itself as friendly partner for healing the harms and pains</i> |
| • <i>involve the community as third party for reconciliation and progress</i> | • <i>followed-up by the restorative agency regularly for maintaining the progress and reported to the community people and stakeholders.</i> |
| • <i>re-gaining the established relationship between victim and offender by RJ practitioner and active stakeholders of community</i> | |

Source: Developed by Researcher

Policy Recommendation and Restorative Discourse

The present study has been conducted to reveal the healing approaches utilized by restorative justice practitioners in community settings. Based on the findings and feedback from respondents, the necessary policies and services are essential to address community-based criminal victimization. Restorative justice is viewed as a community-oriented justice approach that taps into its strengths and wisdom to tackle compoundable criminal victimization within the community. By taking these actions, restorative agencies create opportunities for victims and offenders to engage in the justice process. According to respondents, the essence of restorative justice encompasses various dimensions and methods to reduce the criminal victimization that frequently occurs in community settings. The government, along with private authorities (development agencies), can take the following steps to promote restorative services: (a) a restorative justice law is needed to implement it nationwide. (b) The government can initiate training sessions for the Restorative Justice Practitioners (RJP) to facilitate restorative justice within the community. (c) The community-based acceptance of restorative actions should be strengthened by involving community members in the restorative process.

Concluding Remarks

Restorative justice possesses the capacity to address criminal victimization by empowering victims and holding offenders accountable for their actions. Community-based criminal victimization in Bangladesh arises from various causes and factors. As a community-oriented justice approach, restorative justice invites all parties to resolve disputes and injustices by empowering the harmed individual or party.

This study investigates healing practices through interviews with restorative justice practitioners (RJPs) and victims of different disputes. The research delves into the profound understanding and authenticity of restorative justice in addressing injustices and discrimination. Similar to the global trend of restorative justice, the interviewed respondents asserted that addressing criminal victimization requires a community-based initiative to achieve better outcomes for maintaining community solidarity and unity. Community members are largely influenced by their daily needs and past relationships in Bangladesh. By emphasizing community codes and relational commitments, restorative justice encompasses strategies and interventions aimed at resolving disputes and unlawful behavior. Appropriate methodological steps were taken in this study to gather field data from respondents while adhering to ethical considerations. The main findings indicate that implementing restorative interventions can help control community-based criminal victimization and reduce case backlog in formal courts. Restorative justice agencies promote restorative actions and campaigns to raise awareness among people to refrain from criminal behavior and to engage restorative agencies for resolving minor criminal victimization while ensuring victims' empowerment and offenders' accountability.

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