



# Advancing Compassionate Justice: Redefining Victim and Offender Rights in Victimology and Penology

**Kalnawat A\***

Assistant Professor, Symbiosis Law School, India

**\*Corresponding author:** Aarti Kalnawat, Assistant Professor, Symbiosis Law School, Nagpur, India, Email: aartikalnawat@slnagpur.edu.in

**Editorial**

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## Editorial

This issue of the Open Access Journal of Criminology Investigation & Justice features meaningful discussions in victimology and criminology based on a humane, compassionate perspective that recognises the profoundly intimate effects of crime and justice.

## Victimology

Today, victimology needs to be assessed from a whole new perspective. When examining the criminal justice system in the context of politics and power, we typically find that offenders with these support networks know they might get away with their crimes. Consequently, it is even more crucial that victimology study the shift to a more compassionate and inclusive victim justice paradigm to prevent victims from feeling unfairly treated. Conventional institutions can concentrate on punitive methods without sufficiently attending to the needs of victims, who need more than punishment to recover; the psychological and emotional wounds caused by the offence must be recognised and addressed. This issue examines trauma-informed practices that recognise victims' experiences and give them a voice in the legal system. We address the need for support services that assist victims in restoring agency and aiding in their immediate recovery, thereby reducing the long-term impacts of trauma. We highlight restorative justice as a transformative approach that involves victims, offenders, and communities to restore equilibrium and promote healing. Special care is also required for victims who feel excluded and frequently experience systematic discrimination. This opinion underscores the importance of equitable policies that target marginalized groups to ensure that all victims, irrespective of their background, have access to justice and support. The articles in this section advocate for solutions

that bridge these gaps to establish a judicial system that puts victims' welfare first.

The primary concern of penology, which examines the philosophy and practice of how society reacts to criminal activity, is drastically shifting. For centuries, the primary objective of prison administrations worldwide was punishment, frequently based on retributive justice. However, as the drawbacks of punishment-only models become more obvious, the conversation has turned to a more holistic approach to prisons that prioritises rehabilitation, human dignity, and compassion. To make criminals "pay" for their crimes and prevent future offenders from committing the same ones, the traditional approach to punishment usually emphasises retribution and deterrence. Let's take a quick look at some of the shortcomings of the punitive paradigm. While these objectives are commendable, the outcomes of such a system are far from optimal. Indicators of systemic problems include high crime rates, overcrowding in prisons, and the degrading of human dignity. With little regard for their ability to reform or the societal factors that influenced their behaviour, offenders are often reduced to the sum of their offences in these models. A vicious cycle is maintained when punishment is meted out without a means of rehabilitation. After being released from prison, offenders usually experience social stigma, a lack of work prospects, and insufficient support networks. They frequently revert to criminal conduct as a result of these obstacles, as well as untreated psychological and emotional problems, putting public safety at risk rather than preserving it.

The justification for support of rehabilitation may be that, in recent years, rehabilitative approaches have gained a foothold in the global discourse on corrections. Addressing the root causes of criminal behaviour and giving criminals the means to reintegrate into society as law-abiding



citizens are the objectives of rehabilitation. This approach not only reduces crime rates practically but also in a more compassionate manner. Two essential components of a successful rehabilitation are education and career training. Inmates who take part in educational programs while jailed have a much lower chance of reoffending after their release, according to numerous studies. The system gives prisoners the resources to create a secure and independent life after release by giving them access to higher education and vocational training. For example, Germany has one of the lowest rates of repeat offences in the world thanks to its prison system, which strongly emphasises education and employment possibilities. Mental health care additionally serves as a significant component in rehabilitation. A considerable number of convicts suffer from unaddressed mental health problems, which frequently contribute to their criminal behaviour. Counselling, therapy, and psychiatric care offered in correctional settings may assist in addressing these underlying problems, providing inmates with the knowledge and skills to change their behaviour.

Providing inmates with humane treatment is essential, not optional. Without a foundation of compassionate care, rehabilitation initiatives cannot be successful. Prisons should be settings that promote personal development and transformation rather than just being sites of incarceration. This starts with protecting prisoners' fundamental human rights, irrespective of their offences. One such entitlement with significant potential for rehabilitation is fair permission for the family to pay a visit. Maintaining family ties gives prisoners emotional support and a sense of responsibility to their loved ones, both of which can be strong inducements to change. Inmate conviction rates are lower, and mental health outcomes are better in facilities that promote regular family engagement.

A further crucial aspect of compassionate care is wellness. Many prisoners have health issues when they first join the system, and some get sick while they are imprisoned. In addition to being morally required, providing proper medical care—including mental health services—is also practically necessary to promote rehabilitation.

Crimes have an impact on the community, and the community shapes criminal actions. Thus, the function of the community has significance from a broader standpoint. The Role of the Community in Corrections Rehabilitation is a process that extends beyond the confines of the prison. For a correctional plan to truly reform, community involvement is required. Programs that facilitate a gradual re-entry into society, such as supervised parole, halfway homes, and community-based job placement initiatives, are essential for bridging the gap between incarceration and reintegration. Additionally, public opinion is crucial. It's time for society

to consider ex-offenders as individuals who can contribute positively rather than as dangerous lifetime members. This shift requires awareness-raising campaigns, partnerships with businesses to promote inclusive hiring practices and legal changes that reduce the collateral consequences of a criminal record.

We can learn a lot from nations prioritising rehabilitation over punishment, which effectively represents rehabilitation systems. In Norway, for example, jails aim to replicate daily life as much as possible. Inmates have access to recreational activities, education, and work programs in an environment that respects their dignity. Because of this approach, repeat offences rates of approximately 20 per cent are among the lowest in the world. Recent reforms in India have allowed offenders to learn computer programming, tailoring, and carpentry skills by introducing vocational training programs in many jails. Although these programs show promise, they must be widely adopted, and there must be a change in how society views prisoners and their capacity for change.

The Economic and social benefits of rehabilitation might be enticing, so it must be promoted. In addition to being the right thing to do, investing in rehabilitation makes financial sense. Punitive systems prioritising imprisonment over reform are expensive and frequently have inadequate public safety outcomes. Rehabilitation programs, on the other hand, lessen the chance of reoffending, which lowers the long-term expenses related to crime and incarceration. Successfully rehabilitated people benefit society as skilled workers, community members, and tax-paying citizens. Additionally, as children of rehabilitated parents are less likely to follow in their parent's footsteps, they break the intergenerational cycle of crime.

A Prospective point of view for a safer and more just society should be the ultimate objective of a criminal justice system. Punishment alone cannot accomplish this. Through rehabilitation, we address the root causes of offenders' conduct and their behaviours. This all-encompassing strategy transforms lives and communities by fostering chances for social reintegration and personal development. Prisons must transform from depressing establishments to hubs of reform and optimism. We can create a system that maintains justice and compassion by providing compassionate treatment, mental health services, and education. After all, a society is genuinely moving toward a brighter future when it invests in the potential of its most vulnerable people.

## Penology

This section discusses the urgent need for reform in corrections. As the shortcomings of punitive-only models have come to light more and more in recent years,

rehabilitative, compassionate methods that emphasise offenders' capacity for constructive transformation have gained traction. To rehabilitate ex-offenders as contributing members of society, this issue examines successful initiatives and regulations that prioritise education, career training, and mental health services. Beyond punishing people, we think a criminal justice system should provide significant chances for reformation and human development. In our discussion on the humane treatment of prisoners, we advocate for settings that uphold fundamental human rights and dignity, including equitable access to family visitation, mental health care, and medical care. Rather than only acting as places of imprisonment, prisons should concentrate on helping offenders via rehabilitation, which can lower relapse and

promote community safety.

In summary, these sections collectively demonstrate our dedication to a legal system that honours the humanity of both victims and criminals. We see a future where justice is restorative, inclusive, and transformative by promoting a more sympathetic, responsive approach in both victimology and penology. As editors, we think we can make significant progress towards a society that values rehabilitation and healing just as much as accountability by humanising the discipline of criminology. Our goal is that this issue will encourage scholars, practitioners, and legislators to keep up the vital task of changing our legal systems.