

VICTIM RIGHTS AND INDIAN CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

1. Sanjeev Sharma 2. DR. D.C. Mishra

Email :aaryvrat2013@gmail.Com

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Abstract: There are people who are suffering beyond description. They are innocent people, they didn't bring this upon themselves. They are the victims of the sins of other people. And while it's hard to see, it's important to understand that these people exist.

Indian criminal justice system is based on Anglo Saxon adversarial model. The burden of proving the case beyond reasonable doubt against accused is on the prosecution. The penal philosophy in India has accepted the concepts of prevention of crime and treatment and rehabilitation of criminals, which have been reiterated by many judgments of the Supreme Court. Victims have no rights under the criminal justice system, and the state undertakes the full responsibility to prosecute and punish the offenders by treating the victims merewitnesses.

Key words- adversarial model, beyond, reasonable, prosecution.

Faculty of Law, Agra College, Agra (UP), India

Across the globe in different countries, victims of crime are given ample protection, assistance, restitution compensation by appropriate laws and acts, but in India the victims have no significant role in criminal justice system. The present criminal justice system is based on the assumption that the claims of a victim of crime are sufficiently satisfied by the conviction of theperpetrator. In recent times, among the many reforms canvassed for improving the criminal justice system is the one that advocates a victimorientation to criminal justice administration. Victim-orientation includes greater respect and consideration towards victims and their rights in the investigation and prosecution process, provisions for greater choices to victims in trial and disposition of the accused, and a scheme of reparation/compensation particularly for victims violentcrimes.

The UN Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power adopted in 1985, has recognised the importance of need to set the standards and norms in international law for the protection of crime victims. It has recognised four major rights of victims: access to justice and fair treatment; restitution; compensation; and assistance. This

ISSN NO.-2347-2944 (Print) e-ISSN NO.-2582-2454 (Online) Vol.-13, No.-III, Issues-18, YEAR- Dec. -2020 chapter examines how far Indian

chapter examines how far Indian legislative framework conforms to the norms set by the declaration.

The Indian criminal justice system is governed by four major laws. (i) The Constitution of India, 1950; (ii) The Indian Penal Code, 1860; (iii) The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 and (iv) The Indian Evidence Act, 1872.

Along with these legislations, there are few special legislations which deal with victim's interests. They are:

Fatal Accident Act, 1855
(ii)Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, (iii)
Probation of Offenders Act, 1958,
(iv) The Protection of Children from
Sexual Offences Act, 2012, (v) The
Protection of Women from Domestic
Violence Act, 2005, (vi) The
Maintenance and Welfare of Parents
and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, (vii)
The Scheduled Castes and the
Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of
Atrocities) Act, 1989(ix) The Juvenile
Justice (Care and Protection)
Act, 2000.

The Code of Criminal Procedure Code (Amendment Act), 2008 brought sweeping changes in criminal law to help the cause of victims. It is a welcome move by the legislature in protection of rights of victims. An attempt has been made here to discuss the provisions which touch the issues of crimevictims.

The Act amends the definition of victim by inserting a new clause (wa) under section 2 after (w) to include the victim's guardian and legal heir. This amendment helps the relatives particularly those who are dependents on the victims to get the compensation for the loss



of victim either in person or in earnings. Further, they can make a claim opportunity to be heard or participate in the criminal justiceprocess.

A new sub section (8) has been added to section 24 which permits the victim to appoint a lawyer of his own choice to assist the prosecution. This allows the victim whenever he feels that the prosecution is not effectively presenting his case, he can press his claims through his lawyer. However, the Act is silent about providing the financial assistance to the victim in this regard.

Many times the victims of the offences of rape feel that the persons particularly the men who hear their cases are not sensitive and often gender biased. To answer this anomaly the Act added a proviso to section 26 and provides that the offences of rapes shall be tried by courts presided by the women. Here the researcher intends to highlight the Government of Karnataka has established ten special courts across the state to try the offences of rape and other sexualabuses.

Further, the Act requires during investigation relating the rape cases, the statement of victim of rape shall be recorded at the place of her choice and by a woman police officer in presence her parents, or relatives and social worker of that locality. This will give the rape victim confidence and courage to give the details of the offence morefreely.

Another change the Act has made is prescribing the time frame for completion of investigation of child rape cases. A new sub section has been added to the existing provision Section 173 which mandates the investigation has to be completed within three months from the date of complaint or information. Further, where an investigation relates to an offence under sections 376, 376A, 376B, 376C, and 376D IPC, the report forwarded to a magistrate shall contain the report of the medical examination of the woman.

The amendment to section 309 Cr.P.C. has the additional proviso that when the inquiry or trial relates to an offence under sections 376 to 376D IPC, the inquiry or trial shall, as far as possible, be completed within a period of two months from the date of commencement of the examination of witnesses.

In order to protect the identity of the victim rapes so as to protect them further humiliation, the Act requires all the trials of rapes cases shall be conducted in camera by awomanjudicialofficer. Further, the Actpermits the printing an dpublication of trial proceedings subject to the condition of maintaining the confidentiality of names and addresses of the victims.

The most important change the Act brought was in relation to victim compensation. The much awaited compensation scheme was statutorily provided for by the present amendment. A new section 357A has been inserted which requires all the states to frame a victim compensation scheme in consultation with central government. On recommendation by the court for compensation, the district legal service authority or

state legal service authority must decide on the quantum of compensation. There is also a provision for relief after inquiry by the state or district legal service authority in those cases where no trial takes place because the offender cannot be traced or identified.

The amendment in 2008 has been further supplemented by Criminal Law Amendment Act 2013 by adding S.357 B, S.357 C have been inserted in Cr.P.C. S.357 B provides the additional compensation to victims who come under s. 326 A, 376 D of the IPC. Section 357 C gives the directions to all the hospitals whether they run by govt. or by local authorities that they provide the free medical aid to the victims of ss. 326 A, 376 A, 376 B, 376 C, 376 D ofIPC.

Though the procedural formalities (quantum and disbursal procedure of compensation) have yet to be worked out, this is indeed a progressive development. It has identified the need for monetary support towards the immediate and long term rehabilitation of the already shattered victim of rape.

The Act also provides an important right to victim to appeal against the acquittal or inadequate sentence of accused by the court. The victim can apply against inadequate compensation. A proviso has been added to section 372 in this regard. Further, the victim can appeal in the same court where the accused can appeal the order of conviction.

The Criminal Law (Amendment Act),2013 which provides for amendment of Indian Penal Code, Indian Evidence Act, and Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 on laws related to sexual offences lays down that after section 53, section 53A which laysdown that, evidence of the character or previous sexual experience is not relevant in certain cases. This new section was inserted to bring the Act in consonance with the amendments made in I.P.C. relating to sexual offences including rape.

Under S.151 and 152 of Indian Evidence Act, 1872, victims are protected from being asked indecent, scandalous, offensive questions, and questions intended to annoy or insult them. Otherwise, there is no other provision for protection of victims, as against threats, intimidation or any inducement whereby they are prevented from telling the truth. Often, when an accused is released on bail, one of the terms and conditions imposed by the Courts on the accused will be that he shall not tamper the evidence, or approach the witnesses. This, again, is not a provision for protection of the witnesses; it is only to ensure that the trial is not rendered in fructuous. Judges also hold in-camera trials to ensure deposition by witnesses without any fear or embarrassment. In recent times the Supreme Court has permitted recording of evidence by video-conferencing. All these are inadequate without a specific legal provision guaranteeing protective measures to victims before, during and also after the trial.

Section 155 (4) of the Act, earlier allowed the defence lawyer to discredit the victim's testimony by arguing that she was of "immoral character". This attack on her in the name of a legally allowed cross examination, questioning her past sexual acts, her personal life and other private matters, deterred many victims of rape from registering complaints. The Indian Evidence (Amendment)Act of 2002 deleted section 155 (4) and amended section 146. According to the new provision, it is not permissible to ask questions in cross examination of the prosecutrix about her general moral character. This paved the way for an end to unwarranted attacks on the past sexual acts of the victim of rape.

The criminal justice system will be successful only when the victims are provided adequate compensation for the injury they have suffered.Justice requires that a person who has suffered including dependents must compensated. In all the cases the accused is responsible for the reparation of any harm caused to the victim.But, where the accused is poor or unable to pay the compensation, the state shall take the responsibility of paying the compensation. Compensation justifies in many ways like it benefits the victims, there shall be recognising of his suffering and more importantly it acts as deterrent effect on the offender. It also has a reformative effect on the offender as the paying of compensation has an "intrinsic moral value of its own". In India there are different statutory provisions under which the compensation may be awarded to the victims of crime are asunder:

 Constitutional Remedy of VictimCompensation

- Fatal Accident Act, 1855
- (iii) Motor Vehicles Act, 1988
- (iv) Criminal Procedure Code,1973
- (v) Probation of Offenders Act,1958

(vi) Other Legislations

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 is a comprehensive law to provide for the protection of children from the offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography, while safeguarding the interests of the child at every stage of the judicial process by incorporating childfriendly mechanisms for reporting, recording of evidence, investigation andspeedy trial of offences through designated Special Courts established under section 28 of the Act. The child victim may be awarded compensation for his/her relief and rehabilitation. This compensation may be awarded at an interim stage, during the pendency of trial, as well as at the conclusion of the trial. Procedures for obtaining and enforcing reparation

The Act is useful to give justice to victims of child sexual abuse but it is essential that the machineries involved in justice delivery system should coordination and cooperate in discharge of their functions. As the prevention of child sexual abuse, protection of victims, justice delivery, and rehabilitation of victims are not isolated issues. The achievement of these objectives requires a coordinated response of all the key players, which include the police, prosecution, courts, medical institutions, psychologists and counselors, as well as institutions

that provide social services to the children.

CONCLUSION- The role of the victim under the Indian Criminal Justice system, which follows the common law tradition. restricted to that of a witness in the prosecution of an offence. This is because of a negative perception of the victim as a person who suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights. As a result, the criminal justice system in India has become a means of social control by the state which took over the right to prosecute the accused excluding the victim. From a criminological and victimological perspective, these are "value laden judgmental labels that serve no useful research function and thus can be replaced by more neutral designations like 'participants to the conflict', 'parties to the dispute' and so on. This view advocates replacement of the vertical criminal justice system by a "horizontal line of justice" where the punishment system is sought to be substituted by a mediation system which gives a central role for the victim. However, our system persisted with the vertical model of criminaljustice.

The brief review of the existing legal frame wok in relation to rights of victims of crime reveals that expect in the area of providing compensation, very little has been done either statutorily or through schemes to address the entire range of problems faced by victims of crime. There is a need to take the fresh look at the position in which

the victim of a crime is placed in our criminal justice system.

Mia Farrow - Activist and Actress MadhavaMenon, N.R. Victim Compensation Law and Criminal Justice: A Plea for a Victim-Orientation in Criminal Justice. In Vibhute, K.I. (ed.) Criminal Justice -A Human Rights Perspective of the Criminal Justice Process in India.(Lucknow, Eastern Book Company, 2004), pp. 362-369.

Clauses 4 & 5

Clause 8

Clause 12

Clause 14 Part B

Section 2 (wa): "victim" means a person who has suffered any loss or injury caused by reason of the act or omission for which the accused person has been charged and the expression "victim" includes his or her guardian or legalheir;'. In section 24 of the principal Act, in sub-section (8), the following proviso shall be inserted, namely:"Provided that the Court may permit the victim to engage an advocate of his choice to assist the prosecution under thissubsection."

In section 26 of the principal Act, in clause (a), the following proviso shall be inserted, namely: - "Provided that any offence under section 376 and sections 376A to 376D of the Indian Penal Code shall be tried as far as practicable by a Court presided over by a woman."

In section 157 of the principal Act, in sub-section (1), after the proviso, the following proviso is inserted, namely:-"Provided further that in relation to an offence of rape, the recording of statement of the victim is to be conducted at

the residence of the victim or in the place of her choice and as far as practicable by a woman police officer in the presence of her parents or guardian or near relatives or social worker of the locality.".

In section 173 of the principal Act,-(a) after sub-section (1), the following sub-section is inserted, namely:-"(1A) The investigation in relation to rape of a child may be completed within three months from the date on which the information was recorded by the officer in charge of the police station."; Ibid, Sub-section (2) (h)

In section 309 of the principal Act,- (a) in sub-section (1), the following proviso shall be inserted, namely:- "Provided that when the inquiry or trial relates to an offence under sections 376 to 376D of the Indian Penal Code, the inquiry or trial shall, as far as possible, be completed within a period of two months from the date of commencement of the examination of witnesses.":

In section 327 of the principle Act,- (a) in sub-section (2), after the proviso, the following proviso is inserted, namely:"Provided further that in camera trial shall be conducted as far as practicable by a woman Judge or Magistrate.";

(b) in sub-section (3), the following proviso is inserted, namely:-"Provided that the ban on printing or publication of trial proceedings in relation to an offence of rape may be lifted, subject to maintaining confidentiality of name and address of the parties.". ibid.

After section 357 of the PIF-7.500 ASVS Reg. No. AZM 561/2013-14 principal Act, the following section is inserted, namely: -357A.(1) Every State Government in co-ordination with the Central Government is to be prepare a scheme for providing funds for the purpose of compensation to the victim or his dependents who have suffered loss or injury as a result of the crime and requirerehabilitation. 2) Whenever a recommendation is made by the Court for compensation, the District Legal Service Authority or the State Legal Service Authority, as the case may be, is to be decide the quantum of compensation to be awarded under the scheme referred to in sub-section (1).

- (3) If the trial Court, at the conclusion of the trial, is satisfied, that the compensation awarded under section 357 is not adequate for such rehabilitation, or where the cases end in acquittal or discharge and the victim has to be rehabilitated, it may make recommendation for compensation.
- (4) Where the offender is not traced or identified, but the victim is identified, and where no trial takes place, the victim or his dependents may make an application to the State or the District Legal Services Authority for award of compensation.
- (5) On receipt of such recommendations or on the application under sub-section (4), the State or the District Legal Services Authority is to be, after due enquiry award adequate compensation by completing the enquiry within twomonths.
- (6) The State or the District Legal Services Authority, as the case may

be, to alleviate the suffering of the victim, may order for immediate firstaid facility or medical benefits to be made available free of cost on the certificate of the police officer not below the rank of the officer in charge of the police station or a Magistrate of the area concerned, or any other interim relief as the appropriate authority deemsfit."

The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act,

In section 372 of the principal Act, the following proviso is inserted, namely:-"Provided that the victim is to be have a right to prefer an appeal against any order passed by the Court acquitting the accused or convicting for a lesser offence or imposing inadequate compensation, and such appeal is to be lie to the Court to which an appeal ordinarily lies against the order of conviction of such Court."

After section 53 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 (hereafter in this Chapter referred to as the Evidence Act), the following section shall be inserted, namely:- Evidence of character or previous sexual experience not relevant in certain cases."53A. In a prosecution for an offence under section 354, section 354A, section 3548, section 354C, section 3540, section 376, section 376A, section 3768, section 376C, section 3760 or section 376E of the Indian Penal Code or for attempt to commit any such offence, where the question of consent is in issue, evidence of the character of the victim or of such person's previous sexual experience with any person shall not be relevant on the issue of such consent or the quality of consent."

Section 152: he Court shall forbid any question which appears to it to be intended to insult or annoy, or which, though proper in itself, appears to the Court needlessly offensive in form

Law Commission of India, 154th Report on the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (1996) at 57 Act No. 13 of Year 1855`

Act No. 59 OF 1988 Act No.2 of 1974 Act No 20 of 1958 Act No No32 of 2012

Section 33 (8) and Rule 7(3) Further, as stated in Rule 7 (4) the compensation is to be paid by State Government from the Victims Compensation Fund or other scheme or fund established by it under Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 or any other law for the time being in force, and in the absence of such fund or scheme, by the State Government.

Clause 1 of U.N. Declaration
Fatah A. Ezzat, "Some Problematic
Concepts, Unjustified Criticism and
Popular Misconception", in Kirchoff
ed International Debates of
Victimology, WSV Publishing, (1994)
at p. 82-84

Kaiser, Gunther, "Comparative Prospective Concerning Victim Orientation in Criminology, And Criminal Justice" in Kirchhoffet al (eds.) International Debates of Victimology, WSV Publishing (1994), 104 at 137
