

Victim-Centric Approaches in Indian Criminal Law: Can Restorative Justice Bridge the Gap Left by Retributive Practices?

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Abstract: *This research paper critically examines the contrasting paradigms of retributive justice and restorative justice within the Indian criminal justice system, with a special emphasis on the role and rights of victims. Traditional Indian criminal law, influenced by colonial frameworks and codified in the newly enacted Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and BharatiyaNagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), has historically prioritized punishment and state sovereignty, often sidelining the voices and interests of victims. This paper explores the limitations of this retributive model and evaluates the transformative potential of restorative justice, which emphasizes healing, victim participation, offender accountability, and community integration. Drawing upon judicial trends, comparative international models, and existing statutory provisions, the paper argues that restorative justice, if institutionalized and carefully implemented, can bridge the victim-centric gaps of India's retributive system. The study concludes with actionable recommendations for embedding restorative principles within Indian criminal jurisprudence to create a more equitable and empathetic justice system..*

Keywords: Restorative Justice, Retributive Justice, Victim-Centric Law, Indian Criminal Law, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), BharatiyaNagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), Victim Compensation, Legal Reform, Victim Rights, Judicial Trends

