



Restorative justice system and the rights of aboriginal and juvenile offenders and victims: An appraisal of the statutes of developed countries

Sohail Amjad¹, Nagina Riaz²

^{1, 2} Research Associate, Department of Political and International Sciences, University of Siena, Siena, Italy

Abstract

Aboriginal and Juvenile offenders and victims have suffered more than they deserved as an offender for the crime or offence on the one hand and as a victim for their rights on the other hand. The story of their suffering is been carried on from centuries but no strategy was made to secure them like the adult and normal citizens of communities. Aboriginal women specially had been targeted at even the world's most educated and developed societies due to lack of legislation and social security. Juvenile offenders must be treated differently than the adult offenders whether they are in prison or in probation for their future growth and to avoid the impact of intentional or unintentional offence committed by him or he being the victim of a crime. This paper throws light on the statutes of different countries where they have tried to provide legal assistance and a distinct status to Aboriginal female and young offenders and such other recommendations are in the development of legislation to provide them with an ideal environment where they will be restored to societies without an impact of crime on them and to assure the community of non occurrence of such offences from them and towards them.

Keywords: RJS, aboriginal, juveniles, Usa, Australia, Canada

1. Introduction

Restorative justice system is now developed in to a well structural phenomenon to accommodate itself in criminal justice system. It comes up with new concept and understandings and adapts new techniques and formulates new mechanisms to handle all sorts of cases and challenging situations.

These techniques and mechanisms comprise of circle sentencing and conferences, victim offender, mediation and reconciliation and it results in apology to the victim and community. These new mechanism are generally utilized by state agencies.

These mechanisms are different in different regions and this is the beauty of these mechanisms that it adopts itself to be used appropriately in the course of legislation. This is the reason and because of its feasibility that the United Nations in criminal matters endorses the declaration of basic principles on the use of restorative justice program ^[1].

2. Restorative justice system in the united states

Restorative justice system is realized and formally accepted as a new mechanisms in the united states and its locality and is accepted that this system looks upon the crime and parties of the crime from a very different perspective and response to it from a very unbiased, sustainable and different approach ^[2].

This system differs from the currently available or traditional justice system that assumes crime to be a violation against the state. However restorative justice system takes crime to be violation of the rules of relationship and social norms among individuals of the society. The main purpose of restorative

justice system is to heal the harm caused by an intentional or unintentional incident keeping in view the balance between the rights and satisfaction of the victim, offender and community ^[3]. This system gives more importance to satisfy the directly affected parties of the crime. And it directly responds and attempts to restore those parties to the community and makes an attempt to lighten the effect of the incident on the agreed parties. This system functions for the sustainable security of the public focuses for the needs of the victim and offender and develops certain mechanism make them or to restore them to the community to be a better and responsible member ^[4].

2.1 Office of juvenile justice and delinquency prevention

It was in 1974 when the congress founded the office of juvenile justice and delinquency prevention with the affiliation of department of justice to prevent and respond to juvenile victimization and delinquency by supplementing resources and to provide national coordination and leadership ^[5].

The purpose of the offices to support communities and states at large to develop themselves and to implement effective prevention and intervention programs for the improvement of the juvenile justice system, for the protection of public and to rehabilitate the juveniles and their families ^[6, 7].

³ https://www.americanbar.org/groups/gpsolo/publications/gpsolo_ereport/2011/october_2011/making_case_restorative_justice/(assessed on august 18 2019)

⁴ <https://www.waldenu.edu/online-bachelors-programs/bs-in-criminal-justice/resource/the-role-of-restorative-justice-in-a-criminal-justice-system>(assessed on august 18 2019)

⁵ <https://www.cairn.info/revue-internationale-de-droit-penal-2004-1-page-535.htm>(assessed on august 18 2019)

⁶ <https://jlc.org/youth-justice-system-overview>(assessed on august 18 2019)

¹ <https://charterforcompassion.org/restorative-justice/restorative-justice-some-facts-and-history>(assessed on august 18 2019)

² <https://www.uscourts.gov/probation-journal-topic/restorative-justice>(assessed on august 18 2019)

2.2 Balanced and restorative justice system project

This project was sponsored by the office of juvenile justice and delinquency prevention and it work with many stack holders for example New York, Illinois and others etc and many state justice systems to provide training and technical assistance to stack holders and important decision makers in those states which were seeking reforms in juvenile justice system ^[8].

This project handled dialogue that primarily focussed on restorative justice system, its implementation and practices. These states have expanded their policies adoption and legislation to be prepared for the upcoming challenges faced by the legislation system and they have implemented certain policies and made certain legislation amendments to structure it for the upcoming restorative and other justice reforms ^[9].

2.3 Restorative justice in oregon

Oregon (STATE IN USA) was among the initial states that included restorative justice in its statute. It is mentioned in the statutes of Oregon that restorative justice system adapts such mechanisms that protect its public and attempts to reduce juvenile victimization and brings reforms in justice systems from the perspective of public safety and restitution to the community and victim ^[10].

2.4 Restorative justice in pennsylvania

It was reported in the commissions of juvenile court judges in 1997 that restorative justice principles distinctively guides the juvenile justice system in Pennsylvania (STATE IN USA). It was reported in that commission that restorative justice principles protects the interest of the public, adapt certain programs for the children for their care, supervision, provides attention of the members of community to protect it, awareness among members to be held accountable for their offences and to develop competencies among children to make them productive and responsible member of the community ^[11].

2.5 Restorative justice in alaska

Restorative justice articulated in the statues of Alaska (STATE IN USA) and it is argued that these statues are to protect the community and to bring awareness among the members of the community ^[12].

Restorative justice system is included in this system for the same purpose that it also protects community, brings awareness among juvenile offenders and attempts to restore them to be responsible and productive and it imposes accountability if any violation of law has occurred and along with this applies certain mechanisms that restores sustainable peace and harmony to the community and lives of victim and offender ^[13].

2.6 Restorative justice in new jersey

It was recommended to the juvenile justice commission by the New Jersey (STATE IN USA) legislation committee to include the principles of restorative justice system in the juvenile justice system as per the committee restorative justice obligates the offender to the accountable for his offence and to make an attempt to restore the victim from the impact and consequences occurred due to his offence and to create same environment in the community for his restoration as it was before his offence ^[14], ^[15].

Restorative justice ensures the safety of community, holds offender to be accountable to victims and community; it fosters reconciliation between the victim, offender and community and provides and develops certain competencies for the offenders in the community so that they can pursue a legitimate life after they are out of prison ^[16].

2.7 Restorative justice in colorado

In Colorado (STATE IN USA), restorative justice forms the basis of legislative justice and recommends that restorative justice improves, restores and protects the public safety and provides an opportunity to bring together the affected parties to offences which are the victims, juvenile offenders and the community for the purpose of restoration ^[17].

It suggests the same purposes of restorative justice as commonly mentioned in the previous paragraphs that restorative justice must keep in consideration the balance of interest of the victim, offender and community and must also focus to ensure the non-occurrence of such offences in future and to restore the juvenile offender to the community and assist him to become a productive and responsible member of the society ^[18].

2.8 Restorative justice in montana

In Montana (STATE IN USA) the office of restorative justice is established in 2013 that functions for restorative justice throughout the states. A fund for restorative justice is also created that provides resources to implement restorative programs in communities such as family group conferencing, restitution program, school expulsion alternatives, victim awareness education and community panels etc ^[19].

3. Restorative justice system in Canada

Canada has articulated restorative justice system in its criminal justice system for more than 40 years. Restorative justice system is mentioned there to be in approach to justice that addresses the consequences of a crime and holds the offender accountable for his Actions and provides an opportunity to all the directly affected parties to the crime that is victim, offender and community to discuss and identify their demands for satisfaction to restores themselves from the impacts of crime ^[20].

⁷restorative justice in the states: an analysis of statutory legislation and policy, sandra pavelka1 justice policy journal ! volume 2, number 13 (fall) © center on juvenile and criminal justice 2016, www.cjcj.org/jpj

⁸ <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/bal.pdf>(assessed on august 18 2019)

⁹ibid

⁶⁸ <https://www.justoutcomesconsulting.com/what-we-do/projects/transforming-justice-in-oregon>(assessed on august 18 2019)

¹¹ <https://www.ydr.com/story/opinion/columnists/2018/03/26/restorative-justice-pa-can-reduce-recidivism-save-tax-dollars/459219002/>(assessed on august 18 2019)

¹² <http://dhss.alaska.gov/djj/pages/generalinfo/rj.aspx>(assessed on august 18 2019)

¹³ <https://www.voaak.org/restorative-justice-services>(assessed on august 18 2019)

¹⁴ <https://njpropheticagenda.org/restorative-justice>(assessed on august 18 2019)

¹⁵p.1. 2002 title 2a:4a-21

¹⁶ <http://www.youthjusticenj.org/a-new-approach/>(assessed on august 18 2019)

¹⁷ <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dcj/restorative-justice>(assessed on august 18 2019)

¹⁸ <https://www.rjcolorado.org>(assessed on august 18 2019)

¹⁹ <http://www.restorativejusticeinternational.com/tag/montana-supports-victims-centered-restorative-justice/>(assessed on august 18 2019)

²⁰ <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/rj-jr/index.html>(assessed on august 18 2019)

Restorative justice system is supported by federal legislation and policy responses. Restorative justice is mentioned in the criminal code of Canada that tends to apply measures other than the punishment for the crime in a situation where the criminal accepts his guilt ^[21].

In other section it is mentioned that the purpose of the punishment shall be reparations to victims and community for the harm cause to them and that punishment shall create a sense of responsibility and shall acknowledge the offender for the harm he has caused to victim and the consequence of his offence.²²

In addition to the criminal code there are two other Acts, victim's bill of right Act and the correction and conditional release Act that mentions restorative justice system and explain that a victim has the right of access to information about restorative justice if they demand it ^[23].

3.1 Indigenous justice Program

This program is among those programs launched in the restoration of justice in a community. This program comprises of justice programs that are for indigenous communities and provides alternative justice in certain circumstances. The main objective for this program is to make and help indigenous people in undertaking responsibility to administer justice in their respective communities ^[24].

This program is to promote and articulate indigenous values to the available justice system and to participate in the measures taken for decreasing crime and victimization rate within the community.²⁵

3.2 Capacity building fund

The purpose of this fund is to support efforts made for the capacity building in indigenous people particularly to gain knowledge and skills for the management of restorative justice programs. The main objectives of these funds are to develop community based restorative justice programs, to train indigenous members of the community, to properly manage these restorative justice programs, to make attempts in developing new justice programs from the perspectives of different locations and as per the nature of disputes ^[26].

It also organizes events that promote trust among these communities towards the main stream justice system. The details of these programs are shared with state agencies to outline indigenous programs for these indigenous communities ^[27].

3.3 Community based justice fund

These fund support justice programs that are based on different communities and sponsored by state government. The main

purposes of these funds are to make indigenous people responsible and productive for seeking of justice in their indigenous communities. These funds help in the reduction of crime rates and victimization within indigenous communities ^[28].

It also aims to ensure faith, effective and responsible administration of justice that would meet the requirements of the indigenous members of indigenous communities, and to make attempts towards restorative justice to accommodate itself to handle disputes and conflicts of new nature ^[29].

3.4 Justice partnership and innovation programs- violence against girls and aboriginal women

Violence against female gender is a problem faced by Canada and the world together. This affects their personal safety and deprived them to participate in the events of community. The risk of violence is more than three time higher for the aboriginal women such as Inuit and metis which they face in their domestic affairs and committed by strangers towards them ^[30].

The government of Canada is taking intense measures to reduce violence against women by promoting different programs and awareness campaign and communities throughout Canada and it also attempts to decrease factors that increases the risk of violence against aboriginal women ^[31].

Government of Canada is supporting many educations and training programs among youth and children that train them to promote programs that functions to reduce and prevent violence against women ^[32].

4. Restorative justice system in new Zealand

New Zealand has set an example for the whole world by articulating restorative justice in its youth and adult justice system. The system of justice in new Zealand has set an example and sends message to all justice systems of the world that conflicts and disputes in the hindered without relying upon main stream justice system and that there are other ways and offender can be punished without putting him in prison and that punishment would lead to his restoration to the community as a responsible and productive person and the needs of the victims can also be dealt with in a better way than simple reparations etc ^[33].

Restorative justice approach that is family group conferencing is introduced to the children, young persons and their families Act of 1989. This approach was very successful as it was itself restorative in nature ^[34]. Some of the aspects of family group conferencing system are mentioned as follow;

1. This system attempted to reduce the use of courts by the offender and all matters were tried to be solved outside the

²¹ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/opinion-eggleton-saint-germain-restorative-justice-1.4884839>(assessed on august 18 2019)

²² <https://www.csc-cc.gc.ca/restorative-justice/003005-4012-eng.shtml>(assessed on august 18 2019)

²³ibid

²⁴ <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/fund-fina/acf-fca/ajs-sja/index.html>(assessed on august 18 2019)

²⁵ <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/bcs-criminal-justice-system/understanding-criminal-justice/indigenous-justice/programs-services>(assessed on august 18 2019)

²⁶ <https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/fun-fin/cfp-adp/2018-1/guide-en.html>(assessed on august 18 2019)

²⁷ <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/fund-fina/acf-fca/ajs-sja/cf-fc/index.html>(assessed on august 18 2019)

²⁸ ibid

²⁹ <https://www.lawfoundation.on.ca/apply/access-to-justice-fund/>(assessed on august 18 2019)

³⁰ <http://skfn.ca/2018/02/06/justice-canada-justice-partnership-innovation-program-violence-aboriginal-women-girls/>(assessed on august 18 2019)

³¹ <https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/violence/knowledge-connaissance/fun-fin-en.html>(assessed on august 18 2019)

³²ibid.

³³ <https://www.justice.govt.nz/courts/criminal/charged-with-a-crime/how-restorative-justice-works/>(assessed on august 18 2019)

³⁴

https://www.unafei.or.jp/publications/pdf/rs_no75/no75_10ve_o%27driscoll.pdf(assessed on august 18 2019)

court, this was helped by police who in the course of their discretionary powers would divert many matters from the court to the family group conferencing system.

2. Unlike other countries there is no limit on the nature of offenses to be dealt by the conference system and this has been the unique nature of the justice system of New Zealand and thousands of families got benefit from the conference system since its evolution.
3. This legislation emphasized more on the outcomes of the process to promote sense of accountability and responsibility among offenders than to punish or imprison them.
4. Nature of the family group conferencing model is receptive and can accommodate new cultures with almost no difficulty. Native community of New Zealand have demanded for a system that would function for the empowerment of communities and indigenous families.
5. This system was sponsored by youth justice system that arranges and coordinates family group conferences support of the volunteers as limited as the conferences are assisted by professionals and responsible officials.
6. Decisions of the family group conference are monitored by model course of individual communities for example rangatahi courts of the Maori communities. These courts also function for the implementations of the conference plans and also outlines certain cultural perspectives to be included in the process with the advice of local elders and community leaders^[35].

5. Restorative justice system in Australia

Restorative justice in Australia is primarily used to deal with offenders who admit their offence. Restorative justice can be contacted to criminal justice system at any stage of court proceeding. It can be used to divert the offender away from court at any point whether before, in prison or after released from prison and referred to programs needed at that respective stage such as youth conferencing, circle and forum sentencing or victim offender mediation^[36].

Youth conferencing is available and operational in all states and territories of Australia. These conferences provide an opportunity for the young offenders to hold themselves accountable and to take responsibility for the harm they have caused to victim and community. Several aspects of the offence are taken into consideration before it can be determined if the matter is suitable for the conference such as harm caused to victim, nature of the offence and other such matters considered relevant etc^[37].

The option of restorative is also available to adult offenders in Australia but is currently limited to four jurisdictions that are New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland^[38].

5.1 New South Wales

³⁵ <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/crime/108873054/peace-above-punishment-restorative-process-challenging-our-perception-of-justice> (assessed on August 18 2019)

³⁶ <https://aic.gov.au/publications/rpp/rpp127/restorative-justice-australia> (assessed on August 18 2019)

³⁷ <http://www.iprt.ie/contents/3026> (assessed on August 18 2019)

³⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/jan/25/airy-fairy-magistrates-comments-about-restorative-justice-spark-concerns-in-queensland> (assessed on August 18 2019)

Young offender can be offered participation in a youth conference under young offender 1997 but after few warnings are made to him. He must accept his guilt and must express his consent to participate in a youth conference however serious offences like drug trafficking, murder are not eligible matters to be taken to youth conferences^[39].

A youth conference includes meeting of all the parties and related persons to the crime along with police and other supporting persons. If a victim is not intended to participate himself he can send his authorized representative however the ideal situation in a conference is that all parties attend by themselves. If the parties do not agree on a mutual plan then the matter is sent back to court or police^[40].

5.2 Victoria

Youth justice conferencing initiated in 1995 in Victoria as there were provisions already available in the children and young person Act 1989. This Act is now articulated into children, youth and families Act 2005. This program is monitored by many known government organizations and also department of human services^[41, 42].

There is a specific age criteria for young people to participate in these conferences and the age limit is 10 to 18 years at the time of crime. Participants in these conferences must be found guilty of offences but shall not include offences of serious nature such as manslaughter, serious crimes of violence and homicide etc. Report from the conferences regarding his participation and behaviour is also taken into consideration by the court at time of sentencing^[43].

5.3 Queensland

Community conferencing was first introduced in 1997 through the juvenile justice Act 1992 in Queensland. Initially in three locations which provided sentencing and diversionary options. Police had power to divert criminal to conferences from the court system. This program as it expanded to many states has undergone many changes and is subject to many amendments that include the removal of the consent from victim before referring him to a conference^[44].

There is no limitation on the nature of offence and age of the offender therefore the conference deal with the offences of all ranges and intensity such as wilful damage, assault and battery etc. If the offender is from an indigenous community then permission from an elder member of community is required before referring him to a conference.

5.4 South Australia

In South Australia, a family conference can only deal with the offender between age of 10 and 18 as per the young offenders Act 1993. If the nature of the crime committed by the offender does not demand prosecution however it demands to be entered and undertaken and if there is a victim then a family conference can deal with the matter which provides opportunities to the offender

³⁹ <http://crg.aic.gov.au/reports/strang/nsw.html> (assessed on August 18 2019)

⁴⁰ <https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/documents/bb/bb77.pdf> (assessed on August 18 2019)

⁴¹ <http://crg.aic.gov.au/reports/strang/vic.html> (assessed on August 18 2019)

⁴² children and young persons act 1989

⁴³ <https://www.varj.asn.au> (assessed on August 18 2019)

⁴⁴ juvenile justice act 1992

to hold himself responsible and accountable for the offence he has committed and to realize the harm he has caused and the consequences that his offence has caused to all affected parties.

6. Restorative justice system in czech republic and the role of pms centre

Restorative justice system in Czech Republic has taken to a more advance level and processed along with court proceeds or mainstream justice system. Mediation service in the dispute between the parties is provided in pre-tribe and court proceedings for the conflict resolution by the PMS centre known as probation and mediation services centre ^[45].

Consent of both parties is mandatory for the mediation services person soon Act as mediator are experts in effective communication and negotiation between parties they enable and support parties in dispute to come to a point of agreement to find a mutually agreed solution or resolution to the dispute these mediators monitor the negotiation process and create conditions that allows understanding among the parties and takes into account the interest of both parties.⁴⁶

Probation and mediation officers prepare a pre-sentence report which includes the current life status of the accused person, his motive for entering the process his cooperation for solving the criminal or accused matters he is prosecuted for ^[47].

These reports helps the PMS officers and the state prosecutor along with the judge to find all necessary information about the accused person and they establish and proposes the extent of cooperation to be made with the client in future and makes it easy for them to make possible restriction, adequate duties for the client etc ^[48].

PMS Officers tries to find alternatives solution for the crime and tries to repair broken relations. The function of the PMS Officer is the main purposes of restorative justice system while dealing with a dispute or parties in an offence. PMS Officer explains the legal status of the crime and the status of accused to his client so that he shall be prepared to actively resolve the consequences ^[49].

Client victim and client accused both shall participate in the mediation process Actively and shall be willing to accept the judgment of their case and shall be willing to Actively participate inner's execution. The PMs Officer in the presentence stage functions to remove the causes of offence that tempted his client to offend and the remedy can be participation in a rehabilitation program, finding him a job or further education etc.

7. Conclusion

There are certain rights claimed by this system for both the victim and offender hence it is explain and proved that restorative justice system comes up with absolute mechanism that restores victim and offender in a systematic way and promises a community with sustainable peace and

⁴⁵ <https://www.pmscr.cz/en/other-activities/restorative-justice-week/>(assessed on august 18 2019)

⁴⁶ <https://slideplayer.com/slide/2504837/>(assessed on august 18 2019)

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ <http://restorativejustice.org/trj-library/mediation-as-a-restorative-approach-to-dealing-with-juvenile-crime-in-the-czech-republic/10138/#sthash.6ft8okjv.dpbs>(assessed on august 18 2019)

⁴⁹ Ibid

harmony. Restorative justice system is now a global phenomenon and is articulated in criminal justice system of almost all countries of the world. It comes up with the different understanding of an offence and creates new mechanisms to handle those situation and ensure dispute resolution. Restorative justice system is found in the statues of many states of US where certain projects and programs are sponsored by government to work in the spheres of restorative justice.

Certain programs and projects are run by the governments of New Zealand, Canada, Australia and Czech Republic to develop the system of restorative justice and to adopt it in the court proceedings from the trial to the execution phase. Initially restorative justice system focused only on the young offender and was limited to certain age groups and handled crimes of non-serious nature but now it is gradually developing and has included adult offenders and crimes off all nature. Restorative justice system provides an opportunity to offenders of all age and accused of and offence to take responsibility of the crime and to hold themselves accountable for harm caused to the victim and restore themselves to the community to become a responsible and productive member of the community.

8. Recommendations

As discussed earlier this system has roots in history of almost all ancient races and tribes still it needs to show more efficiency which need some points to be kept in to focus while drafting or legislating this system. Some of the key facts are mentioned below:

In general the system is working at the level of communities at this stage but the question is that how will the decisions of the committee be made effective whether it will need judicial implementation or can be kept non judicial by trying alternative enforcement mechanism.

In the far flung area the system is mainly corrupted due to political influence in all aspects as is intervened in to management or Police groups, will the system won't be affected by such influence? Or it will create an environment where such intervention will not be effective as the basis of the RJS is the offer from both the aggrieved parties and no third or external party will affect their choice or award of arbitration.

As RJS is enrolled in different states and entertained from the perspective of age and nature of offence as is done in different states of Australia, will the same level be maintained in heinous crimes of very serious nature in all communities? The mission says yes but what will be the mechanism?

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