

Mitigating Compoundable Victimization in Bangladesh to Empower Victims and Strengthen Society Through Community-led Justice Approach

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Abstract

This article examines the strategies employed to mitigate compounded victimization within a community-led justice framework. Community members have been influenced in various ways to meet their needs and demands. Through this study, the effectiveness of the community-led justice approach has been identified and understood by implementing research-based interventions. Victims affected by criminal victimization in the selected community served as primary respondents to achieve the study's objectives. In contrast, practitioners of the community-led justice approach were interviewed to uncover the strategies employed to address the victimization that had occurred. As a qualitative study, fifteen victims and ten practitioners were interviewed using an interview checklist (IC). Victims were engaged through a Case Study, while the practitioners were asked to share their servicing methods following the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) approach. The offenders' reactions to their committed crimes were investigated to gain insight into society's rules and regulations. Restorative justice is regarded as a community-led justice approach that fosters improved reconciliation models and services to resolve disputes within the community. Ethical considerations were maintained as both groups were interviewed, and the gathered data were analyzed critically. Key findings indicate that various factors, including personal demands, property-related issues, neighborhood dynamics, and relational connections, influence community members. The findings and in-depth interpretations suggest that by activating essential policies and services, community-based criminal victimization can be effectively addressed, leading to increased satisfaction and accountability from offenders.

Keywords: compoundable victimization, community response, community-led justice approach, victims' empowerment, and offender responsibility

1. Background and Logical Framework

The community members design their life approach based on the community-led guidelines and dimensions that have been practiced most frequently. The people have various demands and crises that influence their actions and relationships with others. Individuals with different characteristics have forged their paths to enhance the capacity and growth of the community. The community instructions and rituals have been practiced for a long time to maintain the social settings and construct the relational structure. The community people are influenced by various factors and dynamics to commit crimes and to hamper the people's property, honor, social image, and collective strength of society. The community-based interactions of the people have extended and influenced individuals to challenge the community regulations mentioned by Devon (2024). Otherwise, an innovative idea about community members has been presented by Birdsong (2020), suggesting that people have been interconnected and gathered to live with satisfaction and engage with various community models. By doing this, they have found the friends and neighbors they desired. A life-based code has been developed and practiced by community members to foster their relationships and connections for better growth.

The societal pattern of a community emphasizes the lifestyle aspects, including food, dress code, thought processes, work mechanisms, community gathering tendencies, trends in violating community manners, and social solidarity. The Lifestyle theory (Maxfield: 1987) indicates that community members are influenced by their daily needs and affairs, which are closely connected to community correspondences and the understanding between community

members and institutions. Community members violate community manners and legislative orders when their needs and desires are not met by conventional methods. Theoretical dimensions (Brennan, Birdger, and Alter: 2013) note that community members violate rules and legal orders for various reasons while demanding recovery through responsive actions. The primary sources of criminal victimization arise from disorderly conduct and a culture of manipulation.

Community members are provoked by numerous factors and issues that lead them to disregard regular rules and customs for various purposes. Lanier, Henry, and Anastasia (2015) state that the lifestyle aspects of community members have compelled them to engage in criminal actions and events. Due to lifestyle factors, community members encounter different people and situations that tend to involve criminal attitudes and processes. Sarker (2008) argued that community members commit criminal victimizations influenced by factors such as financial scarcity, moral degradation, a lack of justice, distrust in relationships, a lack of community-based preventive measures against crimes and unethical behaviors, significant discrimination in many arenas, lack of community solidarity, and desires for benefits without ownership and legitimacy. The impact of post-modernization has complicated life contexts, pushing individuals to become more self-centered and interest-driven. Under these circumstances, community members have committed various criminal victimizations for their interests and intentions. A study conducted by Carrabine, Iganski, Lee, Plummer, and South (2004: 97) states the following:

“The concept of postmodernism, which relates to the life of the community and influences people to accept different benefits without any questions and imagination towards community etiquette and obligations. The people of the community have committed crimes for their own interest and followed the recognized legislations under the threat of punishment. The crime tendency of people varies from country to country, but it remains a subject and issue that cannot be avoided. In the modernization aspect, the criminal matter has grown as a regular phenomenon and imposed preventive measures by the state to control.”

Zehr (2002) studied that restorative justice focuses on restoring the damage and healing the lost relationship through appropriate intervention from offenders and the accused. The punitive justice process emphasizes punishment for offenders according to legislation, which tends to demotivate efforts to regain lost correspondence and understanding. The gap between victim and offender has widened due to the punishment-based justice approach. Bayes and Watson (2014) noted that in countries like the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, Scandinavian nations, South Korea, Switzerland, South Africa, the Philippines, and others where human respect and social mutuality are prioritized, restorative justice is practiced to foster connections between victims and offenders for a better community life. Restorative justice promotes the essential elements needed for broader contexts and provides the necessary frameworks for changing views and responsibilities with good intentions. In essence, restorative justice spreads an ideology of reconciliation among community members while aiming to reduce recidivism. It has been observed (James: 2005) that community members are interested in embracing the concepts of togetherness and affiliation, yet issues like criminal victimization and existing social discrimination have caused a rift, fostering a sense of isolation among group members. It is important to highlight that restorative justice does not condone severe criminal victimization that leads to significant devastation and relational degradation.

The practice of restorative justice relies heavily on the social composition of the community. John (2002) stated that victimization and its responses depend on the social structure and human behavior within the community. Considering relational dynamics, social structures and human behavior are intertwined and influence the development of restorative practices. Sarker (2001) identified two aspects crucial for addressing criminal matters and creating a preventive framework to shield community members from victimization: (a) community behaviors are shaped by the social structures of their environment, which dictate mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, and (b) correspondence among individuals is defined through approaches evaluated by the outcomes of human conduct accepted by society. Social values, ethics, customs, and community-based legal practices monitor accepted behaviors.

Restorative justice engages community members in addressing victimization and involves offenders in the process of repairing and healing trauma. It effectively addresses the victimization of women and children by applying local reconciliation trends. Restorative justice emphasizes indigenous approaches that are seen as a framework for treatment. Islam, Jahan, and Hossain (2018) examined women's victimization within the context of Bangladesh and identified three factors contributing to victimization within the community, which are deeply ingrained and practiced by its people: (a) treating offenders at face value: The tendency to commit crimes is likely to rise if offenders are judged solely on social status; (b) adherence to community-based regulations: Community pressure and motivation can correct behaviors as members become educated through community standards and guidance; (c)

the nature of responses during the post-victimization stage: Legal and community support for victims empowers them to combat offenders effectively. When protective measures are inadequate, victims often feel confused and lack the motivation to confront and resist.

Communities, as stakeholders, are actively involved in the restorative process to address victimization and motivate individuals not to violate community standards. Relationships among community members are formed based on various factors, such as familial ties, legal bonds, and social connections. Under situational pressures, relational expectations can shift, leading individuals to damage their experiences, relationships, and existing solidarity. Experiences regarding criminal victimization and prevention strategies vary significantly by country. Restorative justice underscores a community-based preventive approach to combat offenses and encourages compliance with community regulations and relational obligations.

Given these contexts, two key points of interest have emerged to guide the present study: *(a) community members operate with a holistic perspective. However, community rules and guidelines compel individuals to act in ways that ensure survival and build trusting relationships. Influenced by external factors or situational pressures, community members have engaged in criminal activities and illegal actions against people and property. This study aims to uncover in-depth insights into the motivations behind criminal behavior within community settings. (b) Minor crimes and unlawful acts can be addressed within the community by arranging restorative sessions for those victimized and affected. As a community-led justice system, restorative justice plays a pivotal role in facilitating restoration efforts aimed at peaceful resolutions and rebuilding lost relationships and goodwill.*

2. Research Questions

The study conducted has revealed the mitigating strategies and approaches utilized by the community-led justice system in Bangladesh to address compoundable criminal victimizations. This study has been guided by the following questions:

- (a) What factors and livelihood-based components influence individuals to commit crimes and violate community regulations?
- (b) In what way does the experience of criminal victimization mitigate?
- (c) How and why have the approaches employed by the community-led justice system been applied to address victimization?
- (d) In what context should the community-led justice system be modified to offer a more effective service for resolving criminal disputes?

3. Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to explore the strategies employed by the community-led justice system to empower victims and enhance societal strength. The specific objectives are to:

- (a) clarify the mitigating strategies employed by the community-led justice system to address the compoundable victimizations;
- (b) understand the reactions and feedback from clients (victims) who have utilized the service;
- (c) determine the community's response to the community-led justice system;
- (d) trace the societal benefits of the community-led justice system; and
- (e) notify the policy-level interactions by outlining the gaps in the interventions and processes employed.

4. Clarification of Concepts Used in the Study

Some relevant concepts have been used in the conducted study to explore the in-depth nature of the research problem. The following concepts have been understood in this way:

Compoundable Victimization indicates those types of criminal incidents that hamper the person's rights and social status. The damage has been made through victimization and needs specific services and supports for the victims and their families. Langford (2022) defined criminal victimization as an intentional action taken by someone to harm others' property and valuable goods, and their social position. As a criminal, it violates the existing relationship and manners that have been practiced socially and permitted by cultural heritage. The study considers the compoundable victimization as an event that may be mitigated within the community, inviting the relevant parties and stakeholders to maintain the national jurisdiction and procedures. The petty crimes are considered minor or compoundable victimization according to the legal framework and social justice jurisdiction. Therefore, the **concept of victim** (Dussich, 2000) refers to a person who has been victimized and harmed by

criminal events and activities. However, the victim is considered a person harmed by the offender through the **victimization process** and damaged valuable subjects from all concerns. The present study received those people as victims, including their victimization process by which they have lost their social position and are vulnerable within the community. Otherwise, the **restoration agencies have been considered a community-led justice system** in the conducted study to empower the victims and to ensure the offender's accountability.

5. Methodological Discourse

The study was conducted using a qualitative approach. The qualitative design (Withrow: 2016) regarding the crime aspect focuses on the integral subjects of any person or group who has passed a critical stage and illegal situations within community life, and is hindered by a person or group known as offenders. Under the qualitative approach, the victim, as a respondent, was interviewed using the case study method (CSM). CSM was chosen as a method to reveal the insights and events from the victim(s). The livelihood patterns of the victim(s), relational factors, community-based resilience, socio-cultural practices, and a culture of obedience toward others have been understood from the victim(s) through the CSM. During the interview sessions, the surroundings of the victim(s) were observed. The efforts made by victims were realized by collecting data like survival strategies, reintegration opportunities, and prevention dynamics. Fifteen victims were interviewed using an Interview Guideline (IG).

By contrast, key persons in the study were interviewed using Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Kibuacha (2024) noted that through the application of KIIs, the insights and in-depth events of any subjective phenomenon have been unearthed and understood. The key persons played a vital role in addressing victimization and worked in restorative agencies as practitioners. They were interviewed to identify the function of the community-led justice system, functional gaps, and structural needs to prevent victimization. Ten key informants were examined using the Key Interview Schedule (KIS). Both types of interviews were conducted face-to-face. Before the interview sessions, the goal of the study was explained to the respondents to obtain consent. Madaripur, Dhaka, and Gazipur were selected as research areas. Ethical considerations and moral issues were upheld while interviewing the victims and practitioners.

6. Research Gaps Reviewing Literature

The etiological ground of the conducted study has been understood by reviewing the relevant literature and theories. The gaps to conduct the study have been explored and identified systematically. The literature below has been reviewed to know the previous research works:

An article has been developed by Braithwaite (2015) about the practice of restorative justice in Bangladesh in the title *'Paralegals Changing Lenses'* to present the actual scenario of restorative justice and its consequences for controlling the re-offending. Another objective of the reviewed study is to know the restorative tendency of the community people and the culture of acceptance for restorative interventions and progress. The community-based disputes and harms have been committed for different causes and the community-based resolution is the best solution for repairing and the re-integration. The reviewed article attempts to clarify the people outlook about the paralegal actions for dispute repairing through restorative interventions and strategies. Braithwaite mentioned that restorative justice is practiced in Bangladesh following the indigenous approach called *shalish* through village court system. A certified body by the concerning agency is empowered to deal the justice process in front of the community as a stakeholder. At same time, local reconciliation process also practices the repairing approach of local disputes gathering local people called social meeting as well as social justice by locally. Braithwaite also noted that NGOs of Bangladesh are involved to heal the community harms, damages, and compensations process targeting to make community peace through empowering the victim as a matter of right.

Restorative justice is applied in the cases of various victimization to heal the injustice and to progress the community relationships. The reviewed study recommended that RJ for prisoners is a new demand by the civil society all over the world. The prison system of all countries are operated the following philosophy to protect the prisoners and to arrange the correctional interventions in behavior and lifestyle. Braithwaite (2015:313) mentioned that:

"A contribution restorative justice can make in serious cases where offenders are imprisoned for a long time without conviction is that victims can play a role in arguing that 21 years in prison is enough. Victims can argue that the pain for all the parties should end, as should the injustice system's dysfunction."

The reviewed study mentioned that restorative justice as a paralegal dimension is noted by Braithwaite which makes lenses in the context of Bangladesh and shows the guideline and directions how to heal the injustice within the community as well as the prison system. The revised study opined that RJ approach as a new invention protects

the prisoners without conviction and rehabilitates within the community. RJ always declares that people are victim by the situation and consequences of the incidents. So that, restorative justice tries to recover the harms and to re-integrate the relationships among the victim and offender. As per the RJ typology, crimes are the imbalance of practicing relationships that produces victimization and hampers the relationships and cooperation among the community people.

The reviewed writing conducted by Braithwaite invents a new concept that *entrepreneurship of restorative justice* in the local community of Bangladesh is practiced through the process of *voluntarism approach*. There are some volunteer committees in the local community of Bangladesh namely Madaripur, Rangpur, Patuakhali. The reviewed study mentions the consequences of restorative justice in Bangladesh and categorized into three propositions as follows:

Table 1. Three Achievements and Interventions by Restorative Justice in Bangladesh

Propositions	Achievements and Interventions
Participation in <i>village democracy</i>	(a) Through participation, the local people can share their feelings, sorrows, and harms. Through sharing, the authority of village court takes the interventions to protect the victim and to identify the offender's responsibilities by mutual understanding.
	(b) Village democracy is a concept that inspires the local people to present their relationships mode in front of local community members. Through this process, the indifference among the people is solved and minimized.
Superior <i>transparency and accountability of village justice</i>	(a) Transparency is a strategy in village justice that cooperates the stakeholders to come in a place for justice, social order and discipline.
	(b) Accountability also counts as a strategy that assists victim through the recovery performance by offender. By the process of village court, offender shares why this behavior has been done and how to repair the victimization.
Educating the <i>whole village about how to do justice, including how to do restorative justice</i>	(a) Village justice system (restorative justice) is a process of justice locally that educates the whole village showing the philosophy of justice and importance of community relationships. By the village justice system, people come willingly to get a solution of victimization.
	(b) In the justice aspect, it is truly mentioned by the RJ authority that people want order and discipline. The community people respects mutual collaboration and human presence naturally for ensuring peace, and order. But the practice of collaboration is not applied at everywhere.

Source: Developed by Researcher

Talukdar (2014) referred that community justice system in Bangladesh deals the compoundable cases through people cooperation and assistances. The reviewed study mentioned that *shalish* process in Bangladesh that practiced more in different places to deal the compoundable cases for local solution within the local community. According to the reviewed study, the scope of restorative justice is opened many more windows that agreed by the community people. The community people welcome the restorative interventions to repair the happened victimizations within the community for ensuring the local treatment and assistance for removing revenge attitude from the mind of community people. The community people have to participate in the justice process for expressing the opinions and shared their views which have been seen by them and to take the responsibilities for transformation of conflict and violence tendency. Restorative justice tries to take care the final decision which has been decided as verdict for saving the victim and correct the offender through paying recovery as duty. Restorative justice as a community-based interventions listens the voice of both party and to select the regulation approach through dialogue and negotiable strategy for bearing a sustainable relationship. According to the Braithwaite, the

approach of restorative justice tunes the conflict corner of the community people and inspires to be gathered for broad interest of community and people. Through community dialogue, the community people have been understood that conflict would be resolved within the community and social acceptance for the victim and offender would be framed in broad context and purposes.

An insight has been developed by Fearnley (2017) in the title *'Restorative Justice is the Way Forward: Non-custodial Approaches can Rescue Lives and Save Money'* to mention that restorative justice is a new way to forward justice system within the community as a non-custodial approach minimizing the harms of compoundable victimizations. The compoundable victimizations which have been occurred within the community with threats to the victim and the community that must be minimized within the community by gathering the parties who has been affected. Restorative justice is such an approach which offers many reasonable alternative to repair the crime events preserving the rights and demands of affected people. The *traditional justice approach is practiced to control the offences controlling the offender, but protecting the victim is not core focus of the traditional justice intervention*. Restorative culture of the community invites the community people to share the existing threatening inputs of the community which makes destruction against of people and relationship. The community is valued as one of the significant component for people surviving and forward the relation among the people in front line for protecting all issues of the community and its essential assumptions. The reviewed study noted that restorative justice takes the initiative to re-build the damaged relationship between victim and offender and inspires to move without any conflict and revenge.

At the age of post-modernization, the social injustice and harms are happening more and the social conflict creates the social deviation among the people. Promoting the social progress is a new challenge for the community-based institution. The social relationship among people controlling the conflicts and the behavior of injustice is considered as pre-factor which invites the community people to be interested for each other. Restorative justice promotes the community values within the mind of community people and suggests to practice collectively. The reviewed study opined that the regular justice process can't resolve the conflict by imposing the punishment and obligations. In this regard, restorative justice as a community-based approach takes the different programs through the healing strategy by RJ practitioner in order to give relief from complaint and injustice. It has studied with strong point that people with conflict is not accounted as pro-people to maintain the community interest and purposes. Restorative interventions always highlights the culture of restoration for refreshment and collective gathering of people within the community with full range of satisfactions and without hesitations.

Umbreit, Bradshaw, and Coates (1999) conducted a study to assess the victim-offender mediation process for meeting the justice demands and reconciliation. The reviewed study mentioned that restorative justice has initiated to gather the victim and offender in front of the community as strong stakeholder to discuss the happened criminal events and tries to evolve a solution which accepted by victim and offender as well as community. It is charismatic approach of restorative justice which applied for repairing and restoration. By which a prolong relationship between victim and offender has been established and continued for long time for esteemed relationship and trusted bonding. Restorative justice focuses on the hidden corners of the community which makes environment within the community for committing criminal victimizations. This criminal situation spoils the peaceful living aspects and pressures the people to be selfish and violates the community rules and obligations. Restorative justice inspires the community organizations to extent community services and by which community people come together to share the new challenges and threats in the community life and festivals. The reviewed study mentioned the below programs which have been implemented within the community by the restorative agencies for making a confident atmosphere among the community people:

Table 2. Provided Services by the Restorative Agencies and Benefits towards People

<i>Services which implemented within the community</i>	<i>Benefits from the Mentioned Services</i>
Community Dialogue and Culture of Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community people are invited by the RJ agency to come in a closer position for sharing the new challenges and complaints which hampers the community life and regulations. • By the community dialogue arranged by the RJ agencies, the community people have expressed the tentative solution approach involving the community people for getting the better communication and correspondence.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the dialogue, any types of happened criminal victimizations have been repaired properly protecting the interest of victim and offender.
Control the Post-reactions of Victimizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The revenge by victim and/or offender has been controlled and minimized for collaborative understanding. • The post-conflict has been removed by the counselling of restorative agencies and inspires to be a person of good behavior and response. • The community people are engaged in positive works and that promotes integrative orientation for changing the society. • The people are being interested to make friendship with community mates for own interest and protect the further victimizations.

Source: Developed by researcher

The restorative justice is different for its working context and applying techniques. The community people are interested to serve the people with community boundary and community demands. Most of the community people are agreed to follow the community rules and customs. In some cases, the community-based relational structure has been stopped by the pressure of few anti-social people who desired to control the community purposes for their own interest. Restorative justice has guided the community people to maintain the people interest and desire to be interacted by implementing its unique working context with full range of well-being of community. The study mentioned a significant subject of restorative justice which known as its working techniques according to experiences of European Union as follows:

The reviewed study noted that restorative justice is called as a process of re-integration and mitigate the harms of victims. Doing this, the restorative approach is invited all persons who are related to victimization and to ensure all responsibilities for injuries mitigation. Restorative justice focuses on the both well-being of victim and offender. As a community-based intervention for mitigating criminal victimizations, restorative justice welcomes the community supports to minimize the revenge and recidivism. The community people are desired to accept the collaboration but the bad culture by the anti-social people, the culture of solidarity is not established with trust and confidence. The study (Fearnley, 2017:16) noted that:

“Restorative intervention involves police, victims, parents and community to resolve any criminal victimizations. Restorative justice discourages the victim not to go court for justice. It believes that criminal victimizations have been raised within the community, the resolution approach is latent within the community. Just need to search the solution by the engagement of community people. Restorative justice is the roadway to guide many offenders for regaining their place in the society by compensating and recovery activities and preventing re-offending and to promote an empathetic views.”

The study which has reviewed to get the working picture of restorative justice in European Union for understanding the consequences and impact on the community by mitigating the criminal victimizations. Restorative justice has opened the different windows for resolving the happened criminal victimizations with pertinent achievement and progress. The community people are envisioned to move with collaborative style, but for the personal interest of anti-social people of the community, the interest of maximum people have been inactivated and the culture of coercion is raised which confined the people desires and demand. Restorative justice welcomes the victim and offender for joining the dialogue for repairing and re-bonding.

Restorative justice is practiced in Bangladesh in different forms to repair the community-based criminal victimizations and disputes. The history of restorative justice in Bangladesh is not a new idea, but it is known in different name and actions. Exactly, restorative justice is focused on the restoration of injustice and victimization within community which hamper the community discipline and sense of bonding. Restorative justice is with various name but the purpose and actions are working following the same target and that is to promote the social solidarity and togetherness among the community people. As a justice of post-modernization era, restorative concern develops the community feelings among the community members to move the affairs of life with collective honor and dignity. Restorative justice is known in different typology as like *Shalish*, village court, arbitration council, *Panchayet committee in old Dhaka*, family court, juvenile court, and court operated by City

Corporation as an institution of local government of Bangladesh. **Considering the mentioned aspects, the study has been considered to conduct through a qualitative intervention.**

7. Findings: Display and Analysis

The collected data from two types of respondents (victims and practitioners) have been categorized and interpreted according to their nature and dimensions. The respondents of victims are identified using pseudonyms like A, B, C, D..... On the other hand, the practitioners of community-led justice have been introduced using pseudonyms like a, b, c, d,.....

7.1 Benefited Through Restoration Process

Restorative mediation in restorative justice is a method by which the made victimizations would be solved and the happened harms and sorrows are being healed within the community in front of all stakeholders. Through the mediation, the community disputes according to the village court regulation may be solved within the community settings. Through the restorative process, the affected people and the stakeholders have been benefitted in multi-ways and the re-integration approach would be implemented easily. The livelihood pattern of community people is being changed applying the process of mediation and Victim-Offender Reconciliation Approach (VORA). Mediation as an approach promotes the situation, and supports for victims and family. As well, mediation controls the offending mentality of people through performing the responsibilities for repairing the harms and sorrows. The respondent of 'C' mentioned that:

"I have been benefitted more taking the advantages of mediation by the RJ practitioner of restorative justice agency. Through the process of mediation, the case of victimization would be solved in relaxed way and the re-relationship between me and offender have been established by discussing the matter in sophisticated approach. The hidden revenge by me has been reduced through the process of mediation. The offender has been contributed to reduce the revenge of me and also the offender has compensated the damaged property in determined ways that has been decided in restorative meeting."

7.2 Post-behaviors of Offenders After Reconciliation Interventions

In the restorative process, the justice has been decided through dialogue among victim, offender and the community. The RJ practitioner has discussed the matter of victimizations with victim and offender involving the community. By a community based justice approach, the offender has clarified the committed behaviors that is considered criminal behavior. At the same time, victim has also explained the total process of victimization why offender has been committed and identified the sufferings.

The offender has agreed to perform the responsibilities for repairing the harms, and traumas. Restorative justice is such kind of approach that focuses on the relationship of victim and offender and promotes the scope of re-integration. Restorative justice tries to fill up the gap of lost resources in terms of relation, property, honor and position, and solves any other disputes of community people. Three factors are identified by the restorative agency at the duration of justice that are: *level of sufferings and harms, involvement of victim in the case of victimization, and how it would be recovered by performing the responsibilities by offender*. The level of sufferings, involvement of victim in offence and recovering performance by the offender are described as follows, according to practitioners:

Table 3. Sufferings, Involvement of Victims, and Responsibilities Performed by Offenders

<u>Level of sufferings and harms</u>	<u>Involvement of victims in the case of victimizations</u>	<u>Recovered responsibilities performed by offenders</u>
Respondent-B	Respondent-A	Respondent-H
<p>The restorative justice agency has find out the types of level of sufferings and harms which have been made due to cause of victimizations. The participants in the restorative approach have asked to victim what types of harms have been occurred and listed following the code of conduct of justice process. Following the list, the offender has been asked by the restorative body, why these have been done and ways of recovering.</p> <p>Through the restorative process, the participating members of restorative justice have measured the compensations for damaged property and others. The participants in the justice process have measured the damaged resources and materials which should be repaired and restored by the offender and community which has been worked under the procedure of reintegration.</p>	<p>Victimization is such of case in which the victim has involved themselves to fight against of offender. But considering the situation and the potential materials for committing crimes, victim couldn't defeat the offender's desire and intentions.</p> <p>By which, affected person is treated as victim, and powerful person is valued as offender. In the justice process, the participants are tried to find out the victim contribution of committing crimes and victimization. In the victimological context, the victim is treated as hidden influential person for doing crimes. The RJ practitioner has scaled the contribution of victim. The A, B, and C as victims have involved in the process of victimizations that has traced out through the justice process and victim was hidden influential person to provoke the offender for committing crimes and violate the rules of social integration.</p>	<p>The participants from the restorative agencies and community have decided how the offender would be performed the role in the process of recovering for gaining the lost resources.</p> <p>All of victims have got the value for lost resources done by offenders. In the process of justice, the recovering mechanisms would be finalized and the performing measurements by offender are leveled and the satisfactory responses from the victim are observed by the restorative agency. The main aim is to re-integrate the lost relationship between victim and offender. Restorative justice always promotes the relational ground and tries to recover the lost resources through the process of compensation.</p> <p>Offender has been commanded by the restorative agency to pay the demand of victims that is considered as victim rights and needs. The restorative justice agency is contributed to promote the situation of victims.</p>

Source: Developed by Researcher

7.3 Community Reactions Towards Offenders

The respondents of victims have evaluated the community reactions towards offenders. Offender as a part of restorative justice has important role in the process of reconciliation and to re-integrate the victims in the community settings. That community is the best where the criminal activities are discussed by neglectful attitude by people and take preventive steps gathering the community people. The criminal activities in community of Bangladesh are discussed for preventing including all supportive resources. The community culture has blamed each other for committing the criminal offences. But in the broad canvas, the criminal offences by offenders are not welcomed in the community and mass people don't accept properly. On the contrast, community people have to emphasize on the prevention of offences. The respondents of victims (e) referred the community reactions towards offender as ways:

The community people, most of the times, have criticized the criminal offenses committed by offenders. Offence is such kind of behavior that is prohibited within the community and the community people are trying to stop it. We observe that mass people within the community settings are avoided the offenders but considering the situation, mass people couldn't say any type of preventive response. But the mass people are eagerly interested to protect the criminal behavior and offences. Most of the mass people are neglect the criminal offences but due to the powerful position of offenders not possible to raise the voice and protect against criminal offence and offenders. Community people are stood generally beside us to say something for our patience. But mass people have done it in hidden way. We observed that mass people are disliked the offenders but they (mass) are helpless due to situation and audacity of offenders.

The respondents of practitioners expressed some symptoms to avoid the offenders by the community people as bellows:

Table 4. Community Reactions towards Offenders

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The community people are feared the offenders. But from the mind, the offenders are regretted by the mass people. The offenders are rejected in terms of honor in social functioning of community festivals.</i> • <i>The respondents of A, B, C have mentioned that community people have used slang language to recall the name of offenders. But due to the social position and power of offenders, the mass people are not mentioned something directly.</i> • <i>The respondents of D, and E have noticed that community people are gather in favor of affected person(s) and helped the victims as per their capacity and wish. The mass people are avoided the association of offenders and their (offender) order and calling to attend the social festivals.</i> • <i>In some cases, the community people are stressed the offenders to perform the responsibility for recovering the harms and sorrows which happened for committed criminal offences. Because, criminal behavior which makes the calamities within the community.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The community people are associated for normal affiliation and togetherness. But the offender community has forced the mass people for doing any types of criminal actions. In some cases, the powerful persons of community are given supports towards offenders for many reasons as like power and authority, audacity and desire to harms and sufferings.</i> • <i>The community people are gathered their feelings and strength against offenders and discuss within own groups for dislike the offender groups.</i> • <i>The community people are used different types of stigmatized behavior and sound to pronounce the name of any offender.</i> • <i>The community people are complained against of offenders to the community authority but in a hidden way.</i>
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Source: Developed by Researcher

7.4 Acceptance of Offenders in the Social Functions Through the Restorative Process

The relational dimensions between victim and offender are turned into different aspects after the victimization. The cruelty between victim and offender have been defined as a serious matter by the community. At a time, think by the community that the post-situation of victimization ought to solve and repairing the trauma and pains. The damaged resources should be repaired and to determine the compensation *following win-win approach*. The respondents have been asked how to move with offenders in the further functions socially. It is a significant question to victims how to accept offenders after the victimization and post-traumatic situation. The community settings and stakeholders for both victim and offender are forwarded to solve the matter and desire to see the situation as peacemaking orientation. After doing the restorative justice, the offenders have been treated as normal in the social functions and gatherings. The respondents of all victims mentioned that:

We have accepted offenders and their stakeholder's after the justice and performed the responsibilities. First time, we have neglected offender's cause of their activities and we have lost so many. But after sometimes, we realized that man could be done any crimes due to situation and by the influence of power, money and provocation of the side people. Thinking that we have expanded our feelings, and integration. Not only us, community people stopped to avoid the offenders and their family members due to their criminal activities and audacity within the community settings.

We have thought that people with criminal identity are helpless and having no respect and dignity in the community settings and in functional aspect. We think that through the collaborative approach, the hidden revenge attitude should be solved and continued a faithful community based relationship. At last, we think that we need cooperation, integration and empathic sympathy. Now, we accept the offenders and their family as well as supporting people easily and continue the relational negotiation and confidence. We believe that problem might be solved and accepted the people of ill-motive through love, feelings, and trust. Then, the criminal victimizations and other traumatic situations might be controlled easily.

7.5 Pressurization Towards Offenders by Community Resolving the Harms and Rebuilding the Lost Trust

In the community settings, the powerful offenders are pressurized the victims to forget the matter of victimizations and ordered not to apply any type of complaints. Victims are the submissive party in the process for minimizing victimizations. The community people, in somewhere, are raised their voice considering the situation and perspectives of the victimizations. The people of community desire to fight in favor of victims and affected people. By the presence of powerful offenders, community people avoid the matter. The community people don't assist the victims at all to inform the case of victimizations to the police station and/or restorative agency. The victims mentioned that offenders and the surroundings of offenders have pressurized victims or ordered not to file case and to inform anyone and institutions. The powerful offenders are desired to solve it proposing money and providing other materials. Victim of 'D' mentioned that:

"I have been affected through the process of victimizations and unlawful nature of behavior by offender. After being the case of victimization, the near persons of offenders have come to me and prohibited not to complain in somewhere. Otherwise, few community people have desired to work for me but considering the situation, the community didn't do it. I have made a plan how to minimize the matter with respectful decision and feedback."

"I have discussed with some people who could be guided me to get the actual compensation and to provide a lesson for offender. Following the advice, I have made a complaint to the local justice agency. Considering the complaint, the local justice agency has called a meeting inviting all stakeholders who could be participated in the process of justice."

"Before taking decision, the RJ practitioner has presented the matter and listen the history of harms and sorrows. Through a longtime discussion, the participants have decided the ways to minimize the matter ensuring the rights of me as victim and defining the responsibilities of offender. And the offender has been agreed to play the responsibilities to heal my harms, sorrows, and damaging properties."

According to the responses of the victims, the ways to tackle the stress by offenders and their surroundings are given as below:

Table 5. Nature of Pressurization towards Offenders by Community-led Justice Institution (s)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared the pressure and threats with near and dear of victims by offenders in the community. • Disturbed for strengthening the situations of victims and affected people. • Insisted to the RJ practitioners not to arrange the restorative meeting and dialogue. • Threats to the community people not to protect the victims and affected people. • Offenders have made arrogance and unlawful bargaining to the community against of victims and injured people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victims are organized to protest the unlawful behavior by offenders to make strength, but not be done it by the threats of offenders. • Restorative justice agency has been threatened by the offenders for abandoning the complaint of victims and the injured people. • Victims have been tortured by the offenders not to share the victimizations with community mates. • Togetherness desired by victims and affected people have been slowed by the offenders and to stop the supports.
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Source: Developed by Researcher

7.6 Recovering the Compoundable Victimizations and Reframing Solidarity

Victims suffer from the post-traumatic syndromes in daily and professional life. The victims clarified some conceptual factors that produce the potential causes for committing crimes which hampered the livelihood pattern of victims. Victim as a part of restorative justice has different thinking about the reconciliation process and restitution mechanisms. Victim as a community person expressed that culture of violence has made within the community for different grounds. The offenders have been stimulated for committing crimes by influential factors and situations. The offenders and the people with criminality violate the legal, social rules and regulation, and social manner as well.

How to recover the victimizations connecting the community experiences as like victims, their family members and stakeholders, community people opinions for addressing the causes which have been discussed by the RJ practitioners and stakeholders of restorative justice. The RJ agency should be re-planned the methods of reconciliations according to the community experiences and natures of disputes. The victims mentioned the further actions of plan how to recover the victimizations and re-integrate the victims within the community.

The respondents of practitioners mentioned their suggestions for advanced reconciliation approaches in broadly following three categories as follows:

Table 6. Advanced Reconciliation Process Utilized by the Community-Led Restorative Institutions

<i>We observed that the offence(s) which are committed by the offenders in the community settings that may be solved taking the initiatives involving all stakeholders. The stakeholders have come to tackle the situation and fight for the rights of victims and their families. The role of stakeholders should be enriched regarding minimize the victimizations and continued the affectionate gathering for victims. The happened victimizations between victim and offender might be negotiated, otherwise hampered the livelihood patterns of both.</i>	<i>The involvement of community people in the reconciliation process should be ensured by the community organizations. As well, the measurements will be taken by the local justice body where the affected people can move freely following rights and to preserve the personal security.</i> <i>The society should be stopped the related factors that influenced people to make crimes through the political understanding locally and nationally. The understanding between affected people and offender have to develop and cherish it in the proper module.</i>	<i>Our problems and victimizations are indicated the cultural reflection through unlawful behavior of people. We think that solving the problem of victimizations, the cultural gap should be re-addressed and the programs of cultural functions should be organized by the integrated approach.</i> <i>Our cultural and social values make offenders and antisocial people in the community which foster to commit crimes. As victims we desire to practice the cultural values and related programs.</i>
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Source: Developed by Researcher

7.7 Evaluation by Victims About the Functions of Restorative Agency and Role of Practitioners

The functions of restorative agency and role of RJ practitioners have been identified by interviewing of victim, offender, RJ practitioners, and the community. In Bangladesh, the functions of restorative justice is practiced as a new dimension and approach to repair the case of victimizations. Historically, the restorative approach has been practiced in Bangladesh from the beginning of the society and accepted as approach locally. By the being time, the local justice approach has re-named as restorative justice. Through the approach, the harms and damages of victims have been restituted in proper ways. The rights and needs of victims have been repaired through the active participation of offenders and the community. The role of community towards victims is considered as ‘community car’ and practiced towards the affected people.

In the proposition of restorative justice, the respondents of victims have clarified the role of RJ practitioners. RJ practitioner is such kind of person who are knowledgeable and having wisdom to work for restorative aspect restoring the victim rights and offender responsibilities. The RJ practitioners have called the restorative meeting convincing the offender and victim and their stakeholders to sit together for solving the matter of victimizations.

The respondent of victims evaluated the functions of restorative agency and role of practitioners as follows:

Table 7. Functions of Restorative Agency and Role of Practitioners according to Victims

<u>Views on the functions of restorative agency</u>	<u>Views of practitioners on mitigating the disputes</u>
<i>As victim, we looked that:</i>	<i>As practitioners, we observed the followings:</i>
a) <i>The restorative agency has taken initiatives to link with the referral agencies for getting the demanding supports and services to us and our families.</i>	a) <i>RJ practitioner has talked to offenders and the stakeholders how to minimize the damaged property and to pay the compensations for healing the harms and sorrows.</i>
b) <i>Through the calling by restorative agency, the stakeholders have participated to share the views and discussion how the disputes would be solved.</i>	b) <i>RJ practitioner has discussed to us and offenders how the meeting would be started to solve the matter of victimizations.</i>
c) <i>The restorative agency has arranged different category of meetings within the community to aware the community people about victimizations and the role of community people to minimize the victimizations.</i>	c) <i>The potential stakeholders from the community settings have been selected by the RJ practitioners and determined the date for meeting of dialogue.</i>
d) <i>The restorative agency has provided the required legal and psycho-social supports towards us as victims for re-integration and re-established socially.</i>	d) <i>Through the order of restorative agency, the RJ practitioners have finalized the restorative decision through meeting and make a chart to implement the plan of actions for healing the victimizations.</i>
e) <i>We as victims gathered again by the supports of restorative agency for making strength within the mind of us in the question of adjustment.</i>	e) <i>RJ practitioners have made the follow chart to observe the activities of offenders and to look the situation of us as victims. The RJ practitioners have to report to the restorative agency and consoled us not to show the revenge attitude.</i>

Source: Developed by Researcher

8. Recommendations for Advancing Community-led Justice System

The restorative justice agencies have practiced and applied common models and approaches to heal the harms and sorrows within the community settings which are compoundable victimizations as well. Theoretical dimensions mentioned that the nature of victimizations have meant in different ways according to the point of culture views and socialization. The culture of Bangladesh has influenced the people in *multi-level of forcements* to commit the crimes. The potential factors of committing crimes which are generated from the community through the dysfunctions of culture and rituals. The models and approaches which are practiced right now for reconciliation the victimizations that may be re-shaped as per the formation of victimizations. The models which are followed to repair the case of victimizations that should be changed according to the nature and the indigenous frame of victimization. The summary mentioned by the victims and the practitioners is as follows:

- (a) The models of restorative justice have been applied to reconcile the happened criminal victimizations for re-gaining the broken relationship between victim and offender in front of community. Victim-Offender Mediation, conferencing, and Peacemaking Circles are used in Bangladesh to heal the victimizations. These models are gathered offenders and victims in a place to discuss the matter of victimizations. The functional dimensions of models should be changed according to the cultural perception of Bangladesh. The name of model may be treated as same but the application approaches should be developed as per the experiences of cultural traits and the nature of criminal victimizations. We as victim wish to refer that the nature of victimizations in Bangladesh reflects the factors of cultural equation and discrimination as well. Restorative justice applies the methods and models for crime preventions within the community settings to repair the gap of understanding among community people and takes actions to develop the relational frame which controls the criminal tendency of people. In Bangladesh, the **Cultural Customs and Provisions (CCP)** may be applied to heal the case of victimizations.

- (b) The essentiality of a **restorative justice legislation** should be passed and take actions to implement it within the community through the process of village court and/or alternative form of justice that will be called justice for the restitution of community disputes.
- (c) The cultural customs should be practiced within the community settings inviting all stakeholders to aware all population of community on the issues of conflict transformation, reduce victimizations and responsibilities of community people, role of elected and non-elected persons to maintain the **community rules and regulations, community feasting, collective approach to celebrate the customs** and through the process, the youth generation would be learnt the community values.
- (d) The **community-based vigilance** should be improved and developed involving the community people and by which the community related disputes would be solved and repaired in front of community people and community guardian.
- (e) In the community settings, the voluntary activities by the community people especially youth generation would be increased to change the perception of community people such for example: human relationship, human dignity and respect, community collaboration and togetherness, community based action for refreshment and enrich the rhythmic motive of behavior, and **bargaining by the people for the people**.
- (f) Finally, the government as state guardian has to continue the services for justice within the community that promotes conflict transformation, including the community people. And the NGOs should initiate the restorative programs to reduce victimization and control recidivism by maintaining human behavior and perception.

9. Concluding Remarks

The present study aims to explore the mitigating approaches and interventions used by community-based justice agencies in Bangladesh. Two categories of respondents, namely victims and practitioners, were interviewed to gain insights into the inner workings of community-led justice approaches. Community members have committed various criminal activities and are involved in multiple unlawful actions within their communities. Among these, some cases are compoundable and can be resolved within the community through systematic interventions and approaches. Various community-led justice systems operate in Bangladeshi society to address compoundable disputes and criminal incidents, creating a win-win situation for both parties, referred to as victims and offenders. After collecting the necessary data from the selected respondents, the applied interventions and strategies have been thoroughly examined according to certain guidelines and principles. Based on the harmonious perspective practiced in the community, most of the committed criminal cases can be resolved by involving victims, offenders, and community members. Through a community-led justice system, community stakeholders can participate in the justice process to ensure victims' rights and pressure offenders to take responsibility. According to the study objectives, the entire study plan was designed and executed to gather the necessary data concerning victimization contexts. The study was limited to specific research areas, where respondents were interviewed to collect relevant victimological aspects and contexts. The required respondents were selected from two groups—victims and restorative justice practitioners using a systematic procedure. These respondents were interviewed to gather data and understand the victimological situations, with sufficient time allocated for each interview. Follow-up interviews, if conducted, would provide additional cross-data and context for better understanding. No major limitations affecting the findings or correlations of the study were identified. Based on the study design, the interviews were completed, and the relevant findings were documented. This study will contribute to reshaping the community-led justice approach while upholding professional standards. The recommendations provided by the respondents can be implemented by government agencies and private institutions to facilitate community-based restorative services and promote community harmony.

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