Victimology and the Role of Victim in Crime

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The criminal-victim relationship is called "victimology" and it is considered as an integral part of criminology. Recently scholarly attention and involvement have developed about the victim as a constituent of the criminal situation. For scholars of criminology and law, victim is not just a passive object but an active component of his or her own victimisation.

The newly developed interest in the victim-victimizer relationship shows that the understanding of crime is reaching a new phase. It also indicates the decline of the sole responsibility of the victimizer. This phenomenon of the crime problem reflects the growing recognition that criminal justice should consider the dynamics of crime and treat the victims and the victimizers in the same light. This paper reviews efforts to see the victim and the offender as components of the same act. Hence, the purpose of this paper is:

i) to discuss the concept of victimology;
ii) to explain the major issues and aims of victimology;
iii) to examine the victim-offender relationship;

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iv) to analyse the pertinent aspects of victim-precipitation; and 
v) to elaborate the nature of victim-compensation and restitution.

**THE CONCEPT OF VICTIMOLOGY**

The part played by the victim in the origin of crime is the central problem in victimology. This, in essence, is the question of responsibility; who is responsible for what and to what extent?

According to Viano (1976:2), there is a rather well-developed vocabulary in English connected with the idea of victim:

Victimhood: the state of being a victim

Victimizable: capable of being victimized

Victimization: the action of victimising, or fact of being victimised, in various senses.

Victimize: to make a victim of; to cause to suffer inconvenience, etc. either deliberately or by misdirected attentions; to cheat, swindle or defraud; to put to death as, or in the manner of a sacrificial victim; to slaughter: to destroy or spoil completely.

Victimizer: one who victimizes another or others.

Victimless: the absence of a clearly identifiable victim other than the doer.

Victimology focuses on both the victim's condition and the victim's relationship to the criminal. Hence, there can be two major sub-areas of victimology:

i) the one relating to the scientific study of criminal behaviour and the nature of the relationships which may be found to exist between the offender and victim; and

ii) the other relating directly to the administration of justice and the role of systems of compensation and restitution to the victim.
The concept of victimology can be better understood if we analyse the meaning, issues and aims of victimology.

1) Meaning of Victimology: In a narrower sense, victimology is the empirical, factual study of victims of crime and as such is closely related to criminology, and thus may be regarded as a part of the general problem of crime.

In a broader sense, victimology is the entire body of knowledge regarding victims, victimisation and the efforts of society to preserve the rights of the victim. Hence, it is composed of knowledge drawn from such fields as criminology, law, medicine, psychology, psychiatry, social work, politics, education and public administration.

2) Fundamental Issues:

i) What is the scope of victimology?
ii) Who is the victim?
iii) What is the use of victimology?
   a) the actual usefulness of the model in research, and
   b) the probable outcome of action based upon it.
iv) What is the nature of compensation and restitution?

These issues cause conflicting problems of diverse dimensions. Hence the main problems of victimology are related to these issues.

3) Aims of Victimology:

i) to analyse the magnitude of the victim's problems;
ii) to explain causes of victimisation; and
iii) to develop a system of measures to reduce victimisation.

The aims of victimology are intricately related to the meaning and issues of victimology. Therefore, the study of victimisation is the study of crime giving importance to the role and responsibility of the victim and his offender.
PIONEERS IN VICTIMOLOGY

The issues of victim-offender relationships are not new; but for a long time it was a neglected problem. Recently, the pioneering works of certain authors have incited immense interest among the public and in the administration of justice regarding the field of victimology. The pioneers of victimological studies are mainly three scholars from different parts of Europe.

1. Hans Von Hentig

Hans Von Hentig was born in Berlin in 1887. In 1948 his book, *The Criminal and His Victim*, was published by Yale University.

For Hentig, victimology is a part of criminology. He holds that the mutual relationship between offender and victim reflects the oneness of criminology and victimology. He sees the mutual connection between victim and victimiser. The main contribution of the understanding of the victim's role in crime is to lead the way toward the study of crime in its totality, and particularly where victim-risks and victim-precipitation are concerned.

Henting (1948:383-450) defines the victim essentially as "the doer-sufferer."

2. Beniamin Mendelsohn

Born in Rumania, Benjamín Mendelsohn did his study of law and jurisprudence and was admitted to the bar of Bucharest in 1934. Having been himself the victim of discrimination in his country, Mendelsohn became much interested in the victim and his/her relationship with the criminal.

Mendelsohn laid the foundations of a science of general victimology in his famous speech before the Rumanian Psychiatric Association in 1947 (see Mendelsohn, 1974: 8-28). For him, victimology started as a part of criminology, but it has a wider scope and implication. The indispensable goal of victimology is fewer victims in all sectors of society to the extent that society is concerned with this problem. Given that man is the creative force in society, fewer victims contribute to his progress.
Mendelsohn considers victimology as a social science. For him (1976:9) it is a science of "victims and victimity." So victimology can take into account all phenomena which cause victims. "To actually practice victimology, to make the research fit the name, it will be necessary to concentrate our attention on the central point, the essential factor common to all victims, victims of man, machinery, society and of biological and social problems, etc." (Mendelsohn, 1976:10).

According to Mendelsohn, the victim can be any one, physical or moral person who suffers either as a result of ruthless design or accident. Hence, there are victims of crime and victims of accident and calamities. For him (1976:9) "the destructive of harmful factors which produce victims cannot be limited to one element (the criminals) but are instead numerous (the environment, sometimes even the personality of the victim, the level of technology, social trends), victimology must then investigate all the factors that cause victims."

Therefore, for Mendelsohn, victimology is a separate and autonomous social science. He coined the term "victimology." He sees "victim" as the opposite of "criminal" and "victimity" as the opposite of "criminality."

Mendelsohn recommended the establishment of a "central institute of victimology," "victimological clinics," an "international institute for victimological researches," an "international society of victimology" and the publication of an "international review of victimology." For Mendelsohn, victimology is not a part of criminology. In his view, it is "a science parallel to it" (1974:26).

3. Stephen Schafer

Born in Hungary, Stephen Schafer took his degree of Doctor of Jurisprudence in 1933 at the University of Budapest.

For Schafer, the victim's importance reflects the offender's and victim's joint existence in victimisation. "Crime should be seen in its functional dynamics. An all-dimensional view of crime cannot accept the criminal's behaviour and the victim's be-
haviour as two distinct and separate forms of conduct. The victim is a part of crime, often playing an esoteric and not an exoteric role” (Schafer, 1976:146).

Schafer considers (1968a:58-104) that victim-offender relationship stresses the necessity to acknowledge the role and responsibility of the victim. Because the victim is not simply the cause of and reason for the victimisation, but has an important part to play in the search for an objective criminal justice and a solution to the victimisation problem.

CURRENT THEORY AND RESEARCH

Most of the studies in victimology have been generally concerned with victims of murder and other assaults, sexual attacks, theft and fraud and accidents. So major contributions in the field of victimology so far led to the following:

i) growing importance of the victim problem;
ii) better knowledge of the factors determining victimity;
iii) classification of victims;
iv) factors relating to specific and unknown victims.

1. Growing Importance

A growing importance in the study of victimology is seen in the U.S.A., certain European countries, Israel and in Japan. The First International Symposium of victimology held in 1973 in Jerusalem called on legislators, courts and other authorities responsible for crime prevention and control to establish, re-evaluate and renovate their organisations and services in order to increase their effectiveness to reduce human suffering; it also expressed the participants’ view that concern with victimology and a better acquaintance with the victims’ role in crime can lead to better sentencing practices and to a general improvement of the legal procedure, which in turn can help to prevent or reduce recidivism and criminality in general” (Schafer, 1976: 153). This International Symposium suggested that all countries must think of giving compensation to victims of crime.
The Second International Symposium on Victimology con-
gregated in Boston under the sponsorship of the International
Society of Criminology and the Northeastern University College
of Criminal Justice.

The Symposium proceedings were divided into three major
discussion sections:

i) Conceptual and Substantive Legal Aspects of Victimology;

ii) Criminal-Victim Relationships;

iii) Restitution and Victim assistance Programmes (Flynn,

The Symposium also discussed the concept and scope of
victimology, victim-typologies, victims in the judicial procedure,
victims of traffic offences, victims of rape, victims of crimes
against the person and crimes against property, corporate victi-
misations, the victim’s relationship with the media of mass com-
unication, the victimisation of the victim by society, and the
victim as a member of his society.

2. Factors Determining Victimity

According to Mendelsohn (1976:17) a victim can be:

— the victim of a criminal;

— the victim of himself, from psychological impulse, and
sometimes even from a conscious decision (suicide) with
no criminal involved;

— the victim of anti-social behaviour, either individual or co-

clective, on the part of his social environment (individual
or collective oppression, social class or political parties upto
and including genocide and war crimes);

— the victim of technology, as a result of insufficient

— the victim of the uncontrolled energies of the natural en-

vironment, as a result either of the lack of human control
or of the loss of control.
3. Classification of Victims

For Mendelsohn (1976) victims are classified primarily in conformity with the degree of contribution to the crime. Hence Mendelsohn categorised the victims as follows:

1. The “completely innocent victim.” The victim can be a child or a person who is unconscious.

2. The “victim with minor guilt” and the “ignorant victim.” The victim can be a woman who agrees for a mis-carriage and as a result pays with her life.

3. The voluntary victim and the “victim as guilty as the offender.” The victim can be a person who commits suicide or asks for euthanasia.

4. The “victim more guilty than the offender.” The victim can be a person who provokes or induces someone to commit a crime.

5. The “most guilty victim” and the “victim who is guilty alone.” The victim can be the aggressive victim who kills the attacker in self-defence.

6. The “stimulating” or “imaginary victim.” The victim can be a paranoid or a hysteric or a senile person.

Henting applies psychological, sociological as well as biological factors in the categorisation of the victim typology. His grouping of victims is more elaborate than of Mendelsohn’s.

Henting differentiates “society-made” victims, from “born” victims. His classification is as follows (Henting, 1948: 404-433):

1. The “female” victim. The female is a symbol of weakness. The male criminals have the benefit of greater physical strength in crimes against women, especially in sexual assault.

2. The “young” victim. For Henting, children are physically underdeveloped and psychologically immature. They are weak compared to adults. So they are easy prey to kidnapping and sex
offences. Children also fall victims of criminals and assist in committing crime.

3. The “old” victim. They are physically and mentally weak. They often fall victims of crimes.

4. The “mentally defective and mentally deranged.” They are commonly potential and actual victims of crimes. The insane, the alcoholic, the drug addict, the psychopath and those who suffer from any other mental abnormality can frequently be victims.

5. The “immigrant.” He has to face innumerable problems while adjusting to a new society and its culture. The immigrant might feel helpless and unwanted in necessary human relations. His capability may evoke hostility of certain persons in the new country.

6. The “minority.” Because of racial, linguistic, religious and caste prejudice they often become victims of powerful groups.

7. The “dull normals.” Henting considers them as “born” victims. He thinks the “success” of certain criminals due to the “folly” of their victims. The dull normal can be a moron or an idiot.

8. The “depressed.” He is a psychological victim type. He suffers from feelings of inadequacy and hopelessness, apathy and submission. He can be his own victim.

9. The “acquisitive.” His desires motivate crime and lead him to being victimised.

10. The “wanton.” He is malicious. His actions are generally unjustifiable. He acts without adequate motive or provocation. He has often no regard for what is right. He can be sexually lawless and unrestrained and he frequently falls victim of physically powerful criminals.

11. The “lonesome and the heartbroken.” These persons can have a desire for companionship and happiness and in this process become victims.
12. The "tormentor." He tortures others and at the end he himself become the victim of the tormented.

13. The "blocked, exempted, and fighting" victims. These persons try to "save" themselves and fall victims. Henting's knowledge in psychology and psychiatry was limited. Hence his classification is not in conformity with psychology.

Barnes and Teeters (1951: 595-596) give another category of "negligent or careless" victim type. The negligent and careless attitude of a person towards his belongings makes it easy for an offender to commit a crime.

4. Specific and Unknown Victims

The inhibitions an offender may have seem to change according to the type of qualities the victim possesses. The attitude and behaviour of the victim influences the offender and which makes possible the criminal act. According to Fattah (1976:33) "acts causing immediate and concrete harm to a real, specific and personalised victim are likely to evoke stronger moral resistance than acts in which the victim is totally absent, impersonal, anonymous or unidentifiable, or where the victim is only an abstraction."

Crimes committed against a willing victim are likely to provoke less resistance than crimes against an unwilling victim. The willingness of the victim to commit an offence upon him or her makes the offender legally stronger. The consent of the victim whom the law intended to protect encourages the offender. "Victim solicitation even more than victim's consent, confers on the act a kind of legitimacy that is likely to break down the strongest moral barriers and to eliminate the deepest moral obligations the person may have regarding the criminal act" (Fattah, 1976:36).

Certain times, while remaining a victim, the victim cooperates with the criminal. The victim even instigates, sustains and defends the victimisation while at the same time suffering from it and disliking it. Money-lending at exorbitant rates can be an example.
The crime committed against a provoking victim allows the criminal to shift his blame on the victim. So the part played by the provoking victim, consciously or unconsiously invites victimisation. Through provoking or precipitating behaviour the victim becomes a deserving victim. The criminal act is possible through the words, gestures or deeds of the victim.

A crime which does not involve the infliction of physical or psychological harm or material loss upon a real, specific and personal victim is likely to arouse less guilt feeling than other crimes where harm affects a personal identifiable victim. The absence of a victim reduces the seriousness of the crime (Fattah, 1976:37-45).

If the victim is physically absent or unknown, the awareness of the victim is absent in crime. But when a crime is committed against a tangible and personal victim the seriousness of the action and victimisation increases, and it creates more feelings in the mind of the victimiser. Stealing from the government or cheating a large firm evokes fewer moral scruples than cheating a person or stealing from a family. Personalisation of the victim evokes pity and compassion in the potential victimiser toward the victim.

SEX AND AGE OF VICTIMS

1. Sex

Generally men commit more crimes than women and also more men become victims of crime than women. According to the President's Commission on Crime (1966:45,79) the number of victimisation against men are three times as great as those for women. But in violent crimes women are often victimised. In Schafer's findings, the proportion of man and woman homicide victims is almost one to one (1976:157), and in Patterns in Criminal Homicide (p. 60), Wolfgang found almost three males to one females. In their study "Murder," Gibson and Klein found that female homicide victims are more than male victims and the ratio is approximately three to two (see Schafer, 1976: 157).
According to Wolfgang (1974:87) more husbands than wives are victims in victim-precipitated mate slaying. The reasons he has given are: “1) husbands actually may provoke their wives more often than wives provoke their husbands to assault their respective mates; or 2) assuming that provocation by wives is as frequent or even more frequent, than provocation by husbands, then husbands may not receive and define provocation stimuli with as great or as violent a reaction as do wives; or 3) husbands may have a greater felt sense of guilt in a marital conflict for one reason or another, and receive verbal insults and overt physical assaults without retaliation as a form of compensatory punishment; or 4) husbands may withdraw more often than wives from the scene of marital conflict, and thus eliminate, for the time being, a violent overt reaction to their wife’s provocation .... In any case, we are left with the undeniable fact that husbands more often than wives are major, precipitating factors in their own homicidal death” (Wolfgang, 1974:87).

2. Age

Crimes of violence often take place in a personal situation of the victim and the offender (Viano, 1976:1-7). In these types of victimisation the age of the victim and the offender is generally the same (Separovic, 1974:15-24). In case of men those who are below 21 years of age and those who are 51 or older are most frequently victimised. In the older age group, 61 and above, obviously the largest category of victims are women (Schafer, 1975:25-28).

Otto Pollack (1961:121-136) writes that women reach at "the peak of their criminal activities at a later age than men. But it is also noted by Nelson and Amir (1975: 47-64) that women have a greater risk of becoming victims at a younger age than men. Schafer (1968a) found that among individuals over 60 years of age, the mate seems to be the major target of violent crimes. In fact, this is the only age group where majority of the violent crimes are committed against the spouse."
Victim-offender relationship is one of the most important notions in victimology. Mendelsohn calls the victim and his offender the "penal couple."

For Schafer (1976:157) victim-offender relationships may contain the origin of victimisation. "The marital status of the offender and that of the victim - or the fact that one person is the spouse or a friend or an acquaintance or just a stranger (third person) - may contain the seeds of crime. Married persons of both sexes are more often victims, than persons in any other marital status. It has also been observed that legally divorced individuals are less often victims of violent crimes than those who are in other relationships with the criminal" (Schafer, 1976:157-158).

It is found by the President's Commission on Crime that primary group relationships seems more important in crime against person, especially in homicide cases. It was also found that 80 per cent of the murder and aggravated assault victims belonged to primary group relationships. In England little over 40 per cent of female murder are suspected to be committed by husbands. In 25 per cent of female murder cases, the suspect was either a relative or a lover (Schafer, 1976:156-161).

Wolfgang (1958:213) states that when a man is killed by a woman "he was most likely to be killed by his wife" and it is also found that a woman was more likely than a man to kill her mate. According to Schafer, "female criminals commit violent crimes against their spouse three times more often than do males, and nine times more often against their children" (Schafer, 1976: 158). Let us now analyse the different dimensions of victim offender relationship.

1. Nature of Victim-Offender Relationship:

According to Hentig (1948) the relationship between the victimiser and the victim are very intricate. The victim, one who suffers and the victimiser, one who harms, appear in victimisation in a close interpersonal relationship and the victim
plays a determinant role with the victimiser. For Cho (1974: 96), "the victim and victimiser should be understood in terms of victimisation incidence and relationship. Both "affinity" and "propinquity" factors should be considered for the differentials in participation, commitment and involvement in victimisation. Though not intended for creating an impression that the victim and victimiser are "guilty by association," we are suggesting that the interaction and relationship should be explored rather than assumed, and that guilt should be understood objectively, rather than assumed to be a hallmark of the victimiser."

So victimisation occurs in interpersonal interaction between the victim and the victimiser and the situation. So the issues are:

1. Is victimity an exclusive characteristic of the victimiser?
2. Is it a depending quality or a developed personal trait?
3. Is it dispatchable genetically or culturally?
4. Is victimity additive, subtractive, transferable or co-extensive with anti or non-victimity?
5. Is victim a dynamic participant in victimisation? and
6. Does victimity emerge from assigned criminal status and role expectations?

2. Grades of Victim-Offender Relationship:

There are different grades of victim-offender relationship.

1. The victim has no prior knowledge of the crime. He dislikes very much being made a victim. He informs the police about the victimisation.
2. The victim has no prior knowledge of the crime and he disapproves being made a victim, but refrains from calling the police.
3. The victim has some prior awareness of the possible crime.

The first of these might be called victim non-acceptance. The second and third might be termed as victim-acquiescence, unwilling, with or without previous knowledge. According to
Mack (1974: 127) these three envelop a number of social situations of which the major ones are:

i) The victim himself is a criminal.
ii) The victim is a near criminal.
iii) The victim has no open criminal associations.
iv) The victim belongs to an ethnic minority group.

Hence, victimisation is a problem of relationship and responsibility. Who is responsible for what and to what extent?

3. A Shared Responsibility:

The victimizer and the victim act on each other directly by sharing a common place, or indirectly by symbolic relationship.

Hence, the victim can be viewed as a dependent variable by examining the effects of being victimised or as an independent variable by examining the conditions which predispose certain kinds of persons to victimisation.

For Hudson and Galway (1975:xii) “the central thrust of the study of victim-criminal relationships is that to some variable extent the officially labelled ‘victim’ of criminal act may directly share in responsibility for the victimisation.” Therefore, the performance of the victimiser should be seen as a shared responsibility. From this point of view, who may take on the role of victim or victimiser in particular situations may have more to do with sheer chance than with anything else (Wolfgang, 1958:265).

VICTIM PRECIPITATION

The concept of “victim precipitation” deals with the case in which the victim has had something to do with his own victimisation. Hence, “the victim-precipitated cases are those in which the victim was the first to show and use a deadly weapon, to strike a blow in an altercation - in short, the first to commence the interplay or resort to physical violence” (Wolfgang, 1974: 80).
According to Reckless (1970:143), “there are three basic points in the study of the role of the victim in criminal delinquent behaviour:

1. doer-victim relationships do not apply to all criminal deeds; rather they apply only to a suspected minority, since reaching out behaviour focuses more on objects than on persons;

2. Criminology at present is not able to account for a closure of doer-victim, although it is conceded that disability of persons makes them vulnerable as victims, on the principle that doer’s behaviour seeks paths for weak resistance;

3. in a minority of victim-related criminal deeds, the victim, because of certain postures and states triggers a non-reaching-out person, initiates the deeds and is the final recipient of the consequence.”

Hence, the concept “victim-precipitated victimisation” is applicable to those victimisation in which the victim is a direct, positive precipitator of his/her own victimisation.

1. Nature of Precipitation:

The provocation of victim has a definite part in the etiology of victimisation, either by inciting the criminal to commit it by creating or fostering a situation likely to lead to victimisation. This type of victim can provoke the crime by his own action. According to Fooner (as cited in Silverman, 1974:100) if “a person has not acted with reasonable self-protective behaviour in handling his money, jewellery, or other valuable and has become the victim of robbery, he cannot be considered an innocent victim - he has .... created a “temptation - opportunity” situation, giving the criminal incentive and help.”

For Schafer (1968a) victims are essential for crime, so directly or indirectly all victims are somewhat responsible for victimisation. Contrary to this, Silverman (1974:100) feels that it is not logical to think that “we are all somewhat responsible for our own victimisation simply because we exist.”
The role of the victim may be of a varying nature. In different ways a victim can contribute to the victimisation. In a study conducted by Separovic (1974:18), the statistical profile of the murder-victim relationship, the victim precipitated one out of four homicide cases. The findings of Wolfgang's studies on criminal homicide in Philadelphia are similar to the result of Separovic's study. In the same way, Horowitz & Amir (1975: 93-98) found that the victim precipitated one out of five rape cases.

2. Contributing Factors:

Victim precipitation is, culture, time and place bound. The victimiser is the person who consciously or unconsciously interprets events that are precipitating. For Silverman (1974:107) "victim precipitation occurs when the offender's action in committing or beginning to commit a crime is initiated after and directly related to, an action (be it physical or verbal, conscious or unconscious) on the part of the victim. The offender perceives, the victim's behaviour as a facilitating action (including temptation, invitation) to the commission of the crime. The action of the victim might be said to have triggered the offender's behaviour."

Often adolescent gangs make a careful choice for victimisation. According to Fattah (1974: 29-53) and Viano (1975: 145-164), the personal qualities of the victim has a major role in this selection. For Sutherland (1965) professional thieves have their own "code of ethics." They generally follow some rules in the selection of their victims. A large firm or government are both considered by many targets for victimisation. The impersonal character, the wealth and the indirect harm are likely to facilitate victimisation.

3. Environmental Factors:

There is an inter-relationship between the environment of the victimiser and of the victim. Hence, victim precipitation also depends on these environmental factors. Knowledge of the so-
cial relationships of the victim is not merely added to the knowledge of the social relationships of the victimiser. The understanding of one area helps to unfold the other. By this method the victimiser’s and the victim’s personality could be made known.

Nkpa’s (1976:71-83) studies in Nigeria show that the geographical aspect of crime offer major guidelines for potential victimisation. The size of the area, the place of the actual commission of crime, the strength of the population, the ethnic character, all these factors serve an important role and points out the chance of victim risk.

COMPENSATION AND RESTITUTION TO THE VICTIM

The question of compensation and restitution to victim is a part of victimology. The victim is a productive member of a society which has failed to protect him/her against victimisation. Hence society has an obligation to provide compensation and restitution to the victim.

1. Compensation

Compensation to victim is one of considerable complexity. In earlier days, many states encouraged compensation to victims, but in the modern era, reimbursement of the victim or of his family by the victimiser is not common. The concept of compensation and restitution are understood interchangeably. But compensation is the counter-balancing of the victim’s suffering and loss that results from the victimisation. It is a sign of the responsibility of the society which is civil in nature and represents a non-criminal purpose and end.

United States Senator Mike Mansfield, in introducing a bill in the Senate to compensate the victims of crime, said: “The point has been reached where we must give consideration to the victim of crime - to the one who suffers because of crime. For him, society has failed miserably.... Society has an obligation; when the protection of society is not sufficient to prevent a
person from being victimised, society then has the obligation to compensate the victim for that failure of protection” (Wright, 1975:408).

It would seem appropriate to discuss the essential elements requisite to have an efficient scheme to compensate the victim's of crime.

1. A compensation plan must be based on the conclusion that the government has failed in its responsibility of protecting its citizens from crime.

2. Compensation must be available to all victims of crime.

3. All expenses incurred such as medical bills and loss of wages must be covered.

4. An effective compensation plan must provide for a speedy system of compensation.

Wolfgang supports victim compensation. According to him, since the state has the power and right of punishment and rehabilitation of the criminal, it should also take up the responsibility of looking after the victim.

Elizabeth Fry holds that “the State which forbids our going armed in self-defense cannot disown all responsibility for its occasional failure to protect” (as cited in Echafer, 1976:163). So compensation calls for action by the victim in the form of payments by the society.

Contrary to the above view Mueller (1968:321-329) states that 26 per cent of all homicide and 35 per cent of all rape victims in America share blame with the offender. He sees victim compensation programme “as planned attempts to dole tax money to the “good guys” (victims) and to care for the “bad guys” (offenders). For Mueller (1968), politicians face political suicide if they refuse to approve compensation schemes, especially if they have previously supported criminal rehabilitation programmes. He further argues that a state plan to reimburse victims may increase rather than decrease crime.
2. Restitution

Margery Fry, Elizabeth Fry, and John Howard, British penal reformers, originally proposed that offenders must contribute to the restitution of their victims as part of the redemptive process of imprisonment.

Restitution is the reparation of the victim’s suffering and loss. It is victim’s restoration of his place in the community and right that were injured or extinguished in the process of victimisation. Restitution is a token of the responsibility of the criminal. It is penal in character and it stands for a correctiional goal. Hence, restitution calls for a decision by a court and payment or work by the victimiser.

According to the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958, the court has power to ask released offenders to pay compensation and costs: “(a) such compensation as the court thinks reasonable for loss or injury caused to any person by the commission of the offence; (b) such costs of the proceedings as the court thinks reasonable” (section 5). Hence, restitution to victims is considered as a major element of punishment besides the protection of law and order and the reformation and rehabilitation of the criminal.

Restitution to victims is based on two obligations:

i) Obligation of the offender

ii) Obligation of the society.

The financial position of the offender generally determines whether the victim will receive restitution. It is argued that when the State fails to fulfil its basic responsibility of furnishing safety measures and security to its citizens, the State is morally responsible for the suffering inflicted upon the victim.

CONCLUSION

Victimology tries to understand and analyse various factors and processes of victimisation in which certain types of people and certain categories come forth as conspicuous and recurrent
victims. The fundamental goal of victimology is fewer victims in all sectors of society which means fewer losses.

As an integral part of criminology, its central objective consists of developing and codifying a reliable and reasonably accurate body of knowledge, relating to the concept of victim, and to its socio-cultural foundations. To the degree to which our society feels threatened by certain forms of victimisation and presses for remedies, to that degree the task of advancing to levels of prediction and prevention may be viewed as the ultimate objective of victimology.

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