

Examining Community Stakeholder Contributions to Addressing Harms Experienced by Victims and Their Families

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ABSTRACT	ARTICLE DETAILS
Communities serve as essential stakeholders in restorative processes that address victimization and promote compliance with community standards. Relationships among community members are shaped by factors including familial bonds, legal frameworks, and social connections. Situational pressures may alter relational expectations, thereby negatively affecting individual experiences, interpersonal interactions, and collective solidarity. The prevalence of criminal victimization and the effectiveness of prevention strategies vary significantly across countries. Restorative justice emphasizes a community-based preventive approach to addressing offenses and encourages compliance with community regulations and relational responsibilities. This study investigates the roles of community members in advancing restorative functions and outcomes. In Bangladesh, community actors play significant roles in resolving criminal disputes and addressing victimization at the local level. The research adopts a comprehensive approach to collect field data and contextual information regarding restorative progress and ongoing initiatives. Additionally, the study aims to gather community reactions and feedback to inform the establishment of restorative centers across Bangladesh, to address harm and suffering resulting from criminal victimization and community-based incidents. Data were collected from 10 victims, 5 family members, and 6 focus group discussions (FGDs) with community stakeholders to identify activities conducted within community settings. All interview tools were pre-tested and revised to incorporate field and contextual feedback. A semi-structured interview schedule was used for all respondents. Interview sessions were conducted in a manner that ensured respondents' confidentiality, privacy, and human dignity. KEYWORDS: Community Stakeholders, Community Functions, Vigilance And Governance, Victims' Feedback.	Published On: 23 July 2026 Available on: https://ijiissh.com/

1.1 INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND, AND LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Community-based initiatives designed to address criminal victimization significantly influence the responses of both victims and offenders. The structure of a community shapes various aspects of lifestyle, such as dietary practices, dress codes, cognitive patterns, work routines, communal gatherings, tendencies to violate social norms, and levels of social solidarity. According to Lifestyle Theory (Maxfield, 1987), individuals are influenced by daily needs and activities that are closely connected to community interactions and the relationships between residents and local institutions. Violations of community norms and legislative orders frequently occur when individual needs and desires are unmet through conventional means. Theoretical perspectives (Brennan, Birdger, and Alter: 2013) indicate that breaches of community rules and legal orders stem from diverse causes and simultaneously generate a need for recovery through responsive actions. Disordered discipline and a culture of manipulation are frequently identified as primary sources of criminal victimization.

Multiple factors have contributed to community members violating established rules and customs for various purposes. Lanier, Henry, and Anastasia (2015) noted that lifestyle-related issues have driven individuals to participate in criminal activity. These lifestyle factors expose community members to a variety of individuals and situations that foster criminal attitudes and behaviors. Sarker (2008) identified several contributors to criminal victimization within the community, including financial scarcity, moral decline, absence of justice, lack of trust in relationships, inadequate community-based crime prevention, excessive discrimination, lack of solidarity, and the pursuit of personal benefit without legitimate ownership. The complexities introduced by post-

modernization have further complicated social contexts, resulting in increased self-centeredness and interest-driven behavior. As a result, situational influences have prompted community members to commit various forms of criminal victimization to advance their own interests.

Restorative justice prioritizes community-based regulations designed to repair harm resulting from criminal victimization. This framework engages multiple stakeholders in structured discussions to analyze the root causes of criminal victimization within the community and to clarify the responsibilities of each stakeholder in restitution. Pranis (2005) analyzed restorative interventions using the circles of restoration model, which aims to rebuild relationships in a constructive and non-confrontational way. Pranis (2005) found that offenders often acknowledge their guilt and demonstrate a willingness to assume responsibility for recovery, thereby reducing the social stigma associated with offending. As a result, community members have shown increased trust in reconciliation processes, leading to greater interest in restorative approaches. Preventive strategies rooted in the community have also been adopted to address recurring criminal incidents and offenses by community members. Offenders are guided by the principles of restorative mediation and thought as described by Morris and Maxwell (2001: 48):

“Offenders and accused individuals are charged with criminal acts. Restorative interventions have resulted in the creation of guidelines for offenders and accused persons to reduce acts of revenge and offenses against individuals, property, and honor. Individuals with harmful intentions may be influenced to violate social codes and legal obligations. Offenders are often required to provide compensation for property damage and loss of status. Within the community, restorative punishment and subsequent follow-up are implemented to evaluate behavioral corrections and modifications. Community stakeholders contribute their perspectives regarding offenders and seek to protect community interests and promote public safety.”

The implementation of restorative justice is shaped by a community's social composition. John (2002) noted that both victimization and its remedies are determined by the community's social structure and behavioral norms. Social structure and human behavior are closely linked, together forming the foundation for restorative practices. Sarker (2001) identified two essential factors for addressing criminal matters and developing preventive strategies to protect community members from harm: first, individuals act in accordance with the social structure of their community, which establishes mechanisms of social inclusion and exclusion; second, interpersonal interactions are defined and evaluated by the outcomes of conduct sanctioned by society. Accepted behaviors are governed by prevailing social values, ethics, customs, and community-based legal practices.

Restorative integrity in Bangladesh organizes community resources to address victimization and actively involves offenders in processes of repair and recovery. This approach specifically addresses the victimization of women and children by utilizing local reconciliation practices. Restorative justice emphasizes indigenous methods as frameworks for intervention. Islam, Jahan, and Hossain (2018) identified three community-based factors contributing to women's victimization in Bangladesh: (a) evaluating offenders based on face value and social status, which may increase crime rates if offenders are treated leniently; (b) enforcement of community-based regulations, where individuals are influenced by community pressure, motivation, and guidance; and (c) the quality of post-victimization treatment, where legal and community support can empower victims to resist offenders. In contrast, inconsistent protective measures can create confusion and discourage victims from seeking justice.

The community, as a key stakeholder, engages in restorative processes to address victimization and promote adherence to established guidelines. Community relationships are formed through familial, legal, and social bonds. Evolving situational demands have modified relational expectations, at times resulting in diminished shared experiences and weakened social solidarity. National contexts exhibit variation in experiences with criminal victimization and prevention strategies. Restorative justice emphasizes community-based prevention to address offenses and fosters compliance with regulations and relational responsibilities. These factors guided the design of the present study, which examines community functions and interventions that reduce criminal victimization by promoting effective participation and satisfaction.

1.2 STUDY OBJECTIVES

The **primary objective** is to unearth the community interventions to minimize the community-based criminal activities and involvement. The **specific objectives** are to:

- Examine the underlying causes of criminal victimization within the context of the community framework;
- Identify the specific harms and adverse impacts resulting from criminal activities;
- Assess the strengths and relational foundations of the community to address the criminal actions;
- Analyze the degree of community cohesion in relation to the needs and requirements for resolving victimization; and
- Recommend a few suggestions based on the findings to resolve the community-based criminal victimizations.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The **principal research question** of the study is to assess the community strengths and mechanisms to address the criminal victimizations. The **specific research questions** are to:

- What perspectives have community members expressed regarding the causal factors contributing to criminal victimization?
- What measures have community members undertaken as stakeholders to address and prevent criminal victimization?
- What challenges do community stakeholders identify as barriers to reframing the relationship between victims and offenders?
- What recommendations do community members propose to advance a restorative approach that leverages local strengths and experiences?

1.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study examines community functions to identify effective restoration methods and approaches for addressing criminal victimization. To achieve this objective, several key concepts with specific definitions are employed. These concepts guide the study's objectivity and conceptual framework: **(a) Community Contributors:** Community participants are defined as individuals or groups who assume responsibility for resolving criminal victimization and conflicts within their community. Individuals with public reputations can play a major role in reducing the harms and risks associated with criminal events, as Turvey (1999) notes. By managing the aftermath, community members, as stakeholders, actively participate in reconciliation processes. Freeman and Menghwar (2024) define community stakeholders as persons responsible for bearing the stake in conflicts and grievances. Through collective initiatives, community peace and solidarity are maintained with the involvement of all parties. **(b) Restorative Interventions:** Restorative justice is a process through which community-based criminal victimization is addressed by involving all parties affected within the community. This approach emphasizes community-based justice, establishing rules and regulations to reduce grievances and conflicts among members. Zehr (2002) describes restorative justice as an approach implemented within communities to resolve non-serious criminal issues, achieve meaningful solutions, and address the consequences of criminal victimization.

1.5 USED METHOD, DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES, AND ANALYSIS

This study aims to examine the role of community stakeholders in resolving community-based criminal victimization and conflicts. In this qualitative study, ten victims and five family members were interviewed using a semi-structured interview checklist that included comprehensive questions on restorative actions, employing both open-ended and closed-ended formats. The post-victimization experiences of participants were systematically documented. The research was conducted in the *Shariatpur and Madaripur* regions of Bangladesh, where restorative justice practices are implemented, and community stakeholders actively fulfill their roles and responsibilities.

Restorative interventions (Hass & Saxon, 2018) require systematic implementation in community settings to address compoundable disputes and victimization. Incorporating victims' perspectives and post-victimization experiences is critical for advancing restorative justice and addressing local deficiencies and challenges. To gain comprehensive insights into restorative actions, this study employed a qualitative research design (Creswell, 2007). Victims were interviewed using the *Case Study Method (CSM)* to collect relevant data and contextual information. The CSM facilitated an in-depth exploration of textual data and the relationships among the study objectives.

Additionally, community stakeholders (CS) participated in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Six FGDs were conducted, each comprising ten relevant participants. An interview checklist guided the discussions to ensure comprehensive coverage of healing approaches associated with restorative justice. The collected data and contexts were analyzed using narrative analysis, conceptual interpretation, verbatim quotations, and thematic analysis. Creswell (2007) identifies these as effective techniques for qualitative data analysis. Ethical considerations for all respondents were maintained in accordance with research requirements. The methodological framework is described below:

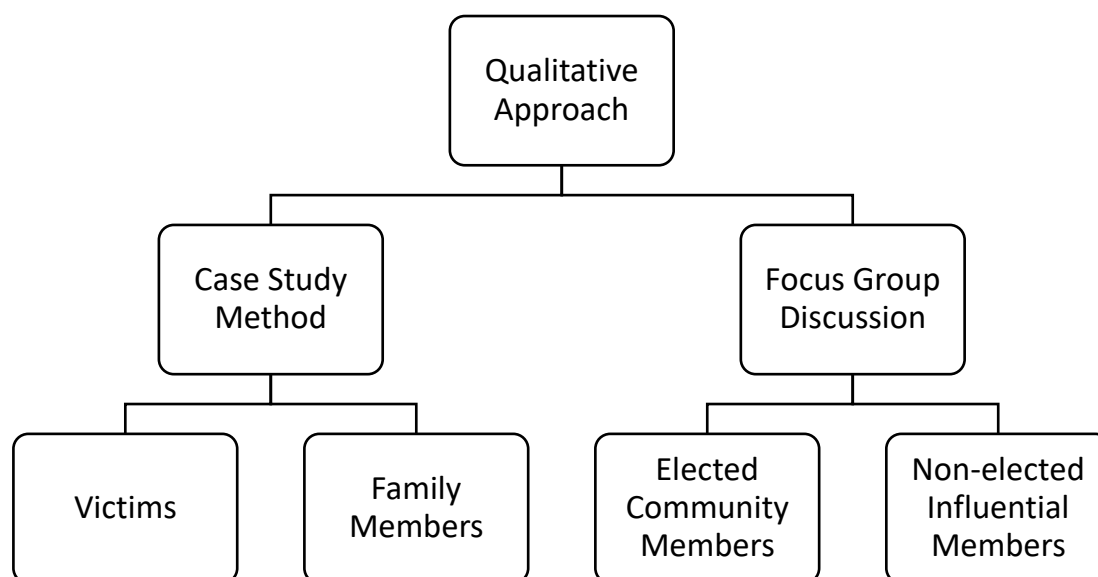


Figure: Structure of the Used Methodology and Approaches

Source: Developed by Researcher

1.6 REVIEWED LITERATURE AND UNDERLYING THE GAPS

A significant body of literature has been reviewed to understand previous research and progress in community-based restorative interventions. This review has also identified gaps and further requirements for developing restorative justice within social settings. The findings of the reviewed literature are noted below:

Braithwaite (2015) noted that the community justice structure in Bangladesh addresses manageable cases through cooperation and assistance among residents. The reviewed study indicated that *the shalish* process is widely practiced across various regions of Bangladesh to resolve compoundable cases within local communities. The study further suggested that restorative justice has expanded opportunities for conflict resolution, which has been positively received by community members. Community members support restorative interventions that repair harm and provide local solutions, thereby reducing tendencies toward revenge. Active participation in the justice process allows community members to express their opinions, share observations, and assume responsibility for transforming conflict and violent behavior. Restorative justice seeks to ensure that final decisions, such as verdicts, protect victims and require offenders to make reparations. As a community-based intervention, restorative justice incorporates the perspectives of both parties and selects regulatory approaches through dialogue and negotiation to foster sustainable relationships. According to Braithwaite, restorative justice aligns with the community's interests and encourages collective engagement for the broader benefit of society. Through community dialogue, it has become evident that conflicts can be resolved locally, and social acceptance for both victims and offenders can be established within a broader social context.

The Madaripur Legal Aid Association (2007) published a handbook titled 'Mediation Manual' that examines the prospects of restorative justice, including its historical context and foundational principles. In Bangladesh, community-based local justice approaches, such as *Shalish*, have traditionally resolved minor disputes. The manual highlights the presence of restorative practices within Bangladeshi communities and identifies actions recognized as restorative interventions. It also outlines the restorative justice processes implemented by the Madaripur Legal Aid Association (MLAA) to address community injustices and damages, emphasizing the involvement of community members and stakeholders in fostering trust and repairing relationships. The reviewed study states that MLAA supports both victims and offenders by engaging community stakeholders to address harm and injustice. MLAA delivers restorative services within community settings, aiming to reduce injustice through mutual dialogue and collaborative solutions. The organization provides legal assistance to disadvantaged individuals and facilitates offender rehabilitation by involving community supporters. MLAA employs a mediation model to resolve disputes, ensure satisfaction for both parties, and connect individuals with appropriate referral agencies for additional services.

Ali (2015) developed the 'Good Practice Guideline' to provide legal support for women who are victims of unlawful disputes within community settings. Published by the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA), this guideline aims to raise stakeholders' awareness of the provision of para-legal services and legal integration, particularly for women and children. BNWLA implements a variety of legal services and awareness programs to protect victims through multiple forms of assistance. The organization also delivers community-based legal services to enhance the capacity of community members. The guideline identifies that individuals within communities perpetrate various forms of criminal victimization for multiple reasons. BNWLA provides legal

support to individuals in both rural and urban areas who lack access to legal interventions to resolve criminal incidents. The guideline further notes that, although community members generally intend to adhere to legal norms and respect communal standards, several factors may lead to violations of obligations and rules. Such actions are classified as criminal activities and necessitate legal interventions for repair and restitution. As an agency engaged in restorative justice, BNWLA organizes meetings and community councils to discuss strategies for managing criminal tendencies among community members and offenders.

Sikder (2016) demonstrated that restorative justice provides substantial social and rehabilitative support, enabling victims and affected individuals to recover from injuries and suffering. The cessation of victimization is facilitated by community-based services and support. Sheikh and Karim (2013) evaluated victim services and found that the government of Bangladesh has established a comprehensive range of services and institutional protections to support victims' reintegration into society. These essential services for victims and their families include psychosocial treatment, medical care and counseling, vocational and entrepreneurial training, referrals to relevant agencies, engagement with philanthropic individuals, legal support and advocacy against offenders, as well as community mobilization to protect victims and deter offenders (Sheikh and Karim, 2013). In rural areas, the provision of victim services is determined by village courts and community stakeholders. The relationship between victim and offender is influenced by situational and environmental factors. Sikder (2016) investigated the activation of village courts in addressing criminal victimization and their roles within the community. However, Sikder (2016) also noted that village court judgments are sometimes disregarded, resulting in victims experiencing re-victimization when filing complaints. The legislative framework for village courts is inconsistently implemented, which creates challenges for offenders and individuals with malicious intent. Despite these obstacles, village courts have achieved notable successes in reconciling criminal victimizations within communities. Sikder (2016) concluded that acceptance of community-based justice and its verdicts is sustained through a process of trial and error, employing various strategies and methods in Bangladesh.

The reviewed study (GIZ Bangladesh, 2013) identified restorative justice as an emerging movement in Bangladesh, with historical roots in local justice practices known as Salish. Currently, restorative justice operates within the legal framework established by the Village Court Act-2006 and is supported by the widespread acceptance of social reconciliation methods. This approach facilitates collaboration among victims, offenders, and community members to address offences and develop mutually agreed-upon solutions. The study further indicated that restorative justice is a process in which stakeholders address specific offences, jointly identify underlying causes, and determine appropriate responses to harms, needs, and obligations within a broader context. Four key dimensions of restorative justice in the justice process were identified: (a) crime prevention, (b) referral, (c) reintegration, and (d) restitution. The reviewed guideline asserts that community-based legal services can reduce re-offending and decrease criminal tendencies among community members. It also provides substantive proposals for implementing restorative justice through community-based legal services and interventions to address injustices and harms within the community.

Ness and Strong (2015) assert that restorative justice conceptualizes crime as a violation of relationships and rights. Their study contends that restorative justice seeks to repair relationships harmed by anti-social behavior by engaging all stakeholders in the offense, thereby fostering restoration and reintegration. This approach is grounded in several core principles: focusing on harms and needs, addressing obligations, employing an inclusive, collaborative, and equitable process, and involving victims, offenders, and the community. Through these principles, mutual respect is established and maintained.

The societal structure of a community encompasses multiple lifestyle dimensions, including dietary habits, dress codes, cognitive patterns, work practices, communal gatherings, tendencies to violate social norms, and levels of social solidarity. Maxfield (1987) contends that individuals are influenced by daily needs and activities, which are intrinsically linked to interactions and mutual understanding among community members and institutions. Violations of community norms and legislative orders often occur when individual needs and desires are not satisfied through conventional means. Brennan, Birdger, and Alter (2013) observe that community members may breach rules and legal orders for diverse reasons, while simultaneously demanding corrective and responsive interventions. A lack of discipline and a pervasive culture of manipulation are identified as significant contributors to criminal victimization.

Multiple factors influence community members to violate established rules and customs. Lanier, Henry, and Anastasia (2015) assert that lifestyle factors contribute to the emergence of criminal behaviors and incidents within communities. These dynamics expose individuals to a range of social interactions and circumstances that may foster criminal attitudes and processes. Sarker (2008) identifies financial scarcity, moral decline, lack of justice, weak interpersonal trust, and absence of community-based crime prevention, pervasive discrimination, insufficient social solidarity, and the pursuit of personal gain through illegitimate means as key contributors to criminal victimization. The complexities associated with post-modernization have further promoted self-centered and interest-driven behaviors, thereby increasing the likelihood of criminal victimization motivated by personal interests and intentions.

The study demonstrates that the village court functions as an effective institution in rural Bangladeshi communities for reducing recidivism. It advocates for the broader implementation of the village court system across Bangladesh. By addressing both civil and

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criminal matters, the village court system helps to alleviate the backlog of cases in the formal justice system. Civil cases managed by village courts include family disputes, land conflicts, property crimes, marriage, and divorce, while criminal cases encompass theft, cattle theft, harassment, rape, fraud, community conflicts, and property damage. The village court model in Bangladesh promotes community harmony by facilitating the restoration of relationships between offenders and victims. The study concludes that community disorder undermines relationships and leads to injustice and unrest. Village courts are identified as the most effective agencies in rural areas for resolving community clashes and inequalities that disrupt daily life. Furthermore, village courts promote community collaboration, encouraging peaceful coexistence and collective dedication to community well-being. **Taking these characteristics into account, this study aims to evaluate community-based restorative interventions and their effects on community solidarity.**

1.7 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The collected data and context have been classified by nature and traits. The clustered data have been organized and presented as follows:

1.7.1 Peacemaking and Negotiation through Community Dialogue

Restorative justice prioritizes community discipline and practices designed to promote integration and mutual trust within the community. Individuals in the community pursue specific objectives, often participating in various social functions and activities to achieve them. However, in pursuit of personal interests, some community members engage in criminal activities due to multiple influencing factors. MLAA has organized community dialogues to cultivate a sense of peacemaking among the broader population and to encourage the adoption of negotiation as a philosophical approach. According to MLAA (Haque: 2007), the reparative aspects of criminal disputes have been publicly addressed within the community to foster tolerance and acceptance of wrongdoing through a systematic approach focused on sustainable solutions. Community members engage with various issues through interventions such as community dialogue and negotiation. MLAA implements these programs as foundational interventions to promote peace and discipline-oriented learning. The organization advances a restorative culture within the community through multiple models and approaches, with reconciliation serving as a central component. MLAA's target groups engage in a range of social activities and responsibilities to promote social integration from a humanitarian perspective.

MLAA (2013) has implemented a range of initiatives to facilitate peacemaking dialogue within the community, to foster a culture of negotiation and tolerance, as detailed below:

Table: Peacemaking Strategies and Dialogue Patterns: Objectives and Applications

<i>Peacemaking Strategy and Patterns of Dialogue</i>	<i>Nature of Actions with Purposes</i>
<i>Gathering People and Promoting a Restorative Message</i>	<i>Aware people about criminal issues. Rules and decisions taken from the Community. Inspire people to play their duties and to be connected.</i>
<i>Community Care and Vigilance</i>	<i>Forward to solving the victim's traumatization and suffering. Inspired not to break the community customs. Elaborated on the inclusive method that MLAA has taken to stop over re-offending. Campaign against unfairness and discrimination.</i>
<i>Social movement and participation</i>	<i>Decided not to allow any offender who causes problems and disputes. The community protects the poor people with vulnerabilities. Spread out the peacemaking slogan and campaign tools Community inspires people to sacrifice for all.</i>

Source: Developed by Researcher

1.7.2 Community Responsibility for Victim-Offender Reconciliation

Community involvement is a significant component of restorative justice, as it facilitates restorative decision-making and encourages offenders to comply with restorative outcomes. When the community participates in the justice process, victims receive

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support and cooperation that help them rebuild their capacity to adjust to daily life. Community-based rehabilitation provides opportunities and resources for victims to regain lost strength and progress. Such initiatives foster reconciliation between victims, offenders, and community stakeholders. In both restorative and community-based social justice, community stakeholders serve as an active platform to protect victims from further trauma and mitigate the consequences of victimization. Offenders are also encouraged to take responsibility and contribute to healing victims by supporting the community. The respondents of FGD indicated that:

“As community stakeholders, we must provide essential support to victims and their families to help them regain strength and restore lost capacity. We are responsible for offering psychological assistance and shelter, enabling victims and their families to reintegrate into the community as active members. Through our experiences, we have observed that community care and guardianship play a significant role in protecting victims from the adverse consequences that follow criminal victimization.”

“Following criminal acts, victims and their families often occupy a vulnerable position within the community, as offenders and their associates are frequently more powerful than the victims and their supporters. Therefore, as community stakeholders, we must establish regulations to curb the dominance of offenders and prevent retaliatory acts by victims and their supporters. By implementing community observation and support initiatives, the adverse consequences of criminal victimization can be managed, thereby fostering a peaceful atmosphere within the community.”

“The overall situation following incidents of criminal victimization within the community must be thoroughly assessed. A justice-oriented approach is implemented locally by involving restorative justice agencies or the village court, ensuring the participation of all stakeholders. Observations indicate that addressing cases of victimization effectively facilitates support for reintegrating victims and their families into the community. Community members play a crucial role in enabling opportunities for readjustment and reconciliation for victims. Furthermore, these measures increase the likelihood of recovery for victims and contribute to the management of offenders.”

1.7.3 Restorative Programs and Services Undertaken by Community Stakeholders

Community stakeholders have undertaken a range of social functions to address victimization and its associated traumas. The community's role as a caretaker for both criminals and sufferers has led to the introduction of various services aimed at preventing crime and maintaining community relationships in accordance with peaceful guidelines and the community charter. The taken programs are operated to resolve the dispute matters by ensuring both perspectives and interests are considered. According to respondents, community stakeholders provide several types of services to support reconciliation between victims and offenders within civic settings, including the following (opinions provided by the FGD attendees):

Table: Undertaken Initiatives and Services by Community Stakeholders

Initiatives	Providing Service
Motivational dialogue at the pre-Restoration stage	Encourage community members to refrain from criminal activity. Promote the adoption of a collaborative approach within the community. Provide support to individuals experiencing need or scarcity. Foster community affiliation and promote care among members. Strengthen the community by encouraging involvement with individuals at risk.
Preventing role during the Restoration and Post-period stage	Restrict the movement of offenders and ensure the safety of victims. Notify hospitals and relevant agencies based on the severity of injuries and specific needs. Prevent retaliatory actions by victims against offenders. Provide emergency support and coordinate the distribution of essential materials with community members and social agencies.

Source: Developed by Researcher

1.7.4 Community Strength for Restorative Justice Process

Community stakeholders fulfill their responsibilities toward both victims and offenders to mitigate the consequences of victimization. This study examines the approaches and functions of community stakeholders in preventing community-based criminal victimizations. Respondents emphasize the importance of community structure and functions in establishing a discipline-

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oriented environment. Although stakeholders' perceptions vary, there is consensus on the need for collaborative efforts to ensure victim security, provide need-based support, and hold offenders accountable for addressing the harm caused by victimization. Restorative justice is an approach that convenes the victim, the accused offender, and community stakeholders to mobilize resources and address incidents of criminal victimization. The participation of community stakeholders is regarded as essential for transforming the consequences of victimization. These stakeholders monitor the behavior of offenders and the distress experienced by victims and their families. Community stakeholders participate both directly and indirectly in the processes of discrimination and settlement. The respondents observed the restorative process and expressed their opinions on operating it for the well-being of the community. Respondent of victim 'B' stated:

"I recognize that victims expect support during their moments of crisis. Without community assistance, victims may become helpless. As a community stakeholder, I have stood by victims and their families and persuaded offenders to provide compensation for damages. I advocate for victims and urge offenders to take responsibility in post-victimization situations to facilitate recovery and reintegration. In this way, I strive to support victims and hold offenders accountable, always considering the broader interests of the community. As a community stakeholder, I work to deter harmful behavior and encourage positive actions, aiming to foster well-being within the community."

1.7.5 Level of Involvement Taken by the Community Stakeholders

Community stakeholders have actively contributed to advancing restorative justice within community settings. These stakeholders have assumed para-restorative justice roles to address victimization and resolve community disputes. Within the restorative justice framework, the roles and functions of community participants are considered significant, as they encourage collaboration among community members and promote harmony, thereby improving relationships between victims and offenders.

Community stakeholders have made important contributions to managing the aftermath of victimization within the community through restorative justice processes, as outlined below (mentioned by the FGD participants):

Table: Contributions and Level of Involvement Provided by the Community Stakeholders

Nature of Contributions	Types of Works and Involvements
<i>Dialogue between victim and offender</i>	Review the history of victimization. Encourage cessation of post-victimization movements. Facilitate reconciliation between victims, offenders, and their family associates. Monitor post-incident situations by engaging the communities of both sufferers and lawbreakers. Notify the police station and local restorative associations when necessary.
<i>Pre-initiatives and actions for restorative meeting</i>	Advise victims to refrain from seeking revenge against offenders and their families. Encourage offenders to acknowledge their guilt and involvement in the victimization. Educate the broader community on strategies to reduce incidents of victimization. Guide restorative justice facilitators on conducting community meetings and addressing harms while preserving the social standing and dignity of both victims and offenders.
<i>Contributing and Access to Justice Process</i>	Support restorative justice (RJ) facilitators in ensuring the active involvement of all parties in the justice process. Manage external pressures on the justice process and mitigate disruptive push factors. Assist RJ facilitators in conducting the justice process in accordance with situational requirements.

	Ensure equitable intervention for both victims and offenders, proportionate to their roles in the victimization. Monitor the justice method and assign compensation and accountabilities through an impartial mediator.
Monitoring Feedback and Reconciliation Governance	Examined the behavior of victims and offenders following the issuance of a restorative verdict. Encouraged offenders to provide compensation following the restorative decision. Facilitated community collaboration to mitigate subsequent desires for revenge and to promote positive interactions within the community.

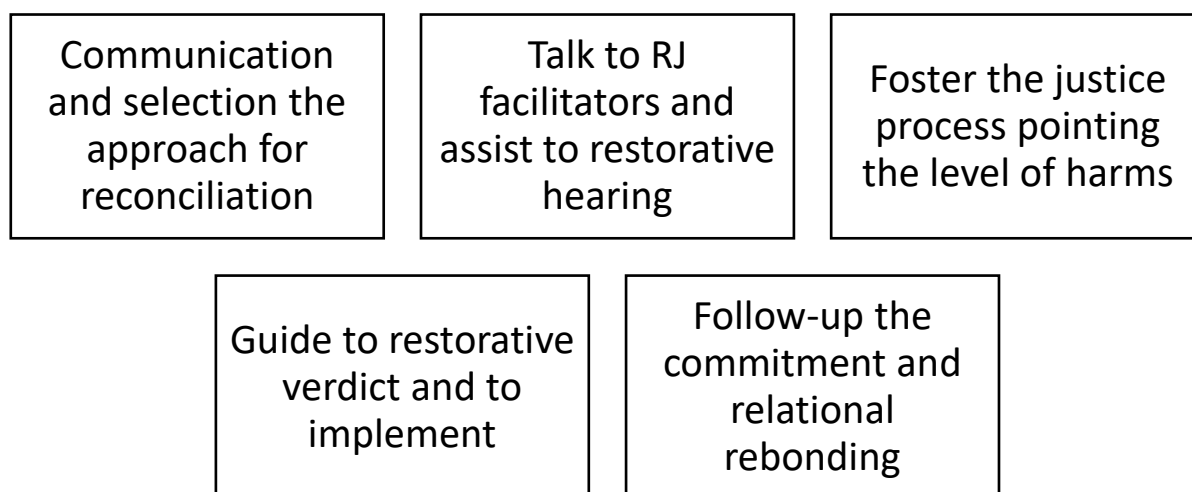
Source: Developed by Researcher

1.7.6 Role of Community Stakeholders to Implement the Restorative Verdict and Decision

Community stakeholders play a critical role in addressing post-victimization circumstances. Restorative justice, as a community-based approach, depends on the active involvement of these stakeholders throughout the justice process. Without direct or indirect interventions from community stakeholders, implementing restorative decisions becomes more difficult and may increase procedural complexity. Respondent of victim 'E' noted that:

"I perceive restorative justice as a community-based system that depends on the active participation of community stakeholders. Based on my experience, I have found that restorative justice offers a support-oriented framework, facilitated by a neutral party, which involves all individuals affected by victimization. As a community stakeholder, I acknowledge my responsibility to advance the restorative process and motivate victims, offenders, and their families to collaborate. I aim to foster positive change and decrease the likelihood of recidivism for the benefit of the entire community."

Community stakeholders played a significant role in the restorative justice process by serving as local mediators alongside restorative justice (RJ) facilitators. Under the guidance of these stakeholders, RJ facilitators implemented targeted initiatives to address incidents of criminal victimization and crisis. In this study, the role of community stakeholders is conceptualized as a **'shadow of guardianship'** within the restorative justice framework. Community participants advanced the resolution of victimization cases by facilitating appropriate compensation and support for victims, offenders, and their communities. Respondents described their roles in restorative justice as follows:



Source: Developed by Researcher

1.7.7 Discussion and Policy Interventions

Restorative justice addresses the pain and trauma caused by crime through systematic approaches and targeted interventions. In Bangladesh, a country with a high crime rate, numerous laws and regulations have been enacted to control crime and mitigate its impact on livelihoods and social cohesion. Restorative justice is recognized as a community-based method that organizes restorative settings to resolve non-serious criminal victimizations within communities. Community stakeholders are regarded as essential participants in the implementation of restorative justice and reconciliation processes. The findings of this study indicate that restorative interventions are increasingly adopted as sustainable mechanisms for resolving community disputes and conflicts.

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Respondents suggest that applying restorative justice can reduce case backlogs. Community stakeholders express a willingness to play significant roles in conflict resolution by leveraging restorative power and consensus. The Village Court Act-2006 was enacted to address minor community-based criminal activities involving victims and offenders. This study provides insights into the current performance of restorative justice. Future research could employ the outlined approach to explore additional dimensions with credible responses. The recommendations from respondents may be implemented to develop a restorative culture further and establish this approach as a widely accepted, community-based professional intervention.

The government can promote a culture of mitigating criminal victimization by developing new policies and legal frameworks that emphasize the role of community-based stakeholders. Involving community stakeholders in the justice process is necessary to ensure effective decision-making in response to criminal events. Restorative justice models have been implemented to address criminal victimization and restore relationships between victims and offenders within the community. In Bangladesh, Victim-Offender Mediation, conferencing, and Peacemaking Circles are utilized to facilitate healing for victims. These models bring together offenders and victims to discuss the circumstances of the victimization. The functional aspects of these models should be adapted to align with Bangladesh's context. The nature of victimization in Bangladesh is influenced by cultural dynamics and patterns of discrimination. Restorative justice employs various methods and models for crime prevention within community settings, aiming to bridge gaps in understanding among community members and to foster relational frameworks that mitigate criminal tendencies.

Additionally, further research employing scientific methodologies is needed to examine the scope and roles of community stakeholders and identify new dimensions and opportunities for their involvement. Community stakeholders have become increasingly aware of the rights of victims and their families, as well as the need for offender rehabilitation. Within the restorative justice process, these stakeholders fostered an environment conducive to open dialogue and encouraged a non-confrontational approach to promote mutual understanding and the development of positive relationships. The strengths identified were applied throughout the restorative justice process in community settings.

1.7.8 Conclusion and Remarks

Community stakeholders are integral to the justice process, safeguarding victims' rights and promoting offender accountability. The study's findings are anticipated to guide the development of community-led justice models that uphold professional standards. Respondent recommendations may be implemented by government agencies and private organizations to strengthen community-based restorative services and promote social cohesion. This research examines the mitigation strategies and interventions used by community-based justice agencies in Bangladesh. Interviews with victims, their families, and community stakeholders offer comprehensive insights into the operation of community-led justice mechanisms. Community members may be involved in various criminal activities, some of which are compoundable and can be resolved internally through structured interventions. Multiple community-led justice systems function within Bangladeshi society to address such disputes and incidents, seeking mutually beneficial outcomes for victims and offenders. Data from respondents were analyzed to assess interventions and strategies in accordance with established guidelines and principles. The results indicate that, from a harmonious community perspective, most compoundable criminal cases can be resolved by engaging victims, offenders, and other community members. The study further demonstrates that restorative interventions are increasingly being adopted as sustainable mechanisms for resolving community disputes and conflicts. Respondent feedback suggests that applying restorative justice can reduce case backlogs. Community stakeholders have expressed a willingness to play significant roles in conflict resolution by leveraging restorative power and consensus. The national legal action (Village Court Act-2006) was passed to address minor community-based illegal activities involving victims and offenders. This revision provides insights into the current performance of restorative justice. Future research could employ the outlined approach to explore additional dimensions with credible responses. The recommendations from respondents may be implemented to develop a restorative culture further and establish this approach as a credible, community-based professional intervention. Community stakeholders expand the scope of re-gathering to address and resolve disputes and misunderstandings. Both victims and offenders are expected to comply with the decisions of the restorative authority. Community rules and regulations are upheld by both parties, enforced through established community channels. The harms and suffering experienced by victims are addressed through active contributions and efforts to resolve the case against the offender. These practices are implemented by community leaders and influential members. In Bangladesh, the community's support for victims and their families has strengthened, in line with community values and restorative justice. The practice of peaceful living in the community is upheld and reformed through the community's caring. Community members are concerned about their neighbors' rights and position through restorative interventions and support.

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