

# **The Usage, Justification, and Impact of Witness Impact Statements in Criminal Trials: An International Perspective**

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## **Abstract**

This research study focuses on the importance of impact statements, victim compensation, and their relevance in today's criminal justice system. The compensation plans and the victim impact statements are increasingly becoming staples in the contemporary criminal justice system. However, there are still issues that make it difficult to advocate for victims' rights in these processes. Although there are mutual pros and cons to compensation or impact statements, there are reciprocal benefits. For instance, integrating these practices aids victims in sharing their feelings, but there are issues such as inequitable impact on sentencing, lack of access, and enforcement challenges. Such obstacles make it increasingly difficult to establish a victim-friendly system. The study focuses on the erosion of victims' rights, outcomes of sentencing, and the processes of restorative justice to explore how these components construct a victim-sensitive system. The study analyses legislative frameworks, judicial practices, and policy reforms in various jurisdictions for a comparative examination of available approaches. The findings indicate that while impact statements enable victims to share their feelings, compensation programs, in contrast, are difficult to access, inadequate, and lack effective enforcement. The report suggests a more holistic approach to the problem by integrating emotional, financial, and legal frameworks to assist victims on multiple fronts while also enhancing the delivery of justice.

**Keywords:** Criminal Justice System; sentencing; victim impact statement (VIS) ; victim compensation; victim-centered justice.