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Understanding the Victim Assistance Models for Survivors of Sexual Abuse : A Comparative Study of South Africa, Brazil and India

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Abstract

The evolution of the discourse of victim assistance although emerged in United States and spread through Europe via international instruments and domestic legal frameworks reinforced by sanctions, it is crucial to appreciate the fact that the realities of a society including crime rates, socio-economic conditions, persisting societal disadvantages shapes the schemes and policies of the society and these policies are expected to be primarily focused in addressing the complex needs of the victims of crime with intersecting identities in order to build an inclusive and safer society for the victims. Against this backdrop, the author in this paper proposes a comparative examination of victim assistance models of India, South Africa and Brazil with particular reference to victims of rape and sexual violence. The rationale behind the selection of these jurisdictions is grounded in the fact that South Africa and Brazil continue to report alarmingly high levels of sexual victimization against women while simultaneously receiving international recognition by UN Women for innovative victim-support measures. Although India follows an adversarial legal system distinct from those of South Africa and Brazil, contemporary scholarship increasingly emphasizes the need to move beyond rigid categorizations of legal systems in comparative socio-legal analysis. Through this analysis, the paper seeks to contribute to the evolving discourse on survivor-centric justice and context-sensitive models of victim assistance in the Global South.

Keywords: Intersectionality, Services, Global South, Legal Frameworks, Victims of Rape