Victimology of Crime and Terrorism: Lessons for South Asia

The South Asian region is home to some of the most populous and heterogeneous societies in the world; profusely divided along religious, ethnic, linguistic and cultural lines. The resultant poverty, unemployment and failures of governance contribute to high crime rates. Statistics from the recent past pertaining to homicide, rape and hate crimes demonstrate a constant trend for the worse, leading individuals and families finding themselves physically, psychologically and financially, victimised.

In addition to domestic issues, the War on Terrorism witnessed the global dimensions of victimisation in the region. According to the Global Terrorism Index 2014, released by the Institute for Peace and Economics, five countries account for 82% of deaths related to terrorist incidents during the last 14 years. Pakistan is one of those countries. Drone strikes, militant attacks and suicide bombings have left thousands of innocent victims adversely affected in terms of the damage incurred to their physical and mental health, as well as loss of livelihood. These serious concerns demand the formulation of a basic victimological framework to refine existing policies and national, regional and international instruments to address these issues on a permanent basis.

The underlying objective of this panel is to lay the foundation of a discourse that can help future policy reforms with an unequivocal demand to provide the knowledge resources, services and social awareness needed to help victims rehabilitate into a peaceful and prosperous future. The desire to secure peace and prosperity in South Asia requires serious deliberations by renowned international and regional victimologists to resolve the critical issues faced by millions of victims of crime and terrorism in the region that are still ignored in both governmental and scholarly pursuits.

The panel discussion will explore means to counter country-specific patterns of victimisation and issues of transnational crimes in the region. It will also enable us to explore durable policy initiatives by governments and civil society organisations with the involvement of vulnerable individuals and communities. The panel will potentially be asking the following key questions:

- What can be the possible legal policy frameworks in addressing the needs of victims of crime and terrorism in South Asia?
- How can an effective system of information, protection, participation, medical wellness, financial compensation, psychological and legal counselling and social acknowledgement be designed to improve the existing conditions of victims?
- How can the role of human rights organisations and governmental institutions be improved to fill the existing gaps in provision of services to such victims?
- What are the international best practices to evolve an effective and efficient system of victim services and to avoid secondary victimisation by state institutions?
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