International Journal of Environmental Sciences
ISSN: 2229-7359
Vol. 11 No. 10s, 2025
https://www.theaspd.com/ijes.php

Relational Repair For A Wounded Planet: Restorative Justice In Environmental Criminal Jurisprudence

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ABSTRACT

The paper aims to examine how restorative justice can be made a crucial part of regulatory mix to enable present regulatory traditions to better repair and mend deleterious practices and prevent future environment degradation. Furthermore, it underscores how restorative justice can be applied in context of environmental harm. It takes into consideration a broader approach in conceptualising the meaning of regulation and view it as that large subset of governance which deliberately manoeuvres the flow of events. Therefore, the article focuses on 'environmental restorative justice' in place of 'restorative environmental justice' which entails all measures that can be employed in which restorative justice play a role in environmental protection of both restoration and care. In addition, it delves deeper into the aspect as to what would happen if restorative justice is infused with environmental stability and endeavours to examine how the impact of environmental restorative justice can be restored. Moreover, the article lays emphasis upon the more holistic integration and hybridisation of restorative justice into daily regulatory environmental practice so that it can penetrate into entire regulatory spectrum. It further aims to unravel the answers to pertinent questions that demands scholarly exploration– Who are the victims of environmental harm? Who should have a voice in restorative processes and what processes should be followed to decide this? What degree of offender acknowledgement of responsibility should be a prerequisite? What approaches are best, given that environmental offences are typically perpetrated by corporate entities? Who can speak on behalf of future or past generations ? And lastly, can restorative justice simultaneously safeguard communities and the environment?

KEYWORDS: *Environmental Justice, Restorative Justice, Sustainable Dvelopment, Green Criminology*

1. INTRODUCTION

Poor, disenfranchised and more-than-human spaces and lives continue to face the disproportionate wrath of environmentally destructive practices. This surfaces the image of environment regulators as 'toothless tigers' who do not possess adequate power and resources to help curb menace. A pertinent question that arises in this scenario is—what steps can be taken to hone regulatory performance? Here, author takes a broader approach in conceptualising the meaning of regulation and view it as that large subset of governance deliberately manoeuvring the flow of events [1]. This entails rules and enforcement notices and at the same time includes measures such as educating and influencing. Response system includes stronger sanctions and better enforcement coupled with imaginative campaigns for planetary stewardship of the environment, efforts to criminalise ecosystem destruction and initiatives to acknowledge the rights of nature.

The author here envisages and suggest that restorative justice be made a crucial part of regulatory mix to enable present regulatory traditions to better repair and mend deleterious practices and prevent future environment degradation. The term 'environmental restorative justice' has been used to underscore two pronged concepts—first, the contribution made by environment stability in restoring justice by recognizing the human and ecological relationship interconnectedness. Second, application of restorative justice in context of environmental harm. The article majorly focuses upon the latter dimension. It is to be noted that the term 'restorative environmental justice' is not used, rather 'environmental restorative justice' is being used. This is so because former means 'making environmental justice' and hence–restorative, which is a distinct field of study and activism. On the other hand, the term 'environmental restorative justice' entails all measures that can be employed in which

[1] Black, J. (2001). Decentring regulation: Understanding the role of regulation and self-regulation in a 'post-regulatory' world. *Current Legal Problems*, *54*(1), 103–146. https://doi.org/10.1093/clp/54.1.103

restorative justice can play a role in environmental protection, that is, both—restoration and care. It is also an opening question of the article to know as to what would happen to restorative justice when it is infused with environmental stability. We have noteworthy examples worldwide where both courts and regulators have tied restorative justice to environmental regulation. For instance, specialised environment courts of countries like Australia and New Zealand have tried using restorative justice conferences and sentencing. In similar vein, Victoria's Environment Protection (Amendment) Act[2], that is a novel legislative approach to environmental regulation, has identified restorative justice as important for inclusion along with other enforcement options (see also Hamilton, this issue). South Africa is also heading towards this approach and has begun with pilot restorative projects dealing with poaching[3]. China is not behind and in 2020 while releasing its Environmental Justice White Paper, the chief justice of the Chinese Supreme Court remarked that 'adherence should be made to the idea of restorative justice, contextualise the needs of environmental restoration, and resort to plural approaches to healing the environment' (SPC, 2020: 1).

The article indulges in dialogue and debate about how to maximise the impact of environmental restorative justice. Here when we talk about environmental restorative justice, it is not solely about supplementing new processes or replacement of existing sanctioning process. Instead, the emphasis is upon the integration and hybridisation of restorative justice more holistically into daily regulatory environmental practice so that it can penetrate into the entire regulatory spectrum. While developing the agenda, the author draws inspiration from three scholarly imperatives. First imperative stipulates comprehending the present shape of the environmental regulatory landscape while ensuring that environmental restorative justice is not perceived as a clamorous intruder. Rather, it is viewed as a prized newfangled approach that builds upon the histories of success and failure experienced in the field. Environmental protection agenda has been pursued by seasoned and well experienced voices. It is essential to understand that environmental restorative justice is required to be comprehended within along with existing initiatives dealing with environmental harm and inequalities.

Secondly, philosophy, practice and principles encompassing environmental restorative justice should be made accessible to distinct environmental champions and be legible to all. This is utmost essential in scenario where these concepts and values are already familiar and scholars working in this field fail to appreciate what is new about environmental justice and what more dimensions it holds.

Thirdly, the due acknowledgment that it is not the present conceptual challenges or those manifested directly are raised by environmental regulation but the future challenges. This brings us to the questions pertinent for future debate: Who are the victims of environmental harm? Who should have a voice in restorative processes and what process should be followed to decide this? What degree of offender acknowledgement of responsibility should be a prerequisite? What approaches are best, given that environmental offences are typically perpetrated by corporate entities? Who can speak on behalf of future or past generations and the more-than-human (animals, plants, rivers, places, ecosystems, etc.)? How is harm measured, and what account can be made of future harm? Can irreversible environmental degradation be healed, and if so, how? Can restorative justice simultaneously safeguard communities and the environment? All these questions demand scholarly exploration.

The first part of article endeavours to address the first scholarly imperative whereby recapitulation of five distinct approaches pertaining to environmental regulation scholarship is being done which have postulated alignment with the core restorative justice values of participation, dialogue and partnership. It is argued that even though we do have ample good reasons for embracing the broader tradition of restorative justice in context of environmental regulation. However, it will be more beneficial to consider specific contours as to what environmental restorative justice constitutes. Consequently, the second part of the article will underscore five fundamental attributes of environmental restorative justice that are distinguished from the five environmental approaches highlighted in this article. Therefore, the concept of environmental restorative justice can be characterised as:

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[2] Victoria. *Environment Protection Amendment Act 2018* (Vic). (2018). https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/

[3] Hübschle, A., Dore, A., & Davies-Mostert, H. (2021). Focus on victims and the community: Applying restorative justice principles to wildlife crime offences in South Africa. *The International Journal of Restorative Justice*, *4*(1), 141–150. https://doi.org/10.5553/TIJRJ.000068

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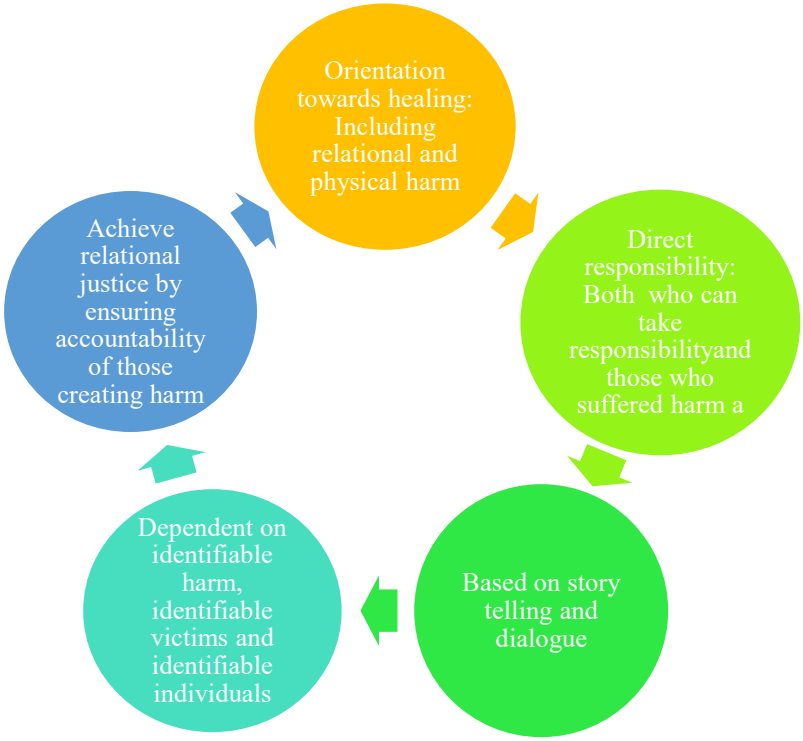

Figure 1: Salient Features of Environmental Restorative Justice

2. ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION SCHOLARSHIP AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: OVERLAPS, CONTRADICTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES

Synthesis of five intellectual traditions in environment regulation scholarship is done which are crucial to environmental restorative justice. The approaches are as follows:

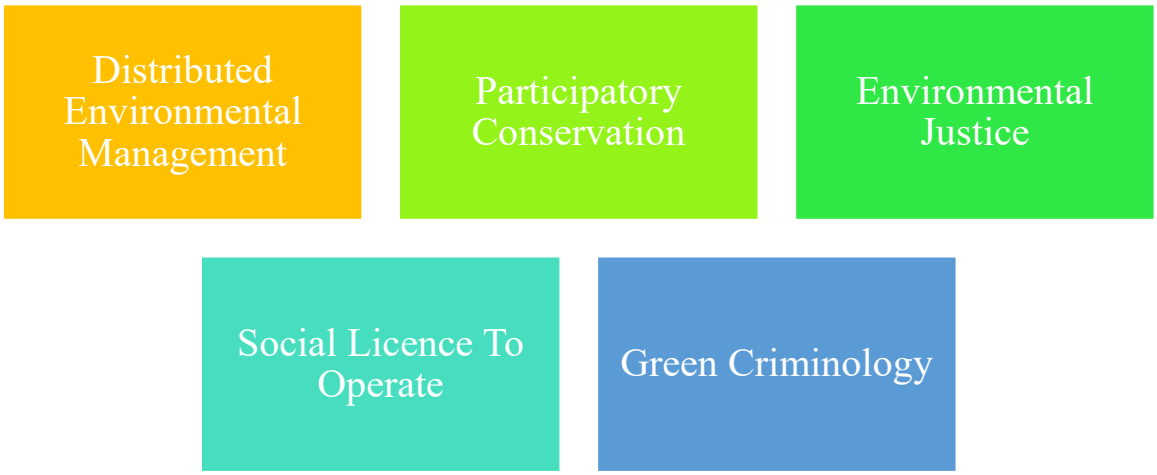

Figure 2: Approaches to Environmental Restorative Justice

Each lineage after emerging from distinct social, ecological and economic contexts and pressures over 50 years has discovered a discrete disciplinary home while focussing on disparate actors as the proponents of justice work. At the same time in light of acknowledgement of the fact that every lineage accommodates depths, variance,

contradictions and overlaps, the author underlines the central idea they represent and their restorative impulse while drawing lessons for development of environmental restorative justice.

2.1 Distributed Environmental Management

Distributed environmental management entails the doctrine of decentring the state's role in environmental regulatory control through collaborative regulatory mechanisms involving diverse actors. It arose as a result of corporations push back against early environmental regulation that was dominated by 'command and control regulation'. While dealing with issues such as proliferation and diffusion of pollution sources, types and scales of development activity given the limited funding received by environmental regulators, the centralised and top-down regulations were found to be inadequate. Both governments and academics have contributed towards a more flexible, risk-based and collaborative regulatory approach based on cost, efficiencies and efficacy[4]. Many umbrella concepts such as management-based regulation and new environmental governance have been proposed[5]. The central idea behind these collaborative regulatory mechanisms is that the end goal or outcome (like limiting noise or odour pollution) may be set by government but the road to accomplish that goal be determined outside government, for instance, through market-based instruments or by any third party.

As per the doctrine of distributed environment management there is a need to expand the regulatory relationship from bipartite (state and company) to tripartite (state, company and community) and the latter, that is, community be represented mainly by civil society organisations. The state will negotiate its role amongst multiple actors through cooperation and dialogue and thereby dilate and disperse responsibility and accountability for environmental protection across different sectors of society and across time and space. There are three elements of distributed environmental management that overlaps with pivotal restorative justice values— direct participation, distributed accountability, and responsive flexibility. Restorative justice aims to achieve this expansion of regulatory framework to embrace 'communities' through direct participation. This community participation, in turn, distributes accountability and now the offenders are not only required to answer state, as part of criminal liability, but to society and community at large which has suffered 'harm' as result of their actions. In similar fashion, responsive flexibility allows third parties (e.g., civil society organisations and businesses) to curate their own best ways to meet environmental standards, have an alignment with restorative justice approach that stipulates participation of stakeholders who have suffered harm to enable them to take part in decision making of how to heal the harm. On the other hand, distributed environmental management does not lay any direct emphasis on healing. Rather, greater reliance is placed on macro-policy regimes. This means that environmental harm (e.g., illness and death of humans/more-than-humans) is seldom dealt with even though normatively desired.

Tangible improvements in responsiveness have resulted through encouraging innovation and attuned responses to environmental issues but still necessity of strong regulatory guidance and enforcement mechanisms have been felt for many collaborative initiatives. In absence of these safeguards, partnerships have short life term, uncertainty or absence in environmental improvements and failed participation of 'Key offenders' [6]. In case of unclear environmental outcomes and continued offending, there are accusations and evidence of regulatory rupture and it results in foundering of trust in decentralised and discretionary regulatory mechanisms. Therefore, past decades experience strongly suggests that that strong state-supported frameworks are sine qua non for the effectiveness of collaborative processes[7].

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[4] Steinebach, Y. (2019). *Environmental policy and the economy: How institutions and policy feedback shape political support for environmental regulation. Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning, 21*(2), 165–180. https://doi.org/10.1080/1523908X.2019.1602756

[5] G. S, K., M. F, A.-S., Nehal, & Shaima, A., A.-S. (2016). A proposed framework of environmental governance and its impact on quality of auditing. *Journal of Environmental Science*, *33*(1), 397–420. https://doi.org/10.21608/jes.2016.25160

[6] Gunningham, N., & Holley, C. (2016). Next-generation environmental regulation: Law, regulation, and governance. *Journal of Environmental Law, 28*(1), 125–151. https://doi.org/10.1093/jel/eqv027

[7] Steinebach, Y. (2019). *Environmental policy and the economy: How institutions and policy feedback shape political support for environmental regulation. Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning, 21*(2), 165–180. https://doi.org/10.1080/1523908X.2019.1602756

Furthermore, accountability mechanisms relying on communities and organisations are perceived cautiously by communities as they are exhausted by constant claims on their time and attention while struggling with complex bureaucratic processes and deficient short term funding arrangements[8]. At the same time restorative processes may place added burden on them especially for those communities who perceive such mechanism as 'risk-shifting' by state to other stakeholders or actors.

The precautionary lesson for environmental restorative justice is that it may be necessary to structure restorative responses inside stricter regulatory processes to ensure genuine healing of relationships and the natural environment. In order to have behavioural change and commitment from offenders, stronger accountability is desired. It will help to garner community trust and trust of activist groups who are sceptical in supporting the process considering it to be soft. This means that restorative justice should be used parallel to traditional prosecutions and not instead of or rather than, as envisaged in cases by Hamilton (this issue). In a nutshell, through the several decades experience of distributed environment management it can be concluded that environmental restorative justice initiatives de rigueur increased and reliable resourcing of non-government groups to warrant willing and effective participation, judicious selection of restorative justice candidates and strong regulatory oversight.

2.2 Participatory conservation

Under the approach of participatory conservation distinct frameworks of natural resource management is covered so as to embrace stakeholders in environmental governance[9]. The focal areas under this approach are biodiversity conservation, national park management and common pool resource management – the 'green' side of environmental regulation. Begotten in the 1970s, the 'participatory turn' underscored that consultation and inclusion were 'the politically most feasible and socially most just form of conservation possible'[10]. Since much of the activity is voluntary, regional and community-based[11], the state lacks the reach or power it has in other domains. Here distinction can be made in both approaches—distributed environment management and participatory conservation, where participation is justified on efficiency and technocratic grounds.

An active and central role is played by researchers such as environmental social scientists, ecologists and conservation biologists in designing, developing and documenting participatory projects and programmes[12]. Resultantly, a rich scholarship conceptualising and theorising has emerged on collective work of different sectors and disciplines and combined learning they can produce[13]. Even though, the terms such as 'offenders' and 'victims are not used by participatory conservation doctrine, rather it peruses term 'interest groups' and 'stakeholders', but it has rich experience in conglomerating diverse groups for negotiating agreements and future plans and thereby contributes valuably to restorative justice.

An important learning is taught by participatory conservation through its profuse literature that criticises considering 'participation' only as placebo and not as panacea. It is found by scholars that face-to-face gatherings labelled as 'participatory' can ramify in entrenching conflicts, ostracism and muzzling of particular social groups, and furthering pseudo consensus fragmenting once back in 'actual world'[14]. It has always been thrusted by restorative justice that we need skilled facilitators, significant investments in preparatory work and 'buy-in' from all key players. Nonetheless, warning is given by 'participatory conservation' that when there is existence of

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[8] Holley, C**.** (2009). *Environmental regulation and governance: Towards complexity and connectivity*. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice, 20*(3), 451–470.

[9] Dovers, S. R. (1998). Community involvement in environmental management: Thoughts for emergency management. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management, 13*(2), 40–44.

[10] Nygren, A. (2004). Contested lands and incompatible images: The political ecology of struggles over resources in Nicaragua's Indio-Maíz Reserve. *Society & Natural Resources, 17*(3), 189–205. https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920490278793

[11] Richardson, B. J. (2015). *Environmental law for sustainability: A reader*. Oxford University Press.

[12] Brown, V. A., Harris, J. A., & Russell, J. Y. (2010). *Tackling wicked problems through the transdisciplinary imagination*. Earthscan.

[13] Polk, M. (2014). Climate change and the academy: A study of the production of knowledge and policy recommendations. *Environmental Science & Policy, 42*, 9-19. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2014.04.012

[14] Cooke, B., & Kothari, U. (Eds.). (2001). *Participation: The new tyranny?* Zed Books.

asymmetrical power relationships and entrenched mistrust, factors such as skill and time will alone not prove sufficient in guaranteeing desired outcomes for community members[15]. Therefore, the emphasis of environmental restorative justice is on self-healing and healing of multiple sets of relationships that may help in overcoming such disillusionment and participatory disinclination. Lastly, participatory conservation literature advocates for incorporation of broader awareness and acknowledgement of cultural values and communication tactics while efficiently navigating power differentials. These all components are pivotal in upholding the shared values of environmental restorative justice—respect, accountability and responsibility.

2.3 Environmental Justice

It is only when environmental decisions are taken with meaningful participation of communities and when there is no disproportionate impact of its outcome faced by an individual or group (including future generations), then only environmental justice as a normative ideal can be achieved. However, it warrants that these communities are given the right and capacity to participate meaningfully in the decision making[16] [17]

As compared to restorative justice, greater reliance is placed by environmental justice on structural factors and results of uneven distribution of harms across time, space and demographics. This is primarily due to differential focus: restorative justice accounts for individual or community- focused intervention after a particular harm, on the other hand, environmental justice accounts for community-focused response to a problem perceived as structural, systematic and repeated. The harm in environmental justice is not considered mutually constituted. Rather, it is the resultant of two factors: first, the exclusion, poverty and disempowerment of communities and second, from impunity, wealth and privilege of state and corporate actors.

Nonetheless the difference in approach of restorative justice and environment justice, both have arisen out of discontentment from mainstream policy and judicial decision making. Furthermore, both lays special attention to the distinct configurations of communities, time and place that resulted in harm and that can aid in healing and curtailing prospective harm. In similar fashion to restorative justice, the environmental justice grounds itself on inclusion and participation so as to challenge the assumptions of court processes and regulatory activities while utilising a 'justice' framing.

2.4 Social licence to operate

It is a public policy tool that vouch for development of trust and legitimacy in the corporate activity from perspective of community or of stakeholders. It was begotten in 1997 wherein it was based on response to social risks that impacted mining industry through the development of a positive relationship with local communities and their allies[18] and from hereon it has expanded to other industries. The social licence to operate is unwritten, informal and unregulated[19].

The term license here does not connote to any legal or regulatory license. Rather, it is used as a metaphor to refer to permission taken from community where the project is based—thus, a type of 'community license' [20]. Furthermore, the community can scrutinise after the licence is given and can enforce it informally through

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[15] Agarwal, B. (2001). Participatory exclusions, community forestry, and gender: An analysis for South Asia and a conceptual framework. *World Development, 29*(10), 1623–1648. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X(01)00066-3

[16] Jessup, B. (2017). The concept of the Anthropocene in international environmental law. *Transnational Environmental Law, 6*(1), 11-37. https://doi.org/10.1017/S204710251600023X

[17] Lukasiewicz, A. (2016). Stakeholder engagement in water governance as social learning: Lessons from practice. *Water International, 41*(2), 265-277. https://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2016.1143355

[18] Cooney, P. (2017). The neoliberal turn in Latin America: The case of Mexico's agrarian counter-reform. *Latin American Perspectives, 44*(3), 194-210. https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582X16683314

[19] Duncan, R., Graham, P., & McManus, P. (2018). Creative destruction in Australia's coastal zones: Managing growth and decline. *Geographical Research, 56*(3), 286-302. https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-5871.12284

[20] Cooney, P. (2017). The neoliberal turn in Latin America: The case of Mexico's agrarian counter-reform. *Latin American Perspectives, 44*(3), 194-210. https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582X16683314

Hampton, K., & Teh-White, M. (2019). Restorative justice and environmental crime: Responding to the failures of traditional approaches. In D. Clark, M. Emmanouil, C. Page, & R. Pelizzo (Eds.), *Environmental crime and restorative justice: Justice as healing?* (pp. 129–144). Routledge.

lobbying, activism, boycotts and therefore, any malpractice could lead company losing its licence[21]. A company that both gains and maintains a social licence tends to be transparent, has proactive stakeholder engagement (listening to and heeding the community, including opponents) and leads industry with compliance (even going 'beyond compliance').

Coupled with restorative justice, the social license to operate connotes to relational justice while aiming to improve relationships or 'contact quality'[22]. Along with this, the shared restorative justice value further encompasses dialogue, trust building and accountability and multidimensional respect and contextual flexibility. The social licence to operate includes two- fold process: first, the licence is obtained by company not by control but through listening, responding and making and keeping promises over the entire period of project duration. Second, the analysis is done by third parties who are independent and verify claims and scrutinizes the company's promise.

Many pivotal lessons can be drawn by environmental restorative justice from licence practices. For instance, the ongoing scrutinising of company's practices throughout the duration of license and deterrence that the licence may be revoked at any time in case of deviation which anchors the company to its social values, attitudes and needs for the entire duration of project. This provides an effective discursive strategy in context of environmental restorative justice whereby the need for ongoing relationship building and maintenance is highlighted. At the same time, it is necessary that story of company's side is also heard by the community for effective functioning of 'social licence' principle. 'It is not enough for an industry to change its practices … if the community is unaware of the fact' [23].

Furthermore, failures in conceptualising and executing social licence also helps to draw valuable lessons. To quote for instance, a company which is least bothered of its reputational loss or where interests of shareholders are prioritised or corporate strategies are given precedence, the licencing system is unlikely to gain a foothold [24]. Additionally, if there is ambiguity in licensing then it can be advantageously utilised by company in revealing only positive data or such data that is confusing. Risk of overlooking of invisible environmental harm also exists [25]. Moreover, the company interests may be well defended by 'company town' validating all its activities and at the same time purposively selecting those individuals as part of community who second their interests and excluding those from whom they feel threatened and labelling them as 'irrelevant', 'irrational' or 'extremist'[26] .

On the other hand, many lessons can be learnt from environmental restorative justice that offers a neutral and safe environment where structured discussions can happen on the uncertain aspects of social licencing system and measures for alleviating the ambiguities lying with in this process can be discussed. This may require setting up of participatory bodies for effectuating the dialogue between the companies, regulators and the local community. An opportunity may also be afforded by restorative conferencing by allowing redemption of lost social licence through aligning the company practices with the prevailing community values and thus, developing a responsible prospective corporate behaviour [27].

2.4 Green Criminology

[21] Gunningham, N., Kagan, R. A., & Thornton, D. (2004). *Shades of green: Business, regulation, and environment*. Stanford University Press.

[22] Edwards, S., Walters, R., & Gredecki, N. (2019). *Green criminology: Crime, justice and the environment*. Routledge.

[23] Hampton, K., & Teh-White, M. (2019). Restorative justice and environmental crime: Responding to the failures of traditional approaches. In D. Clark, M. Emmanouil, C. Page, & R. Pelizzo (Eds.), *Environmental crime and restorative justice: Justice as healing?* (pp. 129–144). Routledge.

[24] Gunningham, N., Grabosky, P., & Sinclair, D. (2004). *Smart regulation: Designing environmental policy*. Oxford University Press.

[25] Lester, L. (2016). Media and environment. In G. Cox & P. Pezzullo (Eds.), *Environmental communication and the public sphere* (pp. 255–272). SAGE Publications.

[26] Gunningham, N., Grabosky, P., & Sinclair, D. (2004). *Smart regulation: Designing environmental policy*. Oxford University Press.

[27] Wijdekop, F. (2019b). Restorative justice, environmental crime and ecocide law. In D. Clark, M. Emmanouil, C. Page, & R. Pelizzo (Eds.), *Environmental crime and restorative justice: Justice as healing?* (pp. 145–162). Routledge.

Green criminology pertains to environmental harms that has impact over both humans and more-than-humans, ecosystems and biospheres [28]. It lays thrust upon analysing how lawful and unlawful state-corporate behaviour contributes to environmental harm. Thus, statutory definitions of crime along with structural causes and challenges are highlighted by green criminology [29].
The concept saw the day light in 1990 while gaining titles such as 'unifying theme' and 'rallying point' as it brings cogency in previous studies done on green issues. For instance:

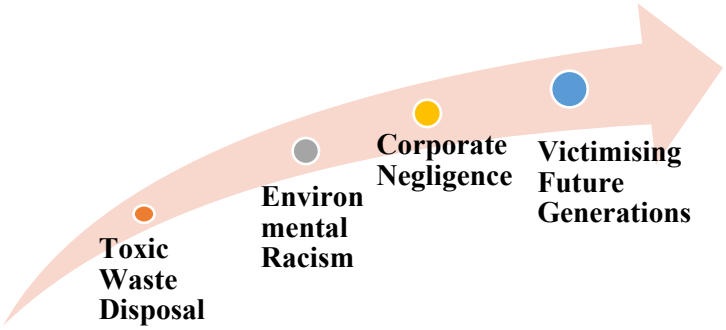


Figure 3: Studies done on Green Issues

Furthermore, green criminology pertains to eco-philosophical orientations on human-nature relationships[30]
a) Anthropocentric: It focusses on human rights and distributional equity
b) Bio-centric: It emphasises upon animal rights and conservation of species
c) Eco-centric: It lays thrust upon the rights of nature and conservation of places (ecosystems and biosphere)

The green criminology broadens the parameter of victimisation to include within its domain humans, non-humans and ecosystem[31]. Recently, Earth Jurisprudence has been acknowledged worldwide which entails that natural elements also have legal personhood and standing in court. And therefore, if harm is caused to nature, right to restoration cannot be enforced to benefit self-interests of individuals[32] .
Environmental restorative justice would also be bedevilled by the challenges faced by green criminology. These challenges are:

1. Animal Rights v. Human Rights: this includes debate between ecological justice and social justice. The question here is regarding how to meet the conflicting interests of divergent groups that satisfy their human nutritional needs through animal poaching. At times ecological justice is pitted against social justice and human rights. For instance, it was found in Rio Tinto Alcan's smelter closure case study that a successful global green agenda of reducing greenhouse gas emissions inadvertently victimised local communities, causing unemployment and exacerbating poverty[33].
2. Voicing the interests of more-than-human animals, plants and ecosystems: This is to be done by humans, however, access to their voices is a big challenge. Green criminology advocates for representation of these voices through scientific evidence [34]. Nonetheless, dominance of global north can be seen here as the

[28] Brisman, A., & South, N. (2019). *Green criminology: Confronting harms against environments, humanity and other animals*. Palgrave Macmillan.
[29] White, R. (2017). *Environmental harm: An eco-justice perspective* (2nd ed.). Policy Press.
[30] Brisman, A., & South, N. (2019). *Green criminology: Crime, justice and the environment*. Routledge.
White, R. (2018). *Environmental harm: An eco-justice perspective* (2nd ed.). Bristol University Press.
[31] Brisman & South, 2019
[32] Clark, D., Emmanouil, M., Page, C., & Pelizzo, R. (Eds.). (2019). *Environmental crime and restorative justice: Justice as healing?* Routledge.
[33] Davies, P. (Ed.). (2014). *Green crimes and environmental justice: An introduction to environmental criminology*. Routledge.
[34] Lynch, M. J., & Stretesky, P. B. (2011). *Exploring green criminology: Toward a green criminological revolution*. Ashgate.

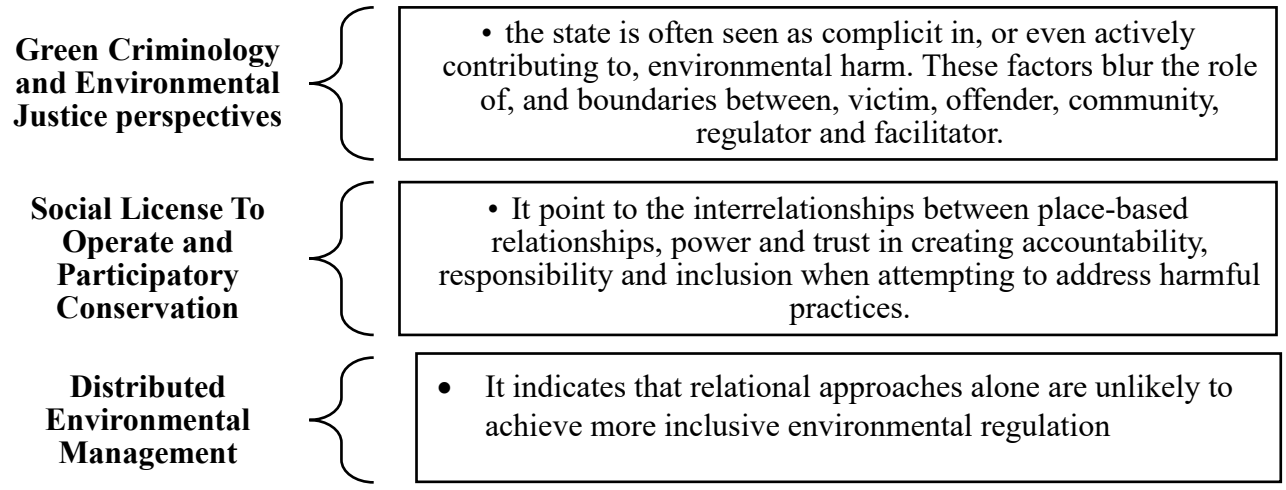
knowledge and expertise is still centred there and thus echoes colonial structures that disregard other sources of knowledge[35]. And now the onus is on environmental restorative justice to see what are future possibilities.

3. Impunity for crimes of the 'powerful': Green criminologists argue that profit-driven corporations traditionally account for regulatory sanctions/fines as a cost of doing business, encouraging recidivism. Some further argue that only substantial financial penalties act as deterrents, raising doubts about the potential of a restorative approach[36].

2.5 Wayfinding from these Five Approaches

The above stated five approaches unravels many threads present in existing literature and praxis that can prove to be beneficial for building the structure of restorative justice. Figure below gathers these together in categories for heuristic purposes, noting, however, that regulatory practice often straddles categories.

Our brief tour highlights both tensions and oppositions within existing environmental scholarship and praxis that may contain relevant lessons for environmental restorative justice. Questions of more-than-human victims and community-as-victim expand and challenge traditional conceptions of victimhood.



The insights drawn here are in congruence with evidence from other sources which states that marriage between restorative justice and court orders may prove to be more efficient than either pursued singly[37]. For the effective implementation of restorative justice, it is essential to embolden voices of marginalised groups along with strengthening their control and access through state sponsored programs pertaining to restorative justice.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: FIVE KEY ATTRIBUTES

Many key restorative values and principles have been revealed from the above discussions that are already inculcated in the existing environmental regulation and justice traditions. Now the question is what new environmental restorative justice adds to this existing landscape and what future challenges may emerge?

Till date, the scholars that have opined for integration of restorative justice with environmental regulation, lay emphasis on integrating restorative justice conferences as a tool to be inserted in enforcement procedures[38]. However, the researcher's hypothesis states that mere introduction of restorative justice conferences as part of regulatory mechanism to cater to specific incidents would hold much less transformative potential than

[35] Goyes, D. R., Sollund, R., & South, N. (2019). The theft of nature and the poisoning of the land in Latin America. *Critical Criminology, 27*(3), 333–347. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-019-09444-8

[36] White, R. (2017). *Environmental harm: An eco-justice perspective* (2nd ed.). Policy Press.

[37] Braithwaite, John. (2016). Learning to Scale up Restorative Justice. 10.4324/9781315723860-10.

[38] Hamilton, L., & Howard, K. (2020). Changing the narrative: Restorative justice and the regulation of environmental harm. In D. Cleland & J. Ocaya (Eds.), *Environmental crime and restorative justice: Justice as healing?* (pp. 79–94). Routledge.

commitment to 'thinking restoratively' at all stages of regulatory processes. Therefore, the aspect of 'thinking restoratively' needs to be clear when used in context of environment.
Now the five attributes that are pivotal for giving shape to restorative justice are explored. These are as follows: healing, participation, storytelling, categorising harm and accountability.

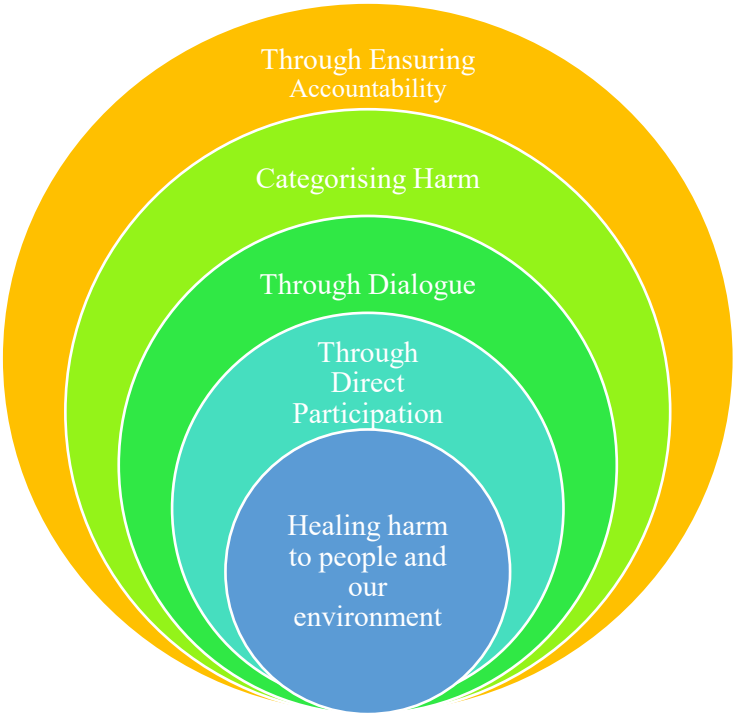


Figure 5: Five Attributes of Restorative Justice

Furthermore, the list is exploratory in nature and is neither hierarchical nor exhaustive. At the same time, researcher tends to identify the possible challenges that may arise while applying these attributes to environment along with the plausible solutions to them as recommended by the five intellectual traditions above.

3.1 HEALING HARM TO PEOPLE AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

Healing and restoration form the fundamental tenets of environmental restorative justice. It is aimed towards communities, institutions, ecosystem and relationships amongst them all that have been damaged by human action or inaction [39]. Thus, restoration here is directed towards finding relational peace or improving conditions of healed harms so as to continue coexisting. Healing involves creating the conditions for repairing wounds whilst accepting that scar tissue, changed aesthetics and reduced/altered ecosystem functions may be ongoing consequences of past actions. Healing is dynamic, not static.
Even though, restoration and healing keep within its folds emotional and relational healing but physical healing accords a simpler explanation. When we talk about repairing the damaged environment—steps such as afforestation, rehabilitation, detoxification can be taken. Nonetheless, the pristine state cannot be returned but still will hold relevance in this world of constant and non-linear change. The role of environmental restorative justice here is to find measures to restore biodiversity, health of ecosystem and access and safety of places that have been damaged. This will take in consideration the history and potentiality of place with lore and values of inhabitants. And much regard will be given to indigenous people and their values which forms the central theme of healing.

[39] Braithwaite, J. (2002). *Restorative justice and responsive regulation*. Oxford University Press.
Zehr, H. (2014). *The little book of restorative justice* (Revised and updated ed.). Good Books.

Pemberton and Aarten while explaining the central role played by relational and emotional healing within restorative justice, advocates that environmental justice offers both space and time necessary for victims and offenders alike to reconcile and amend their relationships towards themselves and each other[40].

3.2 DIRECT PARTICIPATION OF PERPETRATORS/ENABLERS OF AND THOSE IMPACTED BY ENVIRONMENTAL HARM

Restorative justice demands direct participation of individuals and corporate personality who are responsible for causing harm. Furthermore, it does not include much involvement of lawyers or advocates for representation of injured party as it entails micro-interactions among parties especially their emotional involvement, both with themselves and with each other[41].

Environmental restorative justice can be instrumental in evoking empathy amongst stakeholders through dialogue and personal interactions amongst those who have suffered harm and those responsible for inflicting harm. It can act as a platform for direct and mutual learning that would enable to understand not only the impact of harm but also circumstances behind it. It would enable to understand the subjective experience of community suffering harm while going beyond the questions of law involving 'which law was breached' and 'which regulatory procedures were bypassed'? David Moore, a long-time practitioner of restorative justice, explains that it is through collective re-narration of events that emotional transformation of all participants of a restorative justice process can occur [42].

When we talk about direct participation, it includes direct communication between affected community and those who are in power and have the capacity to effect change in corporate or regulatory mechanism. It is considered to bring real traction and leverage, as there are not only meaningful interactions but also actionable change because people who are holding resources have responded in affirmation. Environmental restorative justice has the ability to bring on one forum all leaders that have the capacity to effectuate change desired by community and that satisfies their desire for a cleaner, safer and cared-for local environment and thus benefitting all.

Through environmental restorative justice provides an opportunity is provided to regulators to involve themselves directly in environment restoration and learn about the ground impacts of their policies. Further, it enables them to be more accountable for the poor past practices, augment their responsiveness and comprehend how better they can cater to the impacts of environmental harm on humans and ecosystems. Additionally, it mobilises the theme of state complicity that is often criticised by proponents of green criminology and environmental justice. At the same time, the environmental restorative justice helps to fix 'institutional betrayal' as felt by communities who feels that regulators have taken them forsaken. The participation of regulators through means of environmental restorative justice enables the regulators to convert the perception of community from 'institutional betrayal' to 'institutional courage' [43].

3.3 STORYTELLING AND DIALOGUE AS CONVERSATIONAL EMPOWERMENT

Restorative justice provides a safe platform to both victims to convey their stories and to people who have caused harm to listen and respond and has proved fundamental in bringing transformation. It is more beneficial than court processes where victim gets only few court hearings to convey its stories and his story is reduced to furnish written form and thus, they feel unheard. It is found through consistent empirical studies that people feel more heard in restorative justice process as compared to traditional court processes[44]. The relevance of story telling lies

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[40] Pemberton, A., & Aarten, P. G. M. (2018). Narrative victimology: A review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 19*(5), 543–556. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838016669518

[41] Bolitho, J. (2017). Inside the restorative justice black box: The role of memory reconsolidation in transforming the emotional impact of violent crime on victims. *International Review of Victimology, 23*(3), 233–255.
Rossner, M. (2013). *Just emotions: Rituals of restorative justice*. Oxford University Press.

[42] Moore, J. W. (2019). The Capitalocene, Part I: On the nature and origins of our ecological crisis. In A. Johnson & C. Lubin (Eds.), *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, history, and the crisis of capitalism* (pp. 1–11). PM Press.

[43] Smith, C. P., & Freyd, J. J. (2014). Institutional betrayal. *American Psychologist, 69*(6), 575–587. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037564

[44] Braithwaite, John. (2016). Learning to Scale up Restorative Justice. 10.4324/9781315723860-10.

in fact that it unearths the personal and collective experience while dialogue involves just statement of facts and therefore, it helps bridging disagreement in opinion and understanding[45]. Furthermore, it brings more emphatically voices of more-than-human victims that remains unheard. One way by which environment can be given voice is by making individuals visit the place that is going through restorative process and experience the story of that place through all their senses. Dialogue and story telling have been recognised as fundamentally important tenets of restorative justice by many of environmental traditions. The major thrust of restorative justice is on reflecting the feelings of victims and those who have caused harm —'how did you feel then?', 'what needs to be done to make things better' or 'what contributed to harm?' On the other hand, central focus of common regulatory approaches is on adversarial dialogue where concern is regarding what rules are flouted and by whom with heightened attention to evidence-gathering, avoiding admissions and punishment.

The storytelling and dialogue in restorative justice is much distinct from the dialogue happening in unstructured 'town-hall' meetings that aims to muster community participation. In particular, restorative justice emphasises co-producing an account of harm, and focuses on achieving a form of justice 'that makes for a better tomorrow' [46]. At its best, it illuminates structural or systemic factors that resulted in the harm and its impacts, widening the circle of responsibility (and ideally, accountability (see Llewellyn, 2019).
The researcher's initial hypothesis states that a mixed approach comprising of both of 'thicker' and 'thinner' forms of storytelling would prove to be more effective as far as environment restorative justice is concerned. The reason behind this lies in the fact that conversation amongst the smaller effected group and the regulators would be more effective if it has 'thicker' story telling involved. However, in town-hall meeting like setting, 'thinner' storytelling as a means of conversation would be more beneficial as here delivery is to be made to large group of people and involves face-to-face participation. This mixed approach would ensure conversational empowerments within the ambit of restorative engagements.

3.4 HARM CATEGORIES WITHIN ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

The following are the categories of harm:

Figure: Categories of Harm under Environmental Restorative Justice

These harms are particularly challenging in environmental context as:-
a) There are various point sources of harm
b) entangled layers of causation exacerbated by climate change
c) questions surrounding harm to future generations
d) harm to more-than-humans

It is to be noticed that under the tenets of environmental restorative justice the term 'offender' has not been used rather 'those taking responsibility of harm' is used. This is done so as to underscore that individuals who are taking responsibility for harm have different ideology, diverse motivations and positionalities.

[45] Cleland, Deborah & Jose, RaissaOcaya. (2018). Rehearsing Inclusive Participation Through Fishery Stakeholder Workshops in the Philippines. Conservation and Society. 16. 10.4103/cs.cs_17_50.
[46] Froestad, J., & Shearing, C. (2007). *Climate change and the social ordering of environmental governance*. In G. Bruinsma & D. Weisburd (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of criminology and criminal justice*. Springer.

Environmental restorative justice plays a preventative role by curbing both the present and future harm through engagement with complex problems from multiple problems. Restorative justice focusses on identifying regulation and policy shortcomings because conflict resolution and harm are dependent upon the effectiveness of policy regulators in preventing harm. Thus, it endeavours to strengthen relationships by building network of environment advocates and shared knowledge. Furthermore, restorative justice focusses upon past harm and historical injustice to better understand the need and take future recourse accordingly[47].

It is ontologically impossible for humans to feel what it likes to be a river, plant or animal and thereby hinders the empathy towards more-than-human victims. Scholars argue that it is not the inability of more-than-humans to speak but our inability to hear that creates problem [48] and it is the biggest challenge for restorative justice to provide connectedness to voiceless victims. Wijdekop (2019a) argues:

"Recognizing the environment as a victim of environmental crime and representing it in the Restorative Justice process grants the Earth a voice, validity, and respect. [...] It contributes to transforming humanity's relationship with the Earth from one of exploitation towards a duty of care."

Most of the environmental conventions provides for protection of environment and there are very few that gives environment the status of legal entity so as to enable it to prosecute its interests by itself and give better representation to more-than-humans who are presently invisible in court systems today. Nonetheless, there has been escalating trend in growth of jurisprudence pertaining to rights of nature internationally[49]. A live question for environmental restorative justice is whether taking a rights-based approach favours legalism instead of exploring the ongoing relationships between people and place and Indigenous approaches to recognising nature's voice.

Humans with local knowledge can be used as proxies to represent the interests of environment[50]. It may include indigenous people, community groups, traditional owners of land along with ecologists, historians and environmental organisations. For instance, the information gathered by citizen groups from daily monitoring of environment through latest technologies such as internet of things can be shared and collaborated with regulators to help them take better steps for environment management.

Furthermore, environment justice underlines that future generation is also one of the victims. Even the emerging jurisprudence in national court recognises that judicial processes should also represent right of future generations. This aspect needs to be incorporated in environmental restorative justice.

Now the next question is of representation of heterogenous groups who are at odds with each other. Environmental restorative justice must address how to develop reflective, deep-listening practices that ensure disempowered or quietened community members, such as migrants and Indigenous people, have their voices heard. This can be done through leaders representing these groups as they can negotiate the interests of the respective communities. The story telling method where everyone is heard may not prove effective here. Moreover, environmental restorative justice can draw lessons from environmental justice and participatory observation on the necessity of understanding underlying causes behind inequalities, exploitation and the power imbalances experienced by disadvantaged communities. Domination of powerful can be countered and checked through adopting measures such as corporate integrity agreements and enforcement undertakings. This ensures minimum standards of content and participation in restorative process.

A network of individuals assuming responsibility of the harm caused can be created by environmental restorative justice by spreading awareness about the systemic factors that leads to environmental harm. The environmental restorative justice can enable access to managers holding positions at the top of value chain and apprise them of the downward harm their business operations in form of production or manufacturing are creating. This aspect is crucial in environmental regulations as there are chances of reoffending by these establishments especially where the regulations are sparse. The restorative justice provides for larger accountability and responsibility from those holding high positions unlike adversarial system where court processes are restricted by strict rules of

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[47] Golub, Aaron & Mahoney, Maren & Harlow, John. (2013). Sustainability and intergenerational equity: Do past injustices matter?. Sustainability Science. 8. 10.1007/s11625-013-0201-0.

[48] Besthorn, F. H. (2004). A spiritual foundation for ecological social work. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work*, *23*(3), 87–103. https://doi.org/10.1300/J377v23n03_06

[49] Cullinan, C. (2017). *Wild law: A manifesto for Earth justice* (2nd ed.). Chelsea Green Publishing.

[50] Lowe, V. (2014). *International law: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.

relevance. Structural contrivances and shielded linkages with other organisations that may otherwise have remained invisible or immune to scrutiny can be made transparent through restorative dialogue, increasing awareness of corporate responsibilities. This proves beneficial for correction of government structures from within the organisation and helps in ideally lifting the industry standards.

3.5 ACCOUNTABILITY: ACHIEVING RELATIONAL JUSTICE

The meaning of accountability in the context of environmental restorative justice[51] is depicted below (see figure).

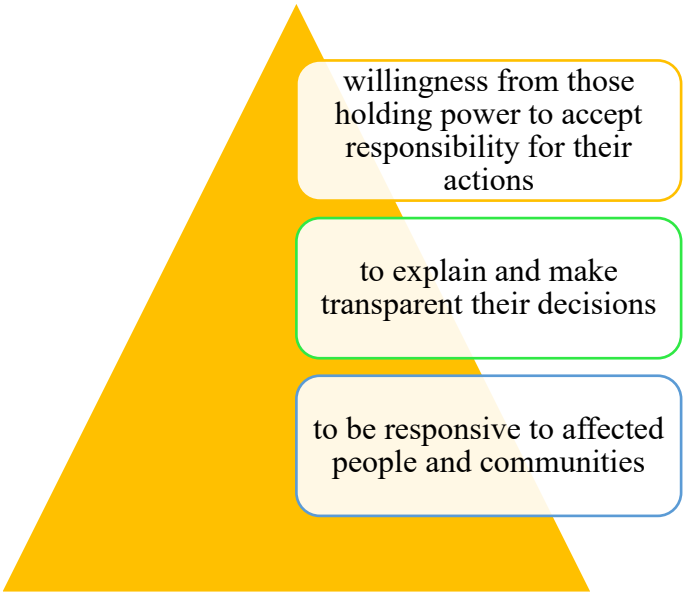

Figure: Tenets of accountability within restorative justice

Here the accountability is demanded from people holding power positions. It is seen that regulatory systems today held the final decision-making power without any mechanism of drawing feedback from community asking about their needs and expectations. Even though, it is justified on account of achieving consistent decision-making, however, such exclusion erodes away local communities or third parties that have been harmed from decision-making. On the other hand, when we talk about accountability in context of environment restorative justice it entails placing of power in the hands of those harmed with full autonomy to reject, modify or co-design the proposed solutions given by those taking responsibility of harm.

One learning from social science to operate can be drawn that a licence can be revoked by the community through persuasive techniques such as protests, if the self-regulation and voluntary commitments see the dark. However, this technique has limitations as it is not so effective where the community efforts are scanty or where majority community dominates the vulnerable or disadvantaged groups or where there is corporate obstructionism or where the government regulations to effectively engage the community. Therefore, it is desired that a strong relationship is forged between the industry and community to enable voluntary commitments to be meaningful and this can be ensured through accountability which environmental justice can only ensure.

4. CONCLUSION

The article therefore, underscores the relevance of environmental restorative justice as propitious novel branch of restorative justice that proposes to string its practices through quotidian environmental regulation practices. It has germinated from the seed sown and tended by generation of indigenous communities, ingenious lawyers, visionary judges, committed bureaucracy, engaged corporates and prolific activists. It holds within its foetus the copious heritage of restorative values and action that have been instrumental in development of this discourse.

[51]Greiber, T., & Baig, S. (2010). *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) for local and regional policy makers*. United Nations Environment Programme.

Koppell, J. G. S. (2005). Pathologies of accountability: ICANN and the challenge of "multiple accountabilities disorder." *Public Administration Review, 65*(1), 94–108. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2005.00434.x

International Journal of Environmental Sciences
ISSN: 2229-7359
Vol. 11 No. 10s, 2025
https://www.theaspd.com/ijes.php

Having said that, it is pertinent to underscore that environmental restorative justice has made significant contributions in giving a novel perspective to restoration and healing of relationships both towards and within environment. Furthermore, it paves way for relational and emotionally intelligent means for achieving environmental justice. It is driven by the objective of healing earth systems and healing of relationship of humans with nature and amongst each other. Therefore, the environmental restorative justice demonstrates the following:

Figure: Four Attributes of Environmental Restorative Justice

A new vision is envisaged through the application of environmental restorative justice whereby a harmonious and restorative relationship exists between nature and humans and amongst each other. Through the string of shared language and common principles, it is efficacious in linking community and personal relationships, strengthening of fragmented communities and strengthens to protest against corporate misdeeds while bringing together corporations, non-profit organisations and regulators. It further provides robustness to the voice of impacted communities and necessitates accountability of those who have caused harm and thereby forge a genuine healing to community and environment. This discourse through the medium of debate and dialogue be let open to schools, institutions, corporations and Indigenous communities, environmental stewards, citizen scientists, friends of creeks, keepers of waterways, multitudinous community groups and, of course, the regulators of our industries.

RESTORATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Development of meaningful responses to environmental harm have been fraught with challenges. It is endeavoured that damage to earth and its inhabitants is ceased with repairing and healing of catastrophic harm already done and to build a structure that respects ecosystems and with due cognisance of rights of future generations. This opportunity is presented by restorative justice that aims to bridge the gap between the ineffective environmental regulations and the dire need to rectify current harmful practices and preventing any future damage. The question worth pondering is—what is environmental justice? This umbrella term includes within its ambit manifold perspectives such as environmental law and activism, environmental regulation and protection, along with the movement to criminalise ecosystem destruction and initiatives to acknowledge the rights of nature and the duty of care for the environment. The contours of environmental restorative justice system have emerged from multifarious contexts—social, economic and ecological and has withstood the pressures from last five decades where lineages are coming from different disciplinary homes while focussing on various actors as proponents of justice work. Furthermore, it is pertinent to mention about environmental restorative justice here because majorly it is the marginalised communities that bear the impact of environmental injuries and while safeguarding them at the frontline is the environmental defence, protection and guardianship. Now the next question is what is restorative justice? Restorative justice implies addressing of harm or the risk of harm through the engagement of affected parties while bringing in a common understanding and agreement on the methods of repairing the harm or the wrongdoings so that justice can be achieved. Restorative justice stipulates a distinct justice paradigm where priority is given to remedying harm caused to human relations over the laws that have been breached. Additionally, it demands participation of citizens in their own disputes instead of

delegating them to others and weighs reparation of the harm and damage done more over punishment for the sake of inflicting pain. Within environmental restorative justice it is sine qua non that the principles of restorative justice are inculcated. These are such as relational definitions of harm, participation, harm reparation and healing.

Furthermore, it indicates both the role of restorative justice in achieving environmental agenda and role of environmental harm in restorative justice. At a philosophical level, restorative justice is better aligned with eco-centric and indigenous approaches in defining what constitutes environmental harm and to define what constitutes environmental justice. At the same time environmental restorative justice is provides space for bringing in alternative narratives and is more flexible and open to redefine the norms of harm and justice. Thus, it enables the stakeholders to label themselves as victims within the purview of environmental restorative justice even if they are not considered so by the rules of criminal justice system. It further allows narration of harm that is otherwise not legally organised or acknowledged. At the ground level, restorative justice provides a platform for participation and dialogue to happen that permits all stakeholders to sit together horizontally and respectfully and express their grief, fear, anger and tender an explanation or commitment to carry out necessary amends and take inventive and reparative measures. The restorative application has applications to redress conflicts between harmed communities, between harmed communities and corporations, between state and activists and lastly, between humans and other-than humans.

Restorative processes further include action plans and restorative contracts that comprises of various commitments for preventing and repairing damaged ecosystems. Possible outcomes in restorative process pertaining environmental includes apologies, restoration of environmental harm, prevention of future harm, compensatory restoration of environments elsewhere if the affected environment cannot be restored to its former condition, payment of compensation to the victims, community service work, environmental audit of the activities of the offending company, and environmental training and education of the company's employees. Consideration of environmental harms and injustices give rise to specific challenges that are not present, or that manifest differently, in the other domains where restorative justice has been used. Restorative environmental justice must be tightly aligned with environmental, civil and political movements, generations of indigenous communities who are at the frontline of environmental defence, community activists, creative judges and lawyers, committed scientists and artists.

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