

Editorial

Open Access and Criminal Justice Journals

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In the modern era of electronic connectivity, open access journals are reaching greater heights and they are adhering to the principles of social justice (Scherlen and Robinson 2008). Also, open access journals are getting cited frequently (Lawrence 2001; Eysenbach 2006). The Budapest Open Access Initiative (2001) defines open access as "*the free availability of literature on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself*". The major advantage of open access is that the content is available to users everywhere and this will "promote authors of such articles, who will see their papers more read, more cited, academic readers in general at institutions that cannot afford the journal, or where the journal is out of scope, researchers at smaller institutions, where their library cannot afford the journal, readers in general, who may be interested in the subject matter, the general public, who will have the opportunity to see what scientific research is about and taxpayers who will see the results of the research they pay for" (Wikipedia 2008).

There are some arguments that open access journals may not be at par with print journals in quality, especially peer review. Open access advocates like Stevan Harnad strongly denies that by pointing that "Open Access means free online access to peer-reviewed research (after — and sometimes before — peer review), not to research free of peer review." The Budapest Open Access Initiative (2001) asserts that open access journals are equally committed to quality, when compared to the traditional print journals. It claims that "Open-access journals do not differ from toll-access journals in their commitment to peer review or their way of

conducting it, but only in their cost-recovery model, which has no bearing on the quality of the articles they publish". The Modern Language Association (MLA) has emphasized the consideration of open access journals at par with print journals four years back. In its Executive Council meeting conducted during 24-25 October 2003, MLA has provided a Statement on Publication in Electronic Journals. The Statement purports that "the electronic journal is a viable and credible mode of scholarly publication. When departments evaluate scholarly publications for purposes of hiring, reappointment, tenure, and promotion, the standing of an electronic journal should be judged according to the same criteria used for a print journal. These criteria include the journal's peer review policy, its rate of acceptance, the nature of its editorial board and publisher, and its general profile in the field it covers". The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada study (2006) on open access journals (Chan, Groen, & Guédon 2006) also supports the views of MLA (2003) Statement on Publication in Electronic Journals.

The field of Criminology/criminal justice has started recognizing the importance of open access and as per the directory of open access journals (2008), there are 13 such journals. A recent article by Scherlen and Robinson (2008) emphasizes the importance of open access journals in criminology/criminal justice and argues that it will ensure social justice. Scherlen and Robinson (2008) in their article *Open Access to Criminal Justice Scholarship: A Matter of Social Justice*, points that "criminal justice scholarship disseminated through the traditional journal subscription model is not consistent with social justice and adoption of "open access" principles in publishing benefits both authors and readers through broader and more egalitarian dissemination of criminal justice literature". Scherlen and Robinsons' (2008) article reflects the ethos of the International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences (IJCJS) and IJCJS strongly support the views of these two authors, and justifies that open access is the only way to ensure social justice in the dissemination of criminal justice scholarship and literature.

This issue has five articles and one book review. Due to various unforeseen circumstances there was a long delay in publishing this issue, nevertheless, this issue comes with a new website, new editorial policy and revamped editorial board. The first article titled, 'School

Violence and Social Control Theory: An Evaluation of the Columbine Massacre' is written by Michael Pittaro. This paper provides a brief analysis of past, present, and emerging research in reference to school violence. Later the paper talks about the impact on the American Criminal Justice System and Social Policy, Pre-Columbine Research in reference to school violence, explanation of current Criminal Justice responses to school violence, application of Hirschi's Theory to School Violence, ill-fated attempts to prevent school violence, threat assessment policies etc. The paper ends with a conclusion that explains the present situation and what measures to be taken by the Local and state law, educating the public and providing awareness to school officials, teachers, students, parents, and community members is the most important step to be taken.

The article entitled, 'Juvenile Deviant Behavior in an Immigrant Bangladeshi Community: Exploring the Nature and Contributing Factors', utilizes the findings from a qualitative field work conducted in an immigrant Bangladeshi community in New York City to understand the nature of juvenile deviant and/or delinquent behavior as well as factors that contribute to this behavior. The study indicates that Bangladeshi juveniles are not involved in any serious law violations. The paper identifies the protective factors that are grounded in the community's cultural values that may work as a shield against youth becoming delinquent in this community. This study emphasizes the importance of generational and cultural conflict as contributing to perceptions of deviance among the youth of this immigrant group, and tries to understand the deviant behavior of youths of an immigrant community within the framework of current criminological theories. The findings of this research may motivate the native Bangladeshi scholars to undertake research pertaining both to juvenile delinquency and other criminal behavior in Bangladesh.

The article entitled 'Protection of Witnesses – A Comparative Study of the Indian and the United States Position' starts with referring to *Jessica Lal's Case* and points out that in such cases very few witnesses remain courageous due to lack of Witness protection in India. In USA there is a very effective Witness Protection Programmes thus witness could remain courageous. A witness is considered to be a major clue which helps the judiciary to arrive at a conclusion in a particular case but in India where the problem of witness turning hostile is very

common, the Judiciary fails to give proper judgment and the criminals escape. The article first gives a brief introduction to the problem of hostile witness, Position of Law in India, provisions that were there in ancient India, provisions in statutes, reports of the Law commission of India, Laws developed to face the situation in India which is compared with position of Law in United States and their efficient Witness protection programmes. The article concludes with a note, that, India has a long way to go as far as the "Witness Protection" laws are concerned and the article ends with various recommendations to develop laws to safeguard the witness.

Julie C. Abril's article study, 'Cultural Conflict and Crime: Violations of Native American Indian Cultural Values' was conducted at the University of California, Irvine in the Department of Criminology, Law and Society. In this paper the author examines violations of Indian cultural values among two distinct cultural groups residing within one Native American Indian reservation. The fragile nature of Indian cultures continues to be threatened in ways that may not be amenable to federal legislative protections but may be protected by tribal law. In the paper the author talks about the method adopted for the survey, such as, measures, analysis of the survey data, interview data with details on how they responded to each questions, theoretical implications, practical and policy implications. This study was done on Indians and non-Indians who live within the same rural tribal reservation community and it found out that they have different perceptions of violations of Indian cultural values. The behaviors of the non-Indian are having a negative effect on the local tribal group. These could be stopped using legislative mechanisms already in place within the tribe's judicial code.

The last article of this issue by Amzat et al on Print media and crime aims to examine relationship between crime, the press and fear of crime, amount and sources of crime stories and pattern of crime news. The authors systematically analyze how crime is reported in the press and factors associated with publishing of crime news. The paper concludes by emphasizing that print media play a vital role in shaping public perception of risk-factors in criminality, crimes, stimulate public awareness and impact on the criminal justice system. This paper undoubtedly unveils some of the major lapses in crime reporting of print media.

The book entitled 'A Fair Hearing? Ethnic minorities in the criminal courts' authored by Stephen Shute, Roger Hood and Florence Seemungal is reviewed by Ali Adnan Feel. This book

is based on questionnaire research, which investigated the experiences of ethnic minority, as well as, white, defendants and witnesses in the English criminal courts between 2000 and 2002. It is the first large-scale study in Britain to have concentrated on how minority ethnic defendants and witnesses experienced their treatment, as compared with white defendants and witnesses. This is a well informed and well argued book that should be welcomed as a substantial contribution to scholarship on English Criminal Justice System. The reviewer opines that this book is an extremely useful resource for anyone engaged in the study of Criminal Courts of England. It lays the foundations for future scholarly inquiry into unanswered questions and emerging ones.

Back again to the issue of open access; IJCJS strongly believes in open access, however, it slightly differs from some of the open access journals. IJCJS do not charge the authors and IJCJS believes that “*author pay models*” are against social justice. The articles of IJCJS are distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike License](#). Also, IJCJS retains the copyright, but permits authors for free use of the articles for themselves and they have to seek permission only if they publish the work in whole with a third party (For e.g., Publishing IJCJS articles as book chapters or in some other commercial medium). All articles of IJCJS undergo rigorous peer review like the traditional print journals and articles are reviewed by two or more experts. IJCJS believes that knowledge is open to all and it should be freely accessible and hence makes all content freely available to all researchers worldwide, ensuring maximum dissemination of content through its website <http://www.ijcjs.co.nr>. I conclude with great pride, to inform that, IJCJS has emerged as one of the leading open access criminology/criminal justice journals, since its inception in 2006.

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