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AND SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA.
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'PENAL REFORMS & REFORMATIVE JUSTICE'
AT CHANDIGARH ON 3rd DECEMBER, 2013.**

Hon'ble Chief Justice – Shri Sanjay Kaul; Home Secretary – Shri Anil Kumar; Deputy Director, Institution of Correctional Administration – Dr. Upneet Lalli; Mr. Justice Iqbal Singh, distinguished guests and press in this International Seminar on 'Penal Reforms & Reformative Justice'.

I feel honoured to be present among you at this function – in this rare combination of ideologicistic thinkers, pragmatics and institutional players – all looking at integration of the restorative justice framework with our penal system.

Traditionally, criminal justice system is primarily aimed at awarding punishment for crime. Real accountability emanates from ensuring that offender understands the impact of his behaviour and in urging the offender to take steps to put things right. In modern day and age, there is an imperative need to also look at the needs of victims seriously.

From this emanates the idea of restorative justice – an idea that tells us that in the 21st Century, there has to be a fundamental change in the way we view and respond to criminal behaviour as also the manner in which we relate to those who commit such acts. For if do not do so and continue to look at crime and punishment in the classical mannerisms, how do we take the next step in our evolutionary world. A step where we start looking at crime as injury rather than wrongdoing alone and justice as healing than punishment alone. Our quest should not only take us to economic relief and rehabilitation of crime and conflict but outcomes must ensure that victims and offenders gain a sense of closure.

The most pressing need, of course, is to correct the ideas of 'restorative justice' with the existing ideas prevailing in contemporary society with a view to exemplify and connect them to existing teachers, beliefs and values. For example, in India, 'paschatap' and 'prayaschit' i.e. penance and purification of one's body and soul through penance has run through our thoughts and ethos for thousands of years. Cumulation of these ideas with the modern day ideas of restorative justice in different civilization is the way forward.

I once again extend my felicitations to all participants for a meaningful discussion on this issue that is socially relevant, legal incisive and ethically of utmost importance to the entire humanity.