

# Beyond Confession and Profiling: A Stage-Sensitive Behavioural–Legal Framework for Reliable Criminal-Justice Knowledge

Tanishka Pawar

*Centre for Crime Sciences and Forensic Intelligence*

**Abstract**—Criminal justice institutions rely on different forms of knowledge throughout investigation, adjudication and correction. However, investigative interviewing, confession evidence, behavioural profiling and correctional rehabilitation are often studied independently, limiting understanding of how they collectively contribute to reliable criminal-justice decision-making.

This article argues that no single investigative technique or evidentiary source can produce a complete understanding of criminal behaviour or establish criminal responsibility in isolation. Instead, reliable criminal-justice knowledge emerges through a stage-sensitive process in which information is generated, evaluated and applied according to distinct legal standards and institutional objectives. Adopting a doctrinal-conceptual methodology, the article synthesises Indian constitutional principles, statutory provisions, judicial precedents and interdisciplinary scholarship from forensic psychology, criminology and correctional studies.

It proposes the Reliable Criminal-Justice Knowledge Framework, comprising four interconnected stages: Information Reliability, Confession Evaluation, Behavioural Inference, and Correctional and Reintegration Assessment. Each stage performs a distinct institutional function while remaining subject to constitutional safeguards, evidentiary standards and professional accountability. The article concludes that criminal-justice decision-making becomes more accurate, fair and evidence-based when investigative interviewing prioritises reliable information over confessions, confession evidence is carefully corroborated, behavioural profiling remains an investigative aid rather than proof of guilt, and correctional assessment focuses on rehabilitation and reintegration. Although conceptual in nature, the proposed framework provides an interdisciplinary model capable of strengthening investigative integrity, procedural fairness and long-term criminal-justice outcomes.

**Index Terms**—Investigative Interviewing; Confession Evidence; Behavioural Profiling; Criminal Justice; Behavioural Inference; Desistance; Reintegration; India.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of any criminal justice system depends upon the quality of information used to make legal decisions. From the first investigative interview to post-release supervision, criminal justice institutions continuously generate, evaluate and apply different forms of knowledge regarding alleged and convicted offenders. Investigators seek accurate factual information capable of directing enquiries, courts determine criminal liability through legally admissible evidence, and correctional authorities assess rehabilitation and reintegration. Although these processes are institutionally connected, they perform different legal functions and are governed by different evidentiary standards. Treating them as interchangeable risks compromising investigative reliability, procedural fairness and public confidence in the administration of justice.

Contemporary criminal justice has undergone a significant transformation from confession-oriented investigation to evidence-based decision-making. Research in forensic psychology demonstrates that investigative interviews produce more reliable information when they emphasise rapport, open-ended questioning and corroboration rather than coercion or psychological pressure. Similarly, legal scholarship recognises that confession evidence cannot be accepted merely because it appears incriminating; its admissibility depends upon voluntariness, constitutional safeguards and consistency with independent evidence. Behavioural profiling has also evolved from intuitive offender descriptions into a

structured investigative technique that assists investigators in generating hypotheses but cannot establish criminal responsibility. At the correctional stage, criminological research increasingly emphasises rehabilitation, desistance and reintegration rather than punishment alone, recognising that behavioural change is a gradual process shaped by both individual and institutional factors.

Despite these developments, the existing literature generally examines investigative interviewing, confession evidence, behavioural profiling and correctional rehabilitation as separate areas of study. Criminal procedure focuses primarily on evidentiary rules governing confessions and constitutional protections. Forensic psychology examines interviewing techniques, memory and false confessions. Criminology analyses offending patterns, behavioural change and desistance, while correctional scholarship evaluates rehabilitation and reintegration. Although each discipline contributes valuable insights, limited attention has been devoted to explaining how these different forms of knowledge interact throughout the criminal justice process. This fragmentation creates uncertainty regarding the institutional role, evidentiary value and legal limitations of each source of knowledge.

This article addresses that conceptual gap by proposing a stage-sensitive framework for reliable criminal-justice knowledge. The central research question is:

How can criminal justice institutions integrate investigative interviewing, confession evidence, behavioural profiling and correctional assessment to produce reliable criminal-justice knowledge while preserving constitutional safeguards and evidentiary integrity?

The article argues that reliable criminal-justice knowledge is not derived from any single investigative technique or evidentiary source. Instead, it develops progressively through four interconnected stages. Investigative interviewing generates reliable factual information; confession evaluation determines the legality and evidentiary reliability of admissions; behavioural profiling supports investigative reasoning without constituting proof of guilt; and correctional assessment evaluates rehabilitation and reintegration independently of criminal liability. Each stage therefore performs a distinct institutional function

while contributing to the overall integrity of criminal justice decision-making.

Methodologically, the article adopts a doctrinal-conceptual approach by examining constitutional provisions, statutory law, judicial decisions and interdisciplinary academic literature. Rather than proposing a predictive model of criminal behaviour, it develops an analytical framework that clarifies how different forms of knowledge should be generated, evaluated and applied within the criminal justice process. By integrating legal doctrine with behavioural science while maintaining clear institutional boundaries, the article seeks to contribute to more reliable investigations, fairer adjudication and evidence-informed correctional practice.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

This article adopts a doctrinal-conceptual research methodology. The doctrinal component examines the constitutional, statutory and judicial framework governing investigative interviewing, confession evidence and criminal procedure in India, with particular reference to Article 20(3) of the Constitution of India, the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 (BSA), the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS), and relevant judicial precedents. The conceptual component integrates interdisciplinary scholarship from forensic psychology, criminology and correctional studies to analyse how different forms of knowledge are generated and applied throughout the criminal justice process.

Rather than measuring investigative outcomes through empirical research, this article develops an analytical framework that explains the institutional role of investigative interviewing, confession evaluation, behavioural profiling and correctional assessment. The objective is not to propose a new theory of criminal behaviour but to clarify how these distinct forms of knowledge should interact while remaining subject to constitutional safeguards and evidentiary standards.

The scope of the article is confined to four interconnected stages of criminal-justice decision-making: the generation of reliable investigative information, the legal evaluation of confession evidence, behavioural inference during investigation and correctional assessment following conviction. Issues relating to sentencing policy, forensic science

and comparative criminal procedure fall outside the scope of this discussion except where necessary to explain the proposed framework.

### III. INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEWING: THE FOUNDATION OF RELIABLE CRIMINAL-JUSTICE KNOWLEDGE

Investigative interviewing is the first stage in the production of criminal-justice knowledge because every subsequent decision depends upon the accuracy of information obtained during investigation. Whether investigators interview victims, witnesses or suspects, the objective is not merely to collect statements but to obtain reliable information capable of independent verification. Modern criminal justice therefore distinguishes investigative interviewing from traditional interrogation, recognising that the quality of information is more important than the extraction of confessions.

Historically, many investigative systems adopted accusatorial interrogation techniques that sought admissions of guilt through confrontation and psychological pressure. Although these methods occasionally produced confessions, they also increased the risk of inaccurate statements, false admissions and investigative bias. Advances in forensic psychology have since demonstrated that coercive questioning may distort memory, increase suggestibility and undermine the reliability of information. Consequently, contemporary investigative interviewing prioritises communication, rapport and evidence-based questioning rather than confrontation.

Reliable interviews are characterised by three essential principles: accuracy, neutrality and corroboration. Accuracy requires investigators to obtain complete and truthful accounts without influencing the interviewee's recollection. Neutrality demands that investigators remain open to multiple explanations instead of pursuing evidence solely supporting an existing theory. Corroboration requires that information obtained during interviews be verified through forensic evidence, documentary material, digital records or independent witness testimony. Together, these principles reduce the likelihood of investigative error while strengthening the evidentiary value of information collected during the investigative process.

Open-ended questioning represents one of the most effective methods for improving information reliability. Allowing interviewees to describe events in their own words reduces interviewer influence and encourages more detailed recollection. Investigators may subsequently clarify inconsistencies through focused questioning, but they should avoid leading questions that introduce information not previously mentioned by the interviewee. Similarly, professional rapport-building promotes cooperation without compromising impartiality. Respectful communication improves information quality while preserving the dignity and legal rights of all participants.

Investigators must also recognise the limitations of human memory. Stress, trauma, fatigue, the passage of time and psychological vulnerability may affect the accuracy of recollection even where an individual intends to provide truthful information. Inconsistencies should therefore not automatically be interpreted as deception. Instead, investigators should evaluate statements alongside objective evidence and continuously reassess investigative hypotheses as new information becomes available. Such an approach minimises confirmation bias and reinforces the principle that criminal investigations are evidence-led rather than confession-led.

Within the Indian legal framework, investigative interviewing is constrained by constitutional and statutory safeguards designed to protect individual liberty and procedural fairness. Article 20(3) of the Constitution prohibits compelled self-incrimination, ensuring that investigative authorities cannot obtain evidence through coercion or compulsion. The BSA and BNSS further regulate investigative procedures by maintaining safeguards governing confession evidence, documentation and admissibility. These protections demonstrate that legality and investigative effectiveness are complementary objectives rather than competing interests.

Within the Reliable Criminal-Justice Knowledge Framework, investigative interviewing constitutes the first institutional stage because it produces the factual foundation upon which subsequent legal decisions depend. Information obtained during interviews does not establish guilt; instead, it directs investigation, identifies relevant evidence and assists investigators in reconstructing events. Its reliability therefore depends

not on whether it supports a particular theory but on whether it can withstand independent verification and legal scrutiny.

#### IV. CONFESSION EVIDENCE: VOLUNTARINESS, ADMISSIBILITY AND RELIABILITY

Confession evidence occupies a unique position within criminal justice because it appears to provide direct evidence of an accused person's involvement in an offence. However, modern criminal jurisprudence recognises that a confession cannot be regarded as inherently reliable merely because it contains an admission of guilt. Its evidentiary value depends upon the circumstances in which it was obtained, its compliance with constitutional and statutory safeguards, and its consistency with independent evidence. Consequently, contemporary criminal justice systems evaluate confessions through the principles of voluntariness, legality and corroboration rather than treating them as conclusive proof.

The principle of voluntariness forms the foundation of confession law. A confession is legally meaningful only when it is made freely, without coercion, threat, inducement or improper influence. This principle protects individual autonomy while simultaneously improving evidentiary reliability. Statements extracted through unlawful pressure may reflect fear, confusion or psychological vulnerability rather than genuine admissions of guilt. For this reason, constitutional democracies reject investigative practices that prioritise confusion over fairness.

The Indian legal framework strongly reinforces this position. Article 20(3) of the Constitution of India guarantees that no person accused of an offence shall be compelled to be a witness against themselves, establishing the constitutional privilege against self-incrimination. This safeguard ensures that criminal investigations remain evidence-based and that convictions are not secured through coercive investigative methods. Complementing this constitutional protection, the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 (BSA) continues the principle that confessions obtained through inducement, threat or promise lack evidentiary legitimacy. The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS) similarly regulates investigative procedure by prescribing

safeguards intended to preserve fairness and accountability during criminal investigations.

Judicial decisions have consistently emphasised that voluntariness is both a constitutional requirement and an indicator of evidentiary reliability. In *State of Bombay v. Kathi Kalu Oghad* (1961), the Supreme Court clarified the scope of the privilege against self-incrimination under Article 20(3), distinguishing compelled testimonial evidence from other forms of evidence. Similarly, in *Nandini Satpathy v. P.L. Dani* (1978), the Court affirmed that the right against self-incrimination extends beyond the courtroom and protects individuals during police investigation, reinforcing the principle that investigative questioning must respect constitutional guarantees. These decisions illustrate that procedural safeguards are designed not only to protect individual rights but also to preserve the integrity of criminal investigations.

Psychological research further demonstrates why legal safeguards remain indispensable. Studies on false confessions establish that innocent individuals may admit to offences they did not commit because of prolonged questioning, intimidation, fatigue, fear of perceived consequences or heightened psychological vulnerability. Researchers generally identify three categories of false confessions: voluntary false confessions, where individuals confess without external pressure; compliant false confessions, where admissions are made to escape stressful interrogation despite private knowledge of innocence; and internalised false confessions, where suggestive questioning leads individuals to believe they may actually have committed the offence. Although these categories arise through different psychological mechanisms, each demonstrates that a confession alone cannot be equated with factual truth.

Accordingly, corroboration remains an essential safeguard. A confession should always be evaluated alongside forensic evidence, witness testimony, documentary material and digital records capable of independently confirming its accuracy. Corroboration not only strengthens the prosecution's case but also reduces the risk of wrongful conviction arising from unreliable admissions. Modern criminal investigations therefore treat confessions as one evidentiary component within a broader process of fact verification rather than as self-sufficient proof.

Within the Reliable Criminal-Justice Knowledge Framework, confession evaluation constitutes the

second stage of knowledge production. Unlike investigative interviewing, which generates factual information, this stage determines whether admissions satisfy the legal requirements of voluntariness, admissibility and reliability. Its institutional purpose is therefore evaluative rather than investigative. A confession may assist judicial decision-making only when it complies with constitutional safeguards, statutory requirements and evidentiary standards. Even then, it cannot replace the prosecution's obligation to establish guilt beyond reasonable doubt through the totality of admissible evidence.

The framework therefore identifies four principles governing the use of confession evidence:

- **Voluntariness** – the confession must be free from coercion, inducement or improper influence.
- **Legality** – the confession must comply with constitutional and statutory requirements governing admissibility.
- **Reliability** – the contents of the confession must be internally coherent and consistent with surrounding circumstances.
- **Corroboration** – the confession should be supported by independent evidence capable of verifying its truthfulness.

By distinguishing investigative interviewing from confession evaluation, the framework clarifies that information gathering and evidentiary assessment perform different institutional functions. Reliable criminal justice depends not upon obtaining confessions but upon ensuring that any confession admitted into evidence satisfies constitutional protections and withstands objective verification. This distinction strengthens procedural fairness while preserving the integrity of criminal adjudication.

#### V. BEHAVIOURAL PROFILING: AN INVESTIGATIVE TOOL, NOT EVIDENCE OF GUILT

Behavioural profiling occupies an uncertain position within criminal investigations. While it has become increasingly prominent in both investigative practice and popular discourse, its legal significance is often misunderstood. Profiling does not identify an offender, establish criminal responsibility or satisfy the evidentiary burden required for conviction. Its value lies in assisting investigators to organise available

information, generate investigative hypotheses and prioritise lines of enquiry. Recognising this distinction is essential to preserving both investigative effectiveness and procedural fairness.

Modern behavioural profiling has moved beyond intuitive assumptions regarding offender personality. Contemporary approaches rely upon behavioural evidence such as victim selection, crime scene characteristics, modus operandi and post-offence conduct to infer possible behavioural patterns. These inferences assist investigators in understanding how an offence may have been committed and what investigative avenues merit further examination. However, behavioural patterns are inherently probabilistic rather than deterministic. Similar offences may be committed by individuals with different motivations, while offenders sharing similar characteristics may behave in entirely different ways. Behavioural inference therefore provides investigative direction rather than factual proof.

The principal limitation of profiling is that it requires interpretation rather than observation. Unlike forensic evidence, which may directly establish a factual connection between an accused person and an offence, behavioural analysis depends upon professional judgement. Such judgement is vulnerable to confirmation bias, particularly where investigators become committed to an early investigative theory. Once a behavioural profile is treated as an established fact rather than a working hypothesis, contradictory evidence may receive insufficient attention, increasing the risk of investigative error. Consequently, behavioural profiles should remain open to continuous revision as additional evidence emerges.

This distinction assumes particular importance during judicial proceedings. Courts determine criminal liability on the basis of legally admissible evidence, not behavioural prediction. Although expert behavioural analysis may occasionally assist in explaining investigative decisions or contextualising particular patterns of offending, it cannot independently establish identity or guilt. Allowing behavioural inference to substitute for evidentiary proof would undermine the presumption of innocence and dilute the prosecution's burden of proving guilt beyond reasonable doubt. Profiling therefore performs a legitimate investigative function only when its evidentiary limitations are clearly recognised.

Within the Reliable Criminal-Justice Knowledge Framework, behavioural profiling constitutes the third stage of knowledge production. Unlike investigative interviewing, which generates information, or confession evaluation, which determines evidentiary reliability, profiling supports investigative reasoning. Its institutional purpose is analytical rather than adjudicative. Behavioural observations assist investigators in refining investigative hypotheses, but they acquire legal significance only when supported by independently admissible evidence. The framework therefore preserves a clear distinction between behavioural inference and legal proof, ensuring that investigative efficiency does not compromise constitutional safeguards or evidentiary integrity.

## VI. CORRECTIONAL KNOWLEDGE, DESISTANCE AND REINTEGRATION

The criminal justice process does not end with conviction. Once guilt has been determined, the institutional focus shifts from establishing criminal responsibility to reducing future offending and facilitating lawful reintegration into society. Consequently, correctional institutions generate a distinct form of criminal-justice knowledge that differs from the information relied upon during investigation or adjudication. Rather than reconstructing past events, correctional assessment evaluates present behaviour, rehabilitation needs and the prospects of successful reintegration.

This shift reflects the growing influence of desistance theory, which challenges the assumption that criminal behaviour is a permanent characteristic of an individual. Contemporary criminological research suggests that offending often declines through gradual behavioural change supported by stable employment, education, family relationships and community integration. Rehabilitation is therefore understood as a continuous process rather than a single institutional intervention. Correctional programmes contribute to this process by addressing criminogenic needs, promoting accountability and equipping offenders with skills necessary for lawful participation in society.

However, rehabilitation should not be equated with certainty regarding future behaviour. Correctional authorities frequently employ structured risk assessments to assist decisions relating to

classification, parole and post-release supervision. While such assessments improve consistency and resource allocation, they remain predictive tools rather than definitive measures of future conduct. Human behaviour is influenced by changing personal and social circumstances, making absolute prediction impossible. Risk assessment should therefore inform professional judgement without replacing it.

Successful reintegration also depends upon factors extending beyond correctional institutions. Individuals released from custody frequently encounter barriers including unemployment, social stigma and limited access to housing or education. These challenges may increase the likelihood of recidivism despite genuine efforts toward rehabilitation. Effective correctional policy therefore requires cooperation between correctional authorities, probation services, community organisations and social institutions to support long-term reintegration rather than focusing exclusively on institutional custody.

Within the Reliable Criminal-Justice Knowledge Framework, correctional assessment represents the final stage of criminal-justice knowledge. Unlike the preceding stages, which address investigation and adjudication, this stage evaluates behavioural change after conviction. Its institutional purpose is prospective rather than retrospective. The knowledge produced at this stage informs rehabilitation strategies, parole decisions and correctional policy without altering judicial findings of criminal liability.

By distinguishing correctional assessment from investigative and adjudicative functions, the framework reinforces an important principle: criminal justice should not be evaluated solely by its ability to secure convictions, but also by its capacity to reduce reoffending and support lawful reintegration. Reliable criminal-justice knowledge therefore extends beyond the courtroom and continues throughout the correctional process, where behavioural change and community reintegration become the primary measures of institutional effectiveness.

## VII. THE RELIABLE CRIMINAL-JUSTICE KNOWLEDGE FRAMEWORK

The preceding analysis demonstrates that criminal-justice institutions generate different forms of knowledge at different stages of the criminal process. Investigative interviewing seeks reliable factual

information; confession evaluation determines whether admissions satisfy constitutional and evidentiary requirements; behavioural profiling supports investigative reasoning; and correctional assessment evaluates rehabilitation and reintegration. Although these processes are interconnected, they pursue distinct institutional objectives and operate under different legal standards. Confusing these functions risks undermining both investigative accuracy and procedural fairness.

To address this conceptual gap, this article proposes the Reliable Criminal-Justice Knowledge Framework. Rather than treating criminal-justice knowledge as a single category, the framework recognises that knowledge evolves progressively throughout the criminal process. Information produced at one stage informs—but does not determine—decision-making at the next. Consequently, each stage should be assessed according to its own institutional purpose, evidentiary standards and legal safeguards.

Figure 1 illustrates the proposed framework.  
Reliable Criminal-Justice Knowledge Framework

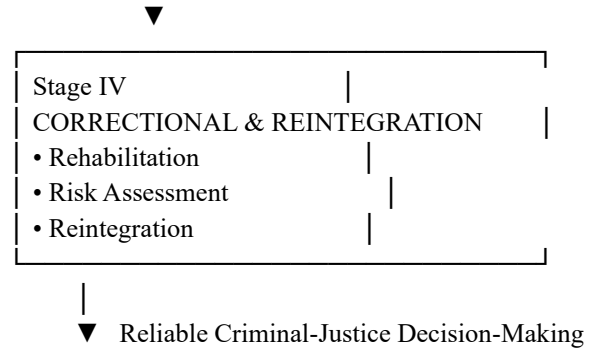
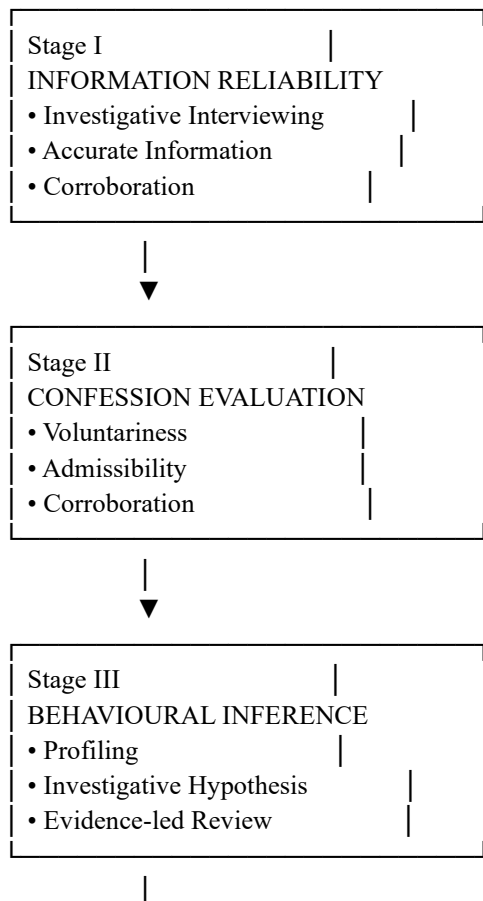


FIGURE 1

The framework is organised into four sequential stages.

Stage I – Information Reliability focuses on investigative interviewing. The objective is to obtain accurate, complete and verifiable information through lawful interviewing practices. At this stage, information remains provisional and must be tested against independent evidence before influencing legal decisions.

Stage II – Confession Evaluation examines whether admissions satisfy the requirements of voluntariness, legality and corroboration. A confession strengthens an investigation only when obtained in accordance with constitutional safeguards and supported by other admissible evidence. It cannot independently establish criminal liability.

Stage III – Behavioural Inference recognises behavioural profiling as an investigative aid rather than a method of proving guilt. Behavioural analysis assists investigators in developing and refining hypotheses but must remain subordinate to objective evidence. Investigative assumptions should be revised whenever emerging evidence contradicts earlier behavioural interpretations.

Stage IV – Correctional and Reintegration Assessment shifts the institutional focus from determining guilt to reducing future offending. Knowledge generated during this stage supports rehabilitation, parole and reintegration while remaining independent of judicial findings regarding criminal responsibility. Its value lies in informing correctional policy and improving long-term public safety rather than revisiting questions already determined by the courts.

The principal contribution of the framework is the clear separation between investigative knowledge, evidentiary knowledge and correctional knowledge. Each serves a different institutional purpose and should therefore be evaluated according to different legal and professional standards. Reliable criminal-justice decision-making depends not upon any single investigative technique but upon the appropriate interaction of these distinct forms of knowledge within their respective institutional boundaries.

The framework also has practical significance. It encourages investigators to prioritise reliable information over confessions, reminds courts that behavioural inference cannot substitute for admissible evidence, and recognises rehabilitation as an essential component of criminal justice rather than a postscript to conviction. By integrating these stages into a single analytical model, the framework offers a structured approach to improving investigative integrity, evidentiary reliability and correctional effectiveness without compromising constitutional safeguards.

#### VIII. IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The Reliable Criminal-Justice Knowledge Framework offers a structured approach to understanding how different forms of knowledge contribute to criminal justice decision-making without conflating their institutional functions. By distinguishing investigative interviewing, confession evaluation, behavioural inference and correctional assessment, the framework reinforces the principle that each stage serves a different legal purpose and should therefore be governed by different evidentiary standards. This distinction promotes both investigative efficiency and procedural fairness while reducing the risk of relying excessively on any single source of information.

For investigators, the framework encourages a transition from confession-oriented practices to information-oriented investigations. Reliable interviewing, systematic corroboration and continuous reassessment of investigative hypotheses improve the quality of evidence available for prosecution while reducing the likelihood of investigative bias. Behavioural profiling, when used as a hypothesis-generating tool rather than a substitute for evidence, further strengthens investigative decision-making by directing enquiries without compromising objectivity.

The framework also has implications for judicial decision-making. Courts frequently encounter different forms of behavioural and investigative information during criminal proceedings. The proposed model reinforces that legal findings must remain grounded in constitutionally obtained and independently corroborated evidence. Behavioural analysis and investigative assessments may assist the fact-finding process, but they cannot replace the prosecution's burden of proving guilt beyond reasonable doubt. Maintaining this distinction preserves the presumption of innocence and strengthens public confidence in the administration of justice.

From a correctional perspective, the framework emphasises that criminal justice extends beyond conviction. Rehabilitation, risk management and reintegration are essential components of long-term public safety. By recognising correctional assessment as a distinct stage of knowledge production, the framework highlights the importance of evidence-based rehabilitation while acknowledging that future behaviour can never be predicted with complete certainty.

Despite these contributions, the framework has certain limitations. First, the study is conceptual and doctrinal rather than empirical. The proposed model has not been tested through field research or quantitative analysis and therefore requires empirical validation across different investigative and correctional settings. Secondly, the discussion is confined primarily to the Indian criminal justice system. While many of the underlying principles may possess broader relevance, their practical application will depend upon the constitutional and procedural framework of individual jurisdictions. Finally, human behaviour remains inherently complex. Neither behavioural profiling nor structured risk assessment can eliminate uncertainty, making continuous review and institutional accountability essential to the responsible use of criminal-justice knowledge.

#### IX. CONCLUSION

Reliable criminal-justice decision-making depends upon more than the collection of evidence or the obtaining of confessions. It requires an institutional process in which different forms of knowledge are generated, evaluated and applied according to their

respective legal functions and evidentiary limitations. Investigative interviewing, confession evidence, behavioural profiling and correctional assessment each contribute to this process, but none can independently provide a complete or conclusive understanding of criminal responsibility.

This article has argued that existing scholarship frequently examines these components in isolation, overlooking the manner in which they interact throughout the criminal justice process. To address this gap, it proposed the Reliable Criminal-Justice Knowledge Framework, a four-stage model integrating investigative interviewing, confession evaluation, behavioural inference and correctional assessment within a single analytical structure. The framework demonstrates that reliable criminal-justice knowledge develops progressively, with each stage informing the next while remaining subject to distinct constitutional safeguards and institutional objectives.

The framework's principal contribution lies in distinguishing investigative knowledge from evidentiary and correctional knowledge. This distinction strengthens investigative integrity by encouraging information-led investigations, protects procedural fairness by reaffirming the constitutional limits on confession evidence and behavioural inference, and recognises rehabilitation as an essential component of effective criminal justice policy. Rather than viewing conviction as the endpoint of criminal justice, the framework positions reintegration and desistance as equally important measures of institutional success.

Although conceptual in nature, the framework provides a foundation for future empirical research examining how investigative practices, evidentiary standards and correctional interventions interact in practice. By promoting a stage-sensitive understanding of criminal-justice knowledge, it offers a coherent model capable of supporting more accurate investigations, fairer adjudication and more effective rehabilitation within the Indian criminal justice system.

## REFERENCES

- [1] American Psychological Association, "Criminal profiling: The reality behind the myth," 2004. [Online]. Available: <https://www.apa.org/monitor/julaug04/criminal>
- [2] American Psychological Association, "Psychological sleuths," 2004. [Online]. Available: <https://www.apa.org/monitor/julaug04/profiling>
- [3] Government of India, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023.
- [4] Government of India, Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023.
- [5] Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Criminal profiling," n.d. [Online]. Available: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/criminal-profiling>
- [6] D. Canter, "Offender profiling and criminal differentiation," *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 23–46, 2000.
- [7] D. Canter, "Offender profiling and investigative psychology," *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 1–15, 2004.
- [8] D. Canter, "From offender profiling to investigative psychology," n.d. [Online]. Available: <https://www.davidcanter.com/investigative-psychology/from-op-to-ip/>
- [9] College of Policing, "Investigative interviewing," n.d. [Online]. Available: <https://www.college.police.uk/app/investigation/investigative-interviewing/investigative-interviewing>
- [10] College of Policing, "Investigation process," n.d. [Online]. Available: <https://www.college.police.uk/app/investigation/investigation-process>
- [11] Constitution of India, 1950.
- [12] Federal Bureau of Investigation, High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group: Interrogation—A Review of the Science. Washington, DC, USA: FBI, 2016.
- [13] Federal Bureau of Investigation, High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group: Interrogation Best Practices. Washington, DC, USA: FBI, 2016.
- [14] G. H. Gudjonsson, *The Psychology of Interrogations and Confessions: A Handbook*. Chichester, U.K.: John Wiley & Sons, 2003.
- [15] S. M. Kassin, S. A. Drizin, T. Grisso, G. H. Gudjonsson, R. A. Leo, and A. D. Redlich, "Police-induced confessions: Risk factors and recommendations," *Law and Human Behavior*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 3–38, 2010.

- [16] S. Maruna, *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild Their Lives*. Washington, DC, USA: American Psychological Association, 2001.
- [17] S. Maruna and M. Shadd, "Redemption scripts and desistance from crime," in *After Crime and Punishment: Pathways to Offender Reintegration*, S. Maruna and R. Immarigeon, Eds. Cullompton, U.K.: Willan Publishing, 2004.
- [18] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *The Growth of Incarceration in the United States: Exploring Causes and Consequences*. Washington, DC, USA: National Academies Press, 2014.
- [19] National Institute of Justice, *Recidivism Is a Core Criminal Justice Concern*. Washington, DC, USA: U.S. Department of Justice, 2014.
- [20] National Institute of Justice, *Desistance from Crime: Implications for Research, Policy and Practice*. Washington, DC, USA: U.S. Department of Justice, 2021.
- [21] National Institute of Justice, "Recidivism," n.d. [Online]. Available: <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/corrections/recidivism>
- [22] Nandini Satpathy v. P. L. Dani, (1978) 2 SCC 424.
- [23] R. J. Sampson and J. H. Laub, *Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life*. Cambridge, MA, USA: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- [24] *State of Bombay v. Kathi Kalu Oghad*, AIR 1961 SC 1808.
- [25] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Introductory Handbook on the Prevention of Recidivism and the Social Reintegration of Offenders*. Vienna, Austria: United Nations, 2018.
- [26] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Manual on Investigative Interviewing for Criminal Investigation*. Vienna, Austria: United Nations, 2024.
- [27] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Investigative interviewing," n.d. [Online]. Available: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/justice-and-prison-reform/investigative-interviewing.html>
- [28] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Social reintegration of offenders," n.d. [Online]. Available: [https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/cjat\\_eng/4\\_Social\\_Reintegration.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/cjat_eng/4_Social_Reintegration.pdf)

| Source                                                         | Source Type                | Main Argument                                                                     | Article Section            | Useful Idea                                       | Limitation                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| UNODC Investigative Interviewing                               | International Guideline    | Ethical, information-gathering interviews improve investigation quality.          | Investigative Interviewing | Rapport-based interviewing increases reliability. | General guidance; not India-specific.                       |
| UNODC Manual on Investigative Interviewing (2024)              | UN Manual                  | Structured interviewing reduces coercion and improves evidence quality.           | Investigative Interviewing | Emphasises planning, recording and rapport.       | Practical manual rather than empirical research.            |
| College of Policing – Investigative Interviewing               | Professional Guidance      | Investigative interviews should seek reliable information rather than admissions. | Investigative Interviewing | Explains PEACE-style interviewing principles.     | Designed for UK policing context.                           |
| FBI HIG – <i>Interrogation: A Review of the Science</i> (2016) | Government Research Report | Scientific interviewing is more reliable than coercive interrogation.             | Investigative Interviewing | Supports evidence-based interviewing.             | Focuses primarily on national security and law enforcement. |

| Source                                               | Source Type              | Main Argument                                                                             | Article Section            | Useful Idea                                   | Limitation                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FBI HIG – <i>Interrogation Best Practices</i> (2016) | Government Report        | Rapport-based interviewing improves information accuracy.                                 | Investigative Interviewing | Practical recommendations for investigators.  | Limited discussion of legal admissibility.                       |
| Kassin et al. (2010)                                 | Journal Article          | False confessions can result from coercive interrogation and psychological vulnerability. | False Confessions          | Explains risk and factors and safeguards.     | Primarily based on Western research.                             |
| Gudjonsson (2003)                                    | Book                     | Psychological pressure can influence suspects to confess falsely.                         | False Confessions          | Foundational work on confession psychology.   | Focuses more on psychology than legal doctrine.                  |
| Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023                    | Legislation              | Regulates admissibility of evidence and confession-related provisions.                    | False Confessions          | Provides statutory safeguards in India.       | Requires judicial interpretation in practice.                    |
| Constitution of India – Article 20(3)                | Constitutional Provision | Protects individuals against self-incrimination.                                          | False Confessions          | Constitutional safeguard for accused persons. | General constitutional protection; application depends on facts. |
| BNSS, 2023                                           | Legislation              | Prescribes procedural safeguards during criminal investigations.                          | False Confessions          | Supports fairness during investigation.       | Effectiveness depends on implementation.                         |

| Source                                                                    | Source Type          | Main Argument                                                                                                        | Article Section       | Useful Idea                                                        | Limitation                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| David Canter – <i>Offender Profiling and Investigative Psychology</i>     | Journal Article      | Profiling assists investigations by analysing behavioural patterns rather than identifying offenders with certainty. | Behavioural Profiling | Explains investigative psychology as an evidence-based discipline. | Behavioural inferences are probabilistic. |
| David Canter – <i>From Offender Profiling to Investigative Psychology</i> | Professional Article | Investigative psychology provides a broader scientific basis than traditional profiling.                             | Behavioural Profiling | Emphasises systematic behavioural analysis.                        | Conceptual rather than empirical.         |
| APA – <i>Criminal Profiling: The Reality Behind the Myth</i>              | Professional Article | Profiling is useful only when supported by evidence.                                                                 | Behavioural Profiling | Corrects common misconceptions about profiling.                    | Introductory overview.                    |

| Source                                                                            | Source Type          | Main Argument                                                                             | Article Section             | Useful Idea                                     | Limitation                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| APA – <i>Psychological Sleuths</i>                                                | Professional Article | Psychology contributes to investigations through behavioural analysis and research.       | Behavioural Profiling       | Demonstrates interdisciplinary collaboration.   | Broad overview rather than detailed analysis.            |
| Britannica – <i>Criminal Profiling</i>                                            | Encyclopaedia        | Explains the concept and development of criminal profiling.                               | Behavioural Profiling       | Useful background information.                  | Secondary reference source.                              |
| National Institute of Justice – <i>Recidivism</i>                                 | Government Report    | Recidivism is a key indicator of correctional effectiveness.                              | Prison Systems & Recidivism | Links rehabilitation to public safety.          | Primarily focused on the United States.                  |
| National Institute of Justice – <i>Desistance from Crime</i>                      | Government Research  | Desistance is a gradual process influenced by social and personal factors.                | Desistance & Reintegration  | Highlights long-term behavioural change.        | Context-specific policy focus.                           |
| UNODC – <i>Prevention of Recidivism and the Social Reintegration of Offenders</i> | UN Handbook          | Reintegration reduces repeat offending through structured support.                        | Desistance & Reintegration  | International guidance on rehabilitation.       | General framework rather than jurisdiction-specific law. |
| National Academies – <i>The Growth of Incarceration in the United States</i>      | Research Report      | Excessive incarceration alone does not improve long-term public safety.                   | Prison Systems              | Examines institutional effects of imprisonment. | Focuses on the U.S. correctional system.                 |
| Maruna – <i>Making Good</i>                                                       | Book                 | Successful desistance is linked to identity transformation and social reintegration.      | Desistance & Reintegration  | Foundational theory of offender reform.         | Qualitative emphasis.                                    |
| Maruna & Shadd – <i>Redemption Scripts and Desistance</i>                         | Book Chapter         | Positive self-identity supports long-term desistance.                                     | Desistance & Reintegration  | Explains "redemption scripts".                  | Focuses on narrative analysis.                           |
| Sampson & Laub – <i>Crime in the Making</i>                                       | Book                 | Stable employment, family and social bonds reduce offending across the life course.       | Desistance & Reintegration  | Introduces age-graded social control theory.    | Longitudinal theory requiring contextual application.    |
| <i>State of Bombay v. Kathi Kalu Oghad</i>                                        | Supreme Court Case   | Clarifies the constitutional scope of protection against self-incrimination.              | Indian Legal Framework      | Landmark precedent on confession evidence.      | Limited to issues before the Court.                      |
| <i>Nandini Satpathy v. P.L. Dani</i>                                              | Supreme Court Case   | Reinforces the accused's right against compelled self-incrimination during investigation. | Indian Legal Framework      | Strengthens procedural safeguards.              | Fact-specific judicial interpretation.                   |

| Source                               | Source Type              | Main Argument                                     | Article Section        | Useful Idea                                               | Limitation                                                  |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Constitution of India, Article 20(3) | Constitutional Provision | Guarantees protection against self-incrimination. | Indian Legal Framework | Forms the constitutional basis for confession safeguards. | Requires judicial interpretation for practical application. |

Reliable Criminal-Justice Knowledge Framework.  
The framework identifies four sequential stages in the production of reliable criminal-justice knowledge. Each stage addresses a distinct institutional question,

highlights the risks associated with inadequate practice, and demonstrates its contribution to fair, evidence-based and effective criminal justice.  
Source: Author's own compilation.

| Stage                                                | Core Question                                                     | Risk if ignored                                                                               | Criminal Justice Value                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stage I – Information Reliability                    | How was information obtained?                                     | Coercion, contamination, unreliable witness or suspect accounts, investigative bias           | Improves the accuracy and reliability of criminal investigations through ethical, evidence-based interviewing.                       |
| Stage II – Confession Evaluation                     | Is the confession voluntary and independently corroborated?       | False confessions, wrongful convictions, violations of constitutional safeguards              | Protects fair trial rights by ensuring confession evidence is voluntary, lawful and supported by independent evidence.               |
| Stage III – Behavioural Inference                    | What can behaviour reasonably suggest, and what can it not prove? | Confirmation bias, suspect tunnel vision, over-reliance on profiling                          | Assists investigators in developing evidence-based hypotheses while recognising that profiling cannot independently establish guilt. |
| Stage IV – Correctional and Reintegration Assessment | How can rehabilitation reduce future offending?                   | Recidivism, failed rehabilitation, poor reintegration outcomes, increased public safety risks | Promotes rehabilitation, desistance and successful reintegration to enhance long-term public safety and reduce repeat offending.     |