

Explain the nature and importance of Criminology in detail? (2016)

1) What is criminology?

In general, criminology is the study of crime and criminals. Criminology aims to analyze criminal behaviour, with the object of reforming the conduct of individuals that society disapproves of.

Criminology is the scientific study of crime as a social phenomenon or of criminals and their behaviours and family conditions.

Mariam-webster Dictionary

~~That~~, criminology is an academic field that scientifically studies crime, its causes, and social responses. It examines individual criminal behaviour within social and cultural contexts, as well as the broader aspects of Punishments and Penology. Criminology borrows heavily from other sciences, including biology (genetical makeup of a criminal), psychology (thinking process of a criminal mind), psychiatry (mental stability and inclination of a criminal), philosophy, general medicine etc. The foremost Pioneer of contemporary,

and particularly American, criminology, Edwin Sutherland defined criminology in his seminal book "Principles of Criminology" (1939) as the study of crime as a social phenomenon, encompassing lawmaking, lawbreaking, and responses to rule violations in a unified sequence of interactions.

iii) Scholarly definition and Argument in criminology: In the realm of criminology, several scholars have put forth distinct viewpoints:

- **George Wilber** believed that understanding behaviours that go against societal norms is not something that can be easily explained or understood through a purely scientific approach. He pointed out that nature of crime varies significantly from one place to another and from one time period to another. Crime isn't consistent, and it takes on different forms and meanings in different contexts. Wilber argued that for something to be considered scientific, it needs to be based on principles that hold true universally, meaning they are true no matter where or when you are. In the case of crime, Wilber believed that these universally valid principles do not apply well to the heterogeneous nature of crime.

• **Max Weber** criminology, which falls within the realm of sociology, merely observes human behaviour related to crime but does not offer practical solutions like other scientific fields do. For instance, when ^{people} ~~one~~ studies something in traditional sciences, they often aim to find solutions to address problems. However, according to Weber, criminology just study criminal behaviour without offering concrete ways to deal with it. He thought that this lack of practical remedies made makes it difficult to consider criminology as a full-fledged science.

• **Herman Mannheim** belonged to a school of thought that believed that criminology does not have well-defined scientific methods of its own. Instead, it tends to use methods from other fields. He criticized criminology for not having a clear and unique way of doing its research.

• **Ellenberger** responded to Mannheim's argument by making a comparison. He mentioned that even in natural science like botany and zoology, scientists do not ^{only} study things that are unique ~~and~~ or one-of-a-kind. But still these fields are considered valid sciences. Ellenberger pointed out that criminology, similar to medicine, is built

upon various scientific disciplines, just as medicine draws from areas like anatomy, physiology, physics, and chemistry, criminology is rooted in social sciences. Both criminology and medicine have practical purposes. In essence, Ellenberger argued that just because criminology does not solely focus on unique phenomena does not mean it's not a legitimate science, especially considering its practical applications.

2) Essence and scope of Criminology

2.1) overview of criminology - An interdisciplinary field: criminology as an interdisciplinary field involves scholars and practitioners from various social and natural sciences. It examines the multifaceted concept of crime, criminal behaviour, and its broader societal implications.

2.2) Evolution of criminology from sociology to distinct disciplines: Initially rooted in sociology, criminology later established itself as a distinct professional field. The emergence of criminology schools and dedicated departments contributed to its evolution.

2.3) Core objectives - Formulating testable theories through research:

A primary objective of Criminology is to develop theories that can be rigorously tested. Through systematic research, Criminologists aim to understand the causes of criminal behaviour, drawing insights from diverse disciplines like psychology, economics, anthropology, and more.

2.4) Subdivisions of Criminology

Exploring Diverse Areas: Criminology

is divided into various subdivisions that delve into specific aspects. These include Penology (study of Prisons), bio-Criminology (analysis of biological factors in crime), feminist Criminology (focus on women and crime), and criminalistics (forensic science and crime detection).

2.5) Biological factors in focus - Genetics, Hormones, Brain

Chemistry: Research within

Criminology has extensively explored the role of biological factors in criminal behaviour.

Genetics, hormones, brain chemistry, and even diet have been studied as potential contributors to criminal tendencies.

2.6) Historical Impact on Law &

Justice System: Throughout history, criminology has played a pivotal role in shaping criminal law and justice system. Findings from criminological research have informed lawmakers, judges, prosecutors, & correctional officers, leading to enhanced understanding of crime, criminals, and improved strategies for handling them.

2.7) Beyond crime - Exploring

related Topics: criminologists examine a range of issues beyond crime itself. victimology, the study of victims of crime, is a key area. Additionally, juvenile delinquency, the media's portrayal of crime, and its potential links to pornography are subjects of criminological exploration.

3) Subject matter of Criminology

Criminology is a subjected, therefore, deals with:

- a) criminal acts;
- b) The criminal;
- c) It indirectly deals with the victim of the crime;
- d) Crime causation and theory;
- e) Crime prevention and detection of potential offenders; and
- f) The efficacy of the criminal justice system.

4) Significance of studying Criminology

criminology, the comprehensive study of crime, criminal behaviour, and the criminal justice system, holds immense importance due to its multifaceted contributions and implications. Delving into various dimensions, criminology plays a pivotal role in shaping societal understanding and responses to criminal activities.

4.1) Understanding & Mitigating

Crime: Criminology serves

as a tool for comprehending, controlling, & ultimately reducing crime. By investigating the causes of criminal behaviour, it equips society with insights to develop policies & strategies aimed at crime reduction. **For instance,** consider a society, with a rising trend of youth involvement in petty theft. Through criminological research, it might be revealed that socio-economic disparities and lack of after-school programs contribute to this behaviour. Armed with/having this knowledge, local authorities can allocate resources to address these root causes.

4.2) Insights into Criminal

Mindsets: A fundamental

aspect of criminology is its exploration of criminal attitudes and motivations. This

understanding aids in resource allocation for combating corruption effectively. **For instance,** consider a case where an individual is involved in embezzlement within a corporate setting. Criminology's study of criminal mindsets allows investigators to delve into the psychological factors that drive such white collar crimes. By uncovering motivations rooted in financial stress, personal greed, or workplace dynamics, criminology guides authorities in directing resources toward preventive measures, such as enhance financial oversight, ethics training, and employee support programs.

4.3) Rehabilitation strategies:

The study of criminology also offers a background for professions and an opportunity for social work

Donald Taft

Beyond addressing crime, criminology contributes practical approaches to criminal rehabilitation so that they can be integrated back into society. Besides, it provides a platform to professionals to actively engage in the rehabilitation process, fostering positive change within the criminal justice system. **For instance,** consider a case where an individual convicted of a

non-violent crime undergoes a rehabilitation program that employs evidence-based techniques from criminology. This approach addresses the underlying factors contributing to the criminal behaviour, such as addiction or lack of education, through counseling, skill-building workshops, and monitored reintegration into the community. As a result, the individual gains the necessary tools to lead a law-abiding life, contributing positively to society and reducing the likelihood of recidivism.

4.4) Unveiling influences on criminal behaviour:

Criminology investigates the intricate interplay of factors that influence criminal behaviour. Through meticulous analysis of local and international data, it unravels the dynamics behind rising crime rates and delves into the specifics of 'who, what, when, where, and why' regarding criminal offenses.

"Understanding the complex web of factors that contribute to criminal behaviour is essential for crafting effective prevention and intervention strategies."

Dr. Smith

for instance, consider a study conducted by criminologists analyzing the sudden surge

in juvenile delinquency within a particular community. Through thorough examination of socioeconomic conditions, family structures, peer influences, and educational opportunities, the study revealed a combination of factors leading to the increase in criminal behaviour among young individuals. By pinpointing these influences, criminology enables lawmakers to make targeted interventions, such as ~~after~~ after-school programs and mentorship initiatives.

4.5) Holistic Exploration:

Criminology involves a comprehensive exploration of various elements related to crime and the legal system. From crime detection and prevention to court proceedings, legal system, incarceration, and rehabilitation programs, criminology purview is wide-ranging. Moreover, throughout history, criminology has played a transformative role in shaping criminal law and justice system. Findings from criminological research have informed legislators, judges, lawyers, and correctional officials, leading to a more nuanced understanding of crime and improved strategies for its management.

4.6) Broadening Horizons:

Criminology delves into diverse areas beyond the realm

of crime itself. Victimology, which examines the experiences of crime victims, receives special attention. Criminologists also delve into topics like juvenile delinquency and the media portrayal of crime, including its potential connection to pornography.

For instance, consider a study undertaken by criminologists exploring the effects of media portrayal of crime on societal perceptions. By analyzing how media narrating influence public opinion and potentially shape attitudes towards criminality, the study sheds light on the intricate relationship between media and crime. This example highlights how criminology's exploration extends to understand the broader societal implications of crime related issues.

"Scrutinizing the media's role in shaping perceptions of criminal behavior is crucial for a balanced understanding of societal dynamics."

Dr. Martinez

4.7) Criminology Addressing Contemporary Challenges

Criminology remains responsive to evolving challenges. In the digital age, cybercrimes, like online pornography, drug trafficking, and cyber

fraud demand fresh strategies. Criminologists consistently adjust to these challenges by engaging in scientific research to counter emerging manifestations of criminal behaviour.

Conclusion

In conclusion, criminology is a dynamic and interdisciplinary field that looks into criminal behaviour, justice system, and how they effect society. It explores many things that shape crime, using different subjects like sociology, psychology, and law to figure out how things work. Criminology helps alot as it helps us understand, control, and lessen crime using smart methods backed by proof. Through the rehabilitation proces, it tries to change and help people who break the law so they can fit into the society. By participating in lawmaking, shaping the justice system, and addressing the larger societal issues, criminology contributes toⁱⁿ building a safer and more just society. It keeps changing to deal with new challenges, showing it is serious about making better rules, and effective solutions.