

Criminology

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Q: Crime is a form of social deviance, its manifestations vary from society to society and culture to culture. Comment on this statement.

In order to establish the notion that crime is a form of social deviance, one ought to understand the two respective concepts. Crime is an act that is punishable by law, while deviance relates to the incompliance of an individual in terms of the norms, standards, and expectations of a society. It would not be incorrect to state that crime indeed, is a form of social deviance since it not only violates the law but also societal norms simultaneously.

However, nothing is black and white; as concepts may be interpreted differently under different cultures, societies or circumstances. Not all forms of deviance are crimes and not all crimes are deviance. The cultural context and social contexts are of utmost importance in this regard. For instance, actions that are considered criminal in one society might not be considered as such, in another society.

The ways in which crime is manifested in various cultures and societies is naturally distinct since every society and culture has

its own norms and values. So to say that an action is criminal largely depends on the society it is being performed in. For example; drinking is a crime in Pakistan, while it is something one does, to celebrate in the United States for instance. These are two identical actions which are almost paradoxical in their interpretation according to their respective society. This shows how crimes may vary according to the society they are being committed in.

Another way in which the manifestation of crimes may vary in different societies is the nature of crimes. The perception of crimes vary. For instance, in an economically deprived society, crimes that would more likely take place may relate to material goods that are of some value. These crimes could include theft- especially petty theft- fraud, embezzlement etc. Similarly, in a conservative society, individuals may engage in moral crimes like adultery, and alcohol consumption, as an act of rebellion against the "conservative expectations" of that society.

Therefore, crime is a form of deviance, and in different societies and cultures, it differs in its nature as well as interpretation. For an act to be criminal, the laws of the society it is being committed in, are the only thing that make it a crime or not a crime.