

Crime is a form of social deviance, it's manifestations vary from society to society and culture to culture. Comment this statement.

CRIME:

The Oxford English Dictionary defines crime as:

“An action or omission which constitutes an offence and is punishable by law”

CRIME AS A FORM OF SOCIAL DEVIANCE:

Social deviance refers to a behaviour that is ^{offensive} found in a social ^{group} crime. Crime is a form of social deviance as crime and deviance violate the norms and the laws of societies, respectively. These two concepts are often used interchangeably but are basically distinct. In some cases, they can overlap. For instance, deviant behaviours can be regarded as criminal. In short, crime is an act of violating the laws of the society as enacted by the government. Criminal laws are documented in constitutions of societies and anyone found contravening them shall be liable to a fine, imprisonment or death penalty in some countries such as Botswana.

MANIFESTATIONS OF CRIME VARY FROM SOCIETY TO SOCIETY:

Crime is always punishable. Its manifestations vary from society to society and culture to culture.

→ For instance, some societies may accept **marijuana** while others criminalize it.

Similarly, social norms and values are different in each country.

→ Example: Today, in **Scotland**, there are a range of laws that respect different forms of sexuality and relationships. Such as common law and civil partnerships (between unmarried, cohabiting couples or same-sex couples) are afforded the same legal protections as heterosexual married couples. However, in **UK** it used to be a criminal offence.

Homosexuality was de-criminalized in Scotland with the **Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1980**.

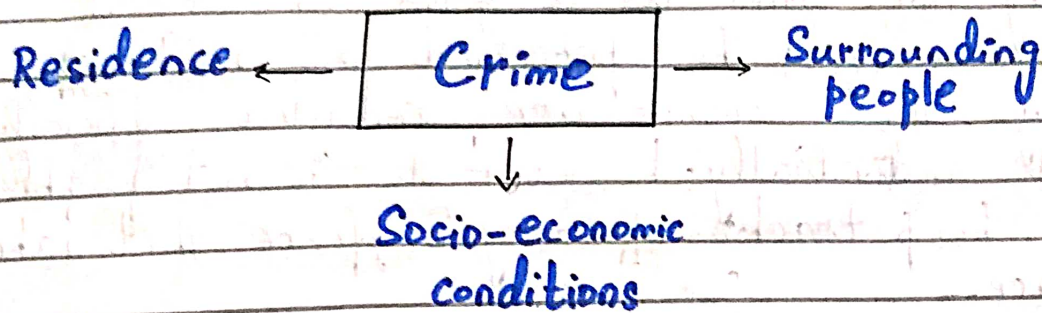
In some **African countries**, it may be a norm for under 18 years teenager to be married whereas in **US**, it is considered a crime.

CRIME VARIES FROM CULTURE TO CULTURE:

Crime also varies according to the cultural values and norms prevalent in the society. Criminologists stress that ^{the} people that someone sees on a regular basis, such as peers, family, and neighborhood residents, convey how one is supposed to relate to illegal

behaviour.

These groups establish norms. How someone reacts to verbal threats, responds to economic distress, and adherence to formal legal mandates are symptoms of the system of norms that govern that person's daily life. (Berg and Stewart, 2009).



These three elements come together to form a unique subculture influencing the individual and his chances to turn to crime.

Example: Violence committed by gangs being influenced by surrounding culture is a crime of social deviance. In **Canada**, 20% of homicides in 2020 were related to gang violence and organized crime (Government of Canada, 2021)

→ Honor killing among immigrants from **South Asia** and **West Asia** are a form of violence in which a female, usually a sister or a daughter, is murdered by men of her own family for the perceived act of bringing dishonor to her family. It usually occurs

when she is accused of associating with a man outside of her community.

CONCLUSION:

In a nutshell, it is difficult to define crime and deviance due to the societal changes that occur over time. These changes are subjective to different areas and what one culture defines as deviant another may not. Crime as a form of social deviance can be perceived in different ways. These crimes are recorded officially and individually; however, it is not possible to keep track of every offence that takes place.