

Question: Crime is a form of social deviance and its manifestation varies from culture to culture and society to society. Discuss/Comment.

Answer:

Introduction:-

From the beginning of civilization and society, humans have devised certain set of rules, laws and norms to keep their society and surroundings peaceful and stable.

These set of laws, norms and rules have changed significantly after the dispersal of human and the formation of new cultures and societies. The definition, understanding and interpretation of both crime and deviance

have also changed with these happenings in time. However, crime has mostly remained a

social form of deviance but its understanding, interpretation and implementation remains subjective

to culture and society. With the change of parameters of society and culture, minimization, maximization or disappearance of actions or behaviors as crime or criminal offenses have varied.

Definition and Explanation of Crime and Social Deviance:

A crime is widely defined as an act, omission or behaviour prohibited by the

law of the land. It means that a crime, that is a punishable offense, will be considered a crime if it goes against a law that has been made by the authority of that particular land having a culture and society. On the other hand, social deviance is a behavior deemed as deviant, non-conforming or going against the point-of-view of a dominant culture of a society, meaning thereby that it may not be a punishable offense all the time, and may also vary on changing a culture or a society.

Crime is Social Deviance:

Keeping in view the definitions of crime and social deviance, one can argue that crime is mostly a form of social deviance. One can also say that crime is in fact a severe form of social deviance in most of the cases. As social deviance is a form of non-conformity or non-compliance with given standards set by the society; crime is also considered the same. Laws are made by the state or a political setup of a country to counter extreme levels of deviances called crime.

Although this definition of crime does not apply universally, it covers most of the scenarios. Murder, for example, is a crime in almost all the cultures and

societies. It is also considered bad in the society; therefore, rules are devised to prevent its happening. However, not all of the murders are considered bad in the given society. Honour Killing, for example, may not be considered a crime neither a deviance in some parts of the world, but it is considered crime and deviance in most ~~others~~ of the other societies.

As the norms of society and academia suggest that we should go with what ~~a~~ majority ~~and~~ says, we can still argue that crime is a form of social deviance.

According to American sociologist William Graham Sumner, Deviation is a violation of cultural or social norms, or codified law. Crime is also a violation of the formally codified law; therefore, crime is deviance. To sum the discussion up, it can be said that crime is a form of social deviance that is against the standard set of norms, rules and formally codified law of the country or land.

Variation in Manifestation of Crime as Social Deviance in Different Cultures and Societies:

Although crime and social deviance have a fixed concept, their manifestation and interpretation varies in different societies and cultures around the world. The severity of crime and it being accepted as a social deviance

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in a society is greatly impacted by many factors such as culture, religion, modernity, education and peace. These factors, not only alter the definition of crime as a social deviance but also cause crime and criminal to become a social hero.

Culture, being a factor, causes changes in the manifestation of crime as a social deviance. An example in this regard, can be the comparison ^{between} of overall culture of a society of United States and the ~~compared~~ culture of Pakistani society. In Pakistani society and culture, calling someone black publicly is neither a deviance, nor a criminal offense. On the other hand, calling some one black or fat publicly is a criminal offense ^{in US} meaning thereby, a crime.

Another factor of the society that changes with the change of society is religion. Religion is also a part of the culture and influences both society and culture in shaping their views. Mostly, the change of dominant religion in two different societies causes difference in manifestation and interpretation of crime as a deviance or a crime itself. On comparing two societies of ^{the} US and Pakistan, the manifestation of killing someone for the sake of protection of religion is poles apart. In Pakistani society, the criminal ~~might~~ will be considered a hero and also not a deviant while in the US society with different dominant

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religion, the person will be considered a heinous criminal and will be subjected to punishment by law.

With the change of societies, level of modernization and development changes. More developed and less developed societies have a difference in manifestation of crime as a social deviance. One such example can be the comparison of society and culture of Norway and that of less developed countries such as Afghanistan or Syria. In Norway, burning of religious scriptures might not be considered a crime and neither a deviance; However, in Afghanistan, it will be considered both social deviance and a heinous crime.

Education is also a factor that affects societies and cultures as well as it changes from society to society. A society with less education, awareness and openness will consider crimes as deviance or not based on the type and quality of education. For example, a backward or traditional society with less or no concept of modern education is likely to consider crimes based on caste, race or gender not a form of deviance. On the other hand, education prevalent societies will consider them both crime and social or cultural deviance most of the times.

Societies having peace and developed structures of education, culture and modernity are likely to accept most of the universal crimes as

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both crimes and social deviance. Conversely, societies having prevalent wars, social disorder, or poverty might consider some of the heinous crimes such as communal violence, target killings and robberies as good things and not the crimes. These societies and cultures not only appreciate and celebrate these crimes but also make the people heroes of their societies.

Conclusion:-

In the end, it can be ~~argued~~ ^{concluded} that based on the previous evidences and instances that crime indeed is a social deviance in most of the cultures of the world. However, the interpretation and manifestation of crime as social deviance differs based on changes in culture and societies around the world. Some societies and cultures consider one crime as a severe form of social deviance while others consider it according to the norms assigned by culture and society.