

Q: What is the meaning of anomie  
Discuss Robert Merton's Theory of  
Anomie in detail.

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### Introduction:

The word **Anomie** is a sociological word. This theory of Anomie was proposed by **Robert Merton** after **Great depression** in America. It was the time when the focus of people was achieving the money. Everyone was striving for the money.

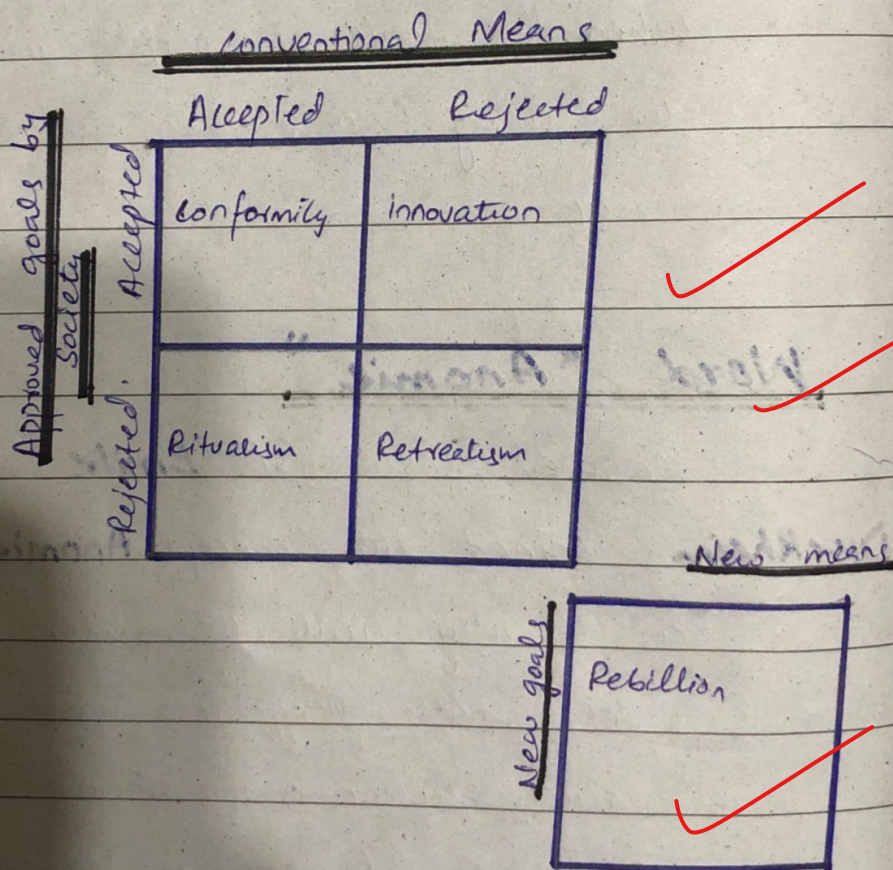
### Word "Anomie"

A renowned sociologist **Emile Durkheim** coined this concept. **Anomie** means a society without norms. When a society starts giving less importance to their values, culture and norms, that condition is called **anomie**. People feel less accountable so they are more prone to show deviant behaviours. Such societies are more vulnerable to criminal activities.



# Theory of Anomie:

Theory of Anomie was proposed by Robert King Merton which is also known as Strain theory. The theory highlights the goals set by the society and the means which people use to achieve success.



This theory comprised of two major aspects.

## 1- Institutional Means:

It includes the ways through



which are achieve his desire-goal  
 Some people use the means which  
 are adherence with social norms  
 whereas others are considered as  
 deviant.

## II- Goals set by Society:

As people  
 use to live together so they are  
 binded or expected to follow  
 the rules of society. Sometimes  
 society set the criteria for success.

**For instance,** getting a government  
 job, passing a competitive exam or  
 having lot of money. Individual  
 differences do exist, there are  
 people who accept them and others  
 reject. So the theory is basically  
 based on all those categories.

Following are the major division of  
 society on the basis of acceptance  
 and rejection of goals and conventional



means to gain them.

## (i) Conformity:

Conformity refers to condition in which the individual pursue the goal which is accepted by society. For example a student decide to do CSS and the institution means should be the hard work to crack the CSS.

## According of Brown and

**Esbenson:** They are the people who accept the cultural goals and adhere with moral institutional means to achieve success.

## (ii) Innovation:

In Innovation, people are willing to achieve goal set by society but not with conventional means. **For instance:**

If culturally set goal is to be wealthy and due to lack of opportunities available to that man. He start pursuing unconventional means to get money like robbery, theft, gambling.



### (iii) Ritualism:

It is the state in which the people behave like they don't want success but their behavior is inclined with social ~~behavior~~ values. They show no happiness either they will receive grade A or D. **Brown and Esbensen** contends this by arguing. The students show the ritual behavior, as they get grades like A and B and the teacher also show no different he continues to come and teach. ~~Similarly~~ a beaver create just following the rules and showing no enthusiasm and energy to come up with new ideas underlies in ritualism. It is safe living as it evade the failure.

### (iv) Retreatism:

According to ~~Robert Merton~~ Robert Merton, there is specific category of people who rejected the goals set by society and ~~are~~ their behavior is also not inclined with the institution means. **Brown and**



**Esbenson** illustrated that these people ~~are~~ neither ~~part~~ pursue cultural goals nor uses conventional means. Such kind of people are more likely to show deviant behavior. There are more involved in criminal activities.

### (V) Rebellion:

This is the final group proposed by Merton. They came up with the new goals and with their new way to achieve that specific goal. Sometimes the revolutionary peoples are of underclass in this category.

### Criticism on Anomie Theory:

This theory has been criticized by due to following reasons.

i- This theory oversimplified the complex phenomenon of cause behind the crime.

ii- There is not always the societal goals which force the people to show deviant behavior.



III- This theory was proposed without providing any recommendation and some authors believe that the theory is incomplete if it failed to provide suggested measures.

IV- It completely ignores the biological and other factors as human is a complex organism.

V- White collar crimes and crimes committed by privilege people are being ignored.

### Conclusion:

This theory through light on how social disparity and cultural expectations can produce a criminal behavior. This theory was only based on economic and material things. Psychological aspects and biological aspects are being ignored. As some times peer criminal behavior of people are results of emotional breakdown and not due to economic stress or social issue.

content and answer is fine  
satisfactory

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