

Q Discuss social disorganization theory. How rapid population growth causes the formation of disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods?

### Introduction:

Social disorganization is a part of social structure theory which linked crime with ecological factors. It explains how a transitional, disorganized neighbourhood become a criminal hotspot. Poverty, social isolation, unemployment, lack of basic needs and ethnic discrimination are some factors which collectively affect social structure of society and leads to disorganization and an increase in crime rate. In the same way rapid population growth with lack of job opportunities and basic life needs produces same effect. As a result, an isolated, deprived and poverty ridden social group develop which then inclined to

do crimes.

## Social Disorganization Theory

⇒ Define:

"It is a branch of social structure theory which focuses the cause of breakdown of inner-city neighbourhoods institutes such as family, school etc."

⇒ Characteristics of Social Disorganization Theory:

Social disorganization theory has following characteristics which explain its links with crime.

### 1. Poverty:

Poverty is one of the major cause for disorganization in the society. Lack of basic needs of life and job opportunities results in the development of an isolated social group. They are deprived of health, education facilities. Moreover the racial and ethnic discrimination further

adds to their miseries of life. Children brought up in these areas feel alienated, and live life full of conflicts.

## 2: Social disorganization:

People living in these neighbourhoods often feel insecure and leave areas. Constant turnover of people in crime ridden areas also leads to disorganization of society because people of different cultural values and ethnicities diffuse in society as a result disorganization occurs. Moreover, affluent people of these communities leave these areas instead of doing something for betterment of society.

## 3. Gang Formation:

Poverty ridden and alienated children deprived of parents' attention produce tendencies towards crime. They observe society and choose what they think is lucrative for them. As a result

they form gangs. Peer influence become dominant and they do what their peers ordered them. These gangs involved in variety of activities, "drug dealing", crime, "theft", and sometimes in "political violence".

#### 4. Criminal Areas:-

As a result of gang formation, and increase in crime, the neighborhood become more crime prone. Stable pockets of crime develop. Social institutions also disorganized. And area become crime ridden with no or little support from external sources and institutions.

#### 5. Lack of cohesiveness:

Lack of cohesiveness among people in these areas also lead to deterioration of social structure. Affluent and educated people instead of doing something for society leave these areas. Then only uneducated, socially isolated people left which leads

further deterioration.

## 6. Transitional areas:

one of the reasons for social disorganization is "constant turnover of people". People from different areas and communities come and go. As a result, different cultural values diffuse in society and societal harmony disintegrates.

## 7. Crime Career:

Children living in deteriorated societies become indulge in criminal activities and become permanent members of criminal gangs. They take crime as a career which is the worst factor which deteriorates society. They also pass these criminal tendencies in next generation.

⇒ The work of "Clifford H. Shaw" and "Henry McKay":

The work of Shaw and McKay holds prime importance in the

field of criminology as it provides foundational basis to social disorganization theory. They searched and collected information that Chicago had developed into "distinct neighbourhoods." These distinct areas were city centre, affluent areas and poverty ridden areas. They identified that affluent areas have low crime rate as compared to city centre, concentric zones.

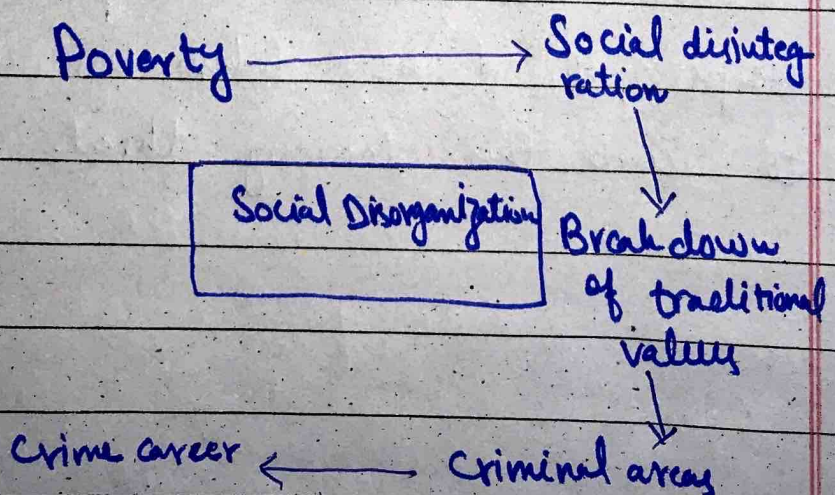
### ⇒ Concentric zones:

Shaw and McKay identified that Chicago had nine distinct concentric zones and these areas are highly transitional areas with high crime rates. They further added that these areas are beset with poorest citizens. The analysis of these zones of city indicated surprisingly stable patterns of criminal activity. They concluded that multiple cultures and diverse values co-exist in these

neighborhoods.

⇒ Population growth and disadvantaged urban neighbourhood:

The uncontrolled population growth without proper implementation on the part of social institutions leads to disorganized neighbourhood. The trajectory of this pathway is same as explained in social disorganization theory. The increase in population growth disrupts the normal economic activities, with more and more people become deprived of jobs which ultimately results in poverty. Poverty is the root cause for disintegration.



So, isolated and deprived people then adopt criminal activities for living which deteriorates societal structure and ultimately leads to disorganization.

### Conclusion:

Social disorganization provide a new direction to understand criminal behaviour and crime origin. This theory provides basis to develop stable communities with equal opportunities available to all. Moreover, the work of Shaw and McKay also strengthened its foundation. Moreover, the modern world including Pakistan is facing rapid population growth which could lead to disorganization and an increase in criminal activities, so concrete and prudent steps should be taken by authorities to curb this looming threat.