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Date: 3 / 10 / 2024 Criminology

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Q: Write a critical note on the increasing importance of Criminology in Pakistan. Also discuss the historical development of criminology as a scientific discipline.

Introduction:

The importance of criminology in Pakistan has increased significantly in recent years due to the rising challenges in law enforcement, crime prevention and the evolving nature of criminal activities.

With the rise of cybercrime, terrorism, human trafficking and other organized crimes, criminology plays a vital role in understanding the causes, patterns and solutions to these issues. The discipline has become essential in aiding law enforcement agencies, policymakers and researchers in addressing the complexities of crime in a modern society.

"In a society like Pakistan where rapid urbanization and digital advancements are occurring, criminology offers vital insights into the sociopolitical dimensions of crime, making it essential for shaping criminal justice system". (Dr. Ahsan Hussain)

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2. Rising Crime Rates and Evolving Criminal Activities :

In Pakistan, Crime rates have been influenced by socioeconomic conditions, political instability and the spread of new forms of crime such as cyberscrime. The rise of internet access and digital technologies has led to a surge in financial fraud, identity theft and cyberscrimes which requires specialized knowledge and tools for detection and prevention.

A 15% increase in street crimes, including muggings and robberies was reported in major urban centers such as Karachi and Lahore in 2024.

3. Criminology's Role in Counterterrorism and Security :

Terrorism remains one of Pakistan's most pressing security challenges. Criminology has gained importance in studying the root causes of radicalization, analyzing terrorist networks and devising strategies for counterterrorism.

By understanding the social, psychological and political factors that lead individuals toward extremism, criminologists can contribute to the development of targeted interventions and policies aimed at preventing terrorism.

4. Law Enforcement Reforms and Criminology :

Criminology has also contributed to the modernization of law enforcement agencies in Pakistan. There is an increasing need for forensic science, crime data analysis and rehabilitation programs for offenders. Criminologist research informs police reforms, judicial decisions and prison management, making the justice system more effective and transparent. The discipline is playing a crucial role in reforming the police force, addressing human rights issues in policing, and improving criminal investigation techniques.

"Criminology is the backbone of law enforcement reforms; it brings scientific analysis to policing strategies and criminal justice"
(Dr. Hassan Abbas)

5. Challenges in Pakistan's Context:

Despite its growing importance, criminology in Pakistan faces several challenges. A lack of specialized education, limited resources for research, and insufficient integration between academic research and practical law enforcement hinders the full utilization of criminological knowledge. Moreover, the cultural and societal attitudes towards crime and punishment in Pakistan often resist reformative approaches, favoring punitive methods instead.

II. Historical Development of Criminology as a Scientific Discipline:

i. Classical Criminology:

Criminology as a scientific discipline has evolved over centuries. Its foundations can be traced back to the 18th century with the emergence of classical criminology which emphasized that individuals have free will to make rational choices, including in their decision to commit crimes.

Thinkers like Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham argued that punishment should be proportionate to the crime and serve as a deterrent.

"The punishment should fit the crime; laws are the conditions under which men unite themselves in society"

(Cesare Beccaria (1764))

ii- Positivist Criminology :

In the late 19th century, positivist criminology gained prominence with a focus on the biological, psychological and social factors that influence criminal behavior. Cesare Lombroso, often considered the father of modern criminology, introduced the idea that criminals may have certain physical and psychological traits that predispose them to crime.

"At the moment of its origin, crime is not the result of free will, but rather the product of biological and social factors that predispose certain individuals towards criminal behavior"

(Cesare Lombroso)
(1876, Criminal Man)

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Sociological Criminology :

In the 20th Century, the study of crime expanded further with the development of sociological criminology, which examines how social structures, relationships and environments contribute to criminal behavior. The Chicago School of Criminology, for example, emphasized the role of urban environments and social disorganization in fostering crime. Theories such as strain theory, labeling theory and social learning theory emerged during this time, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of crime.

iv. Modern Criminology :

Today, criminology is an interdisciplinary field that incorporates insights from sociology, psychology, law, economics and political science. It addresses various aspects of crime, from causes and consequences to prevention and rehabilitation.

With advancements in technology, criminology now includes specialized areas such as cybercrime, forensic psychology and criminal justice reforms.

"Crime is learned behavior through interaction with others within a process of communication"

(Edwin H. Sutherland)

(1939, Principles of Criminology)

Conclusion:

The increasing importance of criminology in Pakistan is undeniable, given the country's evolving crime landscape. While the discipline has made significant strides in addressing various forms of crime, there is still a need for more robust research, education and integration with law enforcement practices. As criminology continues to evolve globally, its role in Pakistan will become even more critical in ensuring the safety and security of its citizens.

