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Explain the concept of crime as a social problem. How does the perception of crime as a social problem vary across different societies?

Ans

The debate of good and bad, divine and evil, and truth and false, dates back to ages. Human history is full of such explanations and their condemnations, but the questions still persists. Crime is one out of those questions. Generally crime is defined as;

"An act that violates the statute and causes harm to any individual or society."

It is a general definition that highlights the relationship between the society and an individual. Now, the question arises that "how crime is a social problem?" The answer of this part of question is present in the definition, as it violates the law and causes harm to society in general or individual in specific. Further connection of crime and its role as a social problem is elaborated as:

**It challenges the writ of State:**

State being the guardian of the people, like a family, sets some rules for its citizen. These rules and laws are designed for the proper functioning of the state. In such an atmosphere, when an individual violates the rules he directly challenges the system of the state and causes disruption in

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the functioning of government and therefore a social problem is encountered in the form of functional disorders.

### Disrespects the norms of a society:

It is a well settled principle, that laws are mostly formed from the most appealing norms and customs of a society. Almost 80% of law or common law countries is derived from the customs. Here when one commits a crime, he violates these laws and, therefore disrespects a norm or custom of a society.

### Impacts socio-economic conditions:

Mostly urban areas are in the control of a notorious crime called "street crime". Such kind of crimes fulfill the true definition of social problem as they cause monetary loss to an individual and a negative impact of the society is also inflicted to him.

### Strained relations and increasing isolationist tendencies:

Increase in crime in a society, increases strained relationships and promotes isolationist tendencies. There exists a trust deficit among people living in such societies. Therefore it is evident that crime is a social problem, but the concept of crime as social problem vary across different societies.

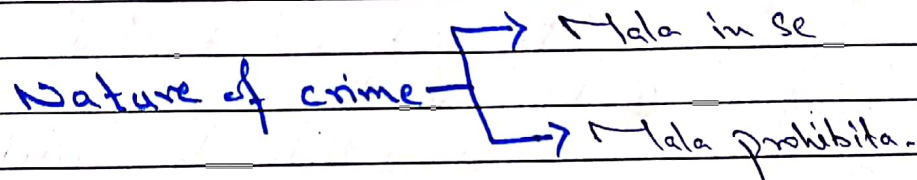


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## Concept of crime as a social problem vary Society to Society:

As discussed in first part of the answer, crime violates a specified statute or law and that law is almost 80% derived from customs. Now, in one society it would be a crime, a social problem but not in another. This can be understood better with the concept of "nature of crime", defined below:



### Mala in se:

Such type of crimes are heinous and criminal in its nature in any kind of situation and society, their commission would be thought and perceived by a common man, an act of crime.

Examples: Murder, Rape and Robbery.

### Mala prohibita:

Act is not criminal or heinous by nature, but is prohibited as there exists any law for it. Such type of criminal acts are usually designed for the maintenance of a society.

Examples: Spitting in public place, Ban on polygamy etc.

The concept that crime as a social problem vary Society to society applies to the "mala prohibita" crimes. Such

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type of crimes are found in various societies. For example the law of Pakistan, derived from Shariah and Sunnah, allows polygamy, but its neighbour country considers it a crime. Furthermore the gay marriages being legal in western countries are illegal in Muslim countries. It is the state that formulates laws and implement them, as it deems fit.

### The authority entitled to decide social problem:

The authority to decide something a social problem is the society and government of that society. If society finds something against the norms of the society and a threat to society, it would be designated as a social problem.

This shows that definition of crime and its perception as a social problem is purely dependent on the customs of a society. Therefore crime varies society to society.

