

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

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Explain Labelling Theory. Critically elaborate its effects on youth and suggest remedies also.

### Introduction

Labelling theory is a social construction theory in criminology which is given by Howard S Beaker. He was an American sociologist and presented his theory in 1963 in his book 'outsider'. Labelling theory discusses the effect of certain labels by society on the personality of individuals. It significantly affects youth and shapes their ways of life.

### Labelling theory explanation

Labelling theory posits that the behavior of an individual is determined by the way society treats them. Beaker instead of focusing on how crime is committed, he focuses on why crime is being

committed. Individuals from birth try to mold their behavior according to expectations of the society. However, when society gives certain label or title, the person changes his/her personality according to that. These labels can lead one towards crime as well.

### Positive versus Negative Label

The 'label' defines the personality of a person. A negative label can restrain a person to correct himself. Once negative label is given that person will survive with that and remain a criminal.

This negative label hinders to change life for criminals. Whereas, positive labels act as control on individuals, they hampers the chances to become a criminal. Positive labels motivate youth to hold that label and not to do any such thing which can diminish that label.

## Link of theory with other sociologists

✓ The ideas of labelling theory can be traced back to French sociologist Emile Durkheim and American sociologist George Herbert Meads. Labelling theory links with their idea of 'self'. As Meads notes, "A self is constructed and reconstructed by the way society treats their individuals".

## Who defines 'labels'

✓ The label given by society must be decided by someone. Some power distinguishes different actions and then label them as good action or bad action. The power varies on every stage. This powerful party defines rules for other and suppress them. In social society, rich decides these labels for poor class. The powerful male partners define labels and

rules for females. Powerful party dominates weaker by these tools.

### Example of different labels.

Labels also vary by social class. The same act is normal for one class but crime for other class. The actions of elite class are normal but poor's every small act is crime. If kids of elite class, break window glass of neighbours or steal fruits from their orchard, these will consider as juvenile actions. In contrast, same activities by some poor kid will be regarded as "Juvenile Delinquency".

### Inequalities and stigma by labelling

The negative labels are usually associated with 'Blacks'. In American history, Blacks were treated so badly and subjugated because of color. Millions of blacks were killed

For being criminals even when they had no arms. Police captures and accused 'blacks' more than 'whites'. This division on basis of colour impregnate the minds of youth with hatred for society and they indulge in criminal activities.

### Role of Literature in labelling

The works written by 'whites' always depicted themselves as civilized and justify their colonialism by civilizing the uncivilized. They label 'Easterns' as uneducated and 'Africans' as barbaric. 'Heart of Darkness' by Joseph Conrad portrays that African's barbarity converted a white man into barbaric as well. In recent days, they spread these labels by social media. The literature was the best tool because people still follow Western literature as they labelled it as good, civilized and rational.

## Permanence of Labels

The label once given by society hardens with time. A ~~person~~ who is labelled as 'criminal' and he suffered his due punishment. Even after his release from jail, society will continue to label him by past ~~et~~ experience. Such person can never start their life again in good manner. This permanence of ~~label~~ affects the youth and they never find a path to revive a new life.

## Labelling brings new problems

A person labelled as criminal finds it difficult to find an employment. It will lead towards ~~poverty~~ and poverty is a major reason of crime. The cycle of crime never ends by such labelling.

## Remedies to eliminate the harm

There are number of remedies

which can revive a new life for a person who has potential.

### Environment of criminal

The environment includes parents, family, peers and community. They all play essential role. They can eliminate the previous label and can introduce a new label which can motivate the individual to new life.

### Socio-economic condition

The society must allow them to participate in social activities. The youth is the potential of society and good employment and environment can restrict them from committing crime again.

### Relation with family

The family of individual and particularly parents must establish good relations with deviant young child. This introduces a sense of loss and gain. The individual in such case restricts himself from crime because they do not want to lose love of parents.

## Role of Government

Government must ensure a positive environment for specially first time offenders to restrict them from being recidivists. The bad labelling for youth is not good for health of any social community.

## Legislation regarding label

There must be some rule that a person not be judged by his previous actions. This let them think regarding new aspects of life and save youth from remaining criminal.

SATISFACTORY

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## Conclusion

Labelling theory is often criticized also for that it did not disclosed first time offenders because they become criminal without label. Meanwhile, it is a significant theory and highlights the harms of labels on society and the way it is turning youth into recidivists.