

Why do People Commit Crimes?

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What is a Crime?

A crime can be defined as an action or a deed that is punishable according to the law and creates an offense. Crime is a matter of law. People doing something bad doesn't necessarily mean it's a crime, such as lying to somebody is considered a wrong deed but it isn't taken as a criminal activity. Crimes can't be opinionated. Laws are made by the government, which, if broken, make up a crime.

Many crimes such as murders, robberies, and attacks were reported in the year 1995, and till now, these crimes are accompanied by rapes, child murders, etc. According to Planty's report of 2013, about 60-70 percent of killings were done with a firearm from the year 1993 to 2011. 20-30% of robberies took place, and 22-32 percent of serious attacks were done using a firearm.

Causes of Crime

There are several reasons behind the criminal activities of the people. Some of them include extreme poverty, ignorance from families or close ones, low self-esteem, drug and alcohol abuse, etc. (bbc.co.uk). All these actions are interrelated in demonstrating why people perform criminal activities. For some people, the circumstances and situations in which they were born become the reason for being a criminal and an offender. The reason why people become criminals is taken simply to be the lack of morality and values. A criminal, no matter what the reasons are, is taken to be responsible for their actions and is punished. Not all people commit crimes for their survival and food, people rather become greedy, and in that greed for more and more money and wealth, they opt for deeds like robbery, killings, etc. Many people have talked about the issue and forwarded their opinions, explaining the reasons why people commit crimes (historylearningsite.co.uk). One of the oldest theories, called demonology, suggests that the offending behavior of criminals is due to some takeover by the spirits or demons that control the body and mind of the person. And such evil can only be exorcised in some torturous or harsh ways. Hence the main focus was given to the person rather than any environmental conditions or forces.

An Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso theorized that criminality is inherited and can be recognized by defects in the physical characteristics of the person. [Sigmund Freud](#) believed that overdeveloped superegos make a person feel guilty without any solid reason, and they desire to be rebuked. Hence, for the relief of this guilt, they commit crimes for the gain of the wanted chastisement. The principle of poor parenting was also offered by Freud. He stated that parents are the first source of education on moral principles and laws. Lack of education and poor parenting lead to immoral and criminal actions. August Aichorn presented three characteristics that produce criminality in a person; wish for

instant pleasure, giving more importance to one's wishes and desires than having good relations with other people, and having no sense of guilt over one's deeds. Albert Bandura opinionated that observation of other people's actions leads the person to decide whether or not to follow them.

Can crimes be eradicated from society?

The causes of crimes are so diverse and complex that it can be said that the prevalence of criminal activities can be controlled or reduced but never fully eliminated. The economic conditions are never stable universally. Rich are becoming richer while poor ones are becoming poorer. Such economic and financial conditions pave the way for criminality and injustices. Both rich and poor people tend to become criminals for wealth and money. The best we can do about it is try to make the economic conditions stable enough so that poverty doesn't reach its limits and the poor ones don't get to do criminal acts for food and survival. Everyone's basic needs must be fulfilled.

Since the first school of every child is his home, the parents must take the responsibility of transmitting moral education to their children so that they become better people and better citizens, contributing to the wellness of the society and nation in a good way. We observe many crimes which are inhumane such as rapes and violent murders. Such criminals' mental state must be checked first since many people commit such deadly crimes because they are undergoing some disorders or disturbances in their mental conditions. If a criminal is found to be a mental patient, he must be thoroughly treated, and if not, he must be punished. Any state's system of justice must be strong enough to control the criminal activities prevailing in society. There must not be any delay in the punishments of proven criminals since this delay disturbs the people who got victimized. This victimization can also lead the victims to become criminals. Hence, both short-term and long-term measures must be taken the control criminality in society.

Can criminals become productive members of society?

This question is complicated and thought-provoking in the sense of why criminals should be given a chance to lead their lives normally. We have different levels of crime. Some can be forgiven after a little punishment, but others are too distressing to let it go. "In the black-and-white world of good guys and bad guys, one is either a good person who makes some forgivable mistakes or a common criminal who deserves no sympathy" (Maruna, 2001, p.5). Criminals can become productive members of society in a way if they're given such work or activities while they're in prison. In this way, they are being punished as well as productive. Maruna (2001) mentions the quote of Alexander Solzhenitsyn at the beginning of her book that can be considered as the reply to this question, "If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it was necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a part of his own

heart?” thus, special education and special activities must be given to the criminals so that they learn something and may some guilt be induced in them. Moral education and special jobs and skills must be taught so that they become productive and contribute to the betterment of the state in some way. Prisoners often tend to perform criminality inside the prisons with their fellow prisoners. This is because the environment makes them more frustrated, and it doesn’t help induce any guilt inside them. Educating them and making them work is the best solution for both criminals and the state. Punishment and productivity are both the aims that will be achieved.

Conclusion

Just like there exist different kinds of criminal activities, there’s a wide range of criminals we see or hear of in the news and media. All these different types of criminals indulge in such activities due to different reasons. Thus, all must be treated differently. They all go through different levels of punishment, and not all tend to become normal and productive members of society.

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