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**DEPARTMENT:**

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**ASSIGNMENT:**

**DISCUSS THE ETYOLOGY OF CRIME**

**WHAT IS CRIME**

This question has to be answered at the very outset It is indeed a Herculean task to define crime. It has been always regarded as a matter of great difficulty1. R.C.Nigam says that to answer the question, as to what is crime, it is to be known at first, what is Law, because these two questions are closely interrelated. Traditionally, it is known that law is a command enjoining a course of conduct A crime may, therefore, be an act of disobedience to such a law forbidding or commanding i t But then, sometimes, disobedience of all laws may not Crime is a public wrong. It is an act strongly disapproved by society. Crime includes murder, dacoities, fraud, rape, etc. Each society has its own perspective of defining crime. For commission of crime, there should be a criminal intention and a criminal act. No individual is a born criminal; the criminal intention and behavior of an individual are a result of various social, economic, biological and psychological causes.

**THE ETMOLOGY OF CRIME**

The causes of crime are one of the important phases of the crime problem that requires more discussion, investigation and research and call for more social and Governmental action'\*'. Why a man becomes criminal? Is a perennial question and scholars have sought to explain criminal behavior for many years. Prior to the eighteenth century, the explanations tended to be demonological (possession by an evil spirit) or naturalistic (an affected brain). As the various disciplines began to grow, particularly biology, anthropology, sociology, psychiatry, psychology, statistics, the explanations soon shifted from rationalism to causes which exist in the hereditary, constitutional, and psychological makeup of individuals as well as the causes which exist in the physical and social environment of man. Causes of crime include;

* Multiple factors
* Sociological factors
* Psychological factors
* Physiological factors

**Sociological factors;**

The sociological study of crime and delinquency has focused either on the social structural factors (e.g., poverty and social disorganization) believed to generate such behavior or on the arenas (e.g., family, school, and peer groups) in which socialization to conventional or criminal values and behavior are affected. Both approaches explicitly or implicitly recognize that some form of learning takes place. Crime and criminal behaviors, as well as their causes, have always been a topic of social controversies because sometimes, two individuals may come from the same environment or family background, but they turn out to be so different from one another later in life. One might become a law-abiding citizen while the other, a criminal. Often times, it's because of how they were raised as well as who they chose to surround themselves withAccording to Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin in 'Delinquency and Opportunity' (1960), crime is learned through associations with criminal definitions. These definitions might be generally approving of criminal conduct or be neutralizations that justify crime only under certain circumstances. Differential opportunity theory also emphasizes that interacting with antisocial peers is a major cause of more crimes. This means criminal behaviors will be repeated and become chronic if reinforced.   
So when criminal subcultures exist within an environment, then many individuals can learn to commit crimes in a very specific location, and as a result, crime rates including violence will become higher within the environment or community.

**Psychological factor;**

Psychological theories of crime say that criminal behavior is a result of individual differences in thinking processes. There are many different psychological theories, but they all believe that it is the person's thoughts and feelings that dictate their actions. As such, problems in thinking can lead to criminal behavior. Take Rory, for example, he doesn't believe that what he did was wrong, which was what led him to act out in the first place.There are four basic ideas when it comes to psychological theories of crime. These general assumptions are that crime is a result of:

* Failures in psychological development

Some people run into trouble because they didn't develop, or grow, the way that others normally do. For example, Rory has an underdeveloped conscience. Whereas Amy hears a little voice inside her reminding her what is right and wrong, Rory just does what he wants and doesn't think about right or wrong. This is an example of what happens when someone has an issue with psychological development.

* Learned behaviors of aggression and violence

If someone is surrounded by violence and aggression, they are more likely to become violent and aggressive themselves, because they have learned that those behaviors are okay. For example, Rory comes from a very abusive household, and his violent parents taught him that it's normal to work out your frustrations by being violent against others.

* Inherent personality traits

There are some characteristics that criminals tend to share with each other, and some psychologists believe that there are certain personality traits that predispose someone towards criminal behavior. For example, even as a baby, Rory liked to seek out dangerous and exciting activities. Amy is happy to stay at home with a book; that's enough excitement for her. But, Rory likes danger, which could lead him to act recklessly and perhaps in criminal ways.

**Physiological factors;**

Studies show that people who consistently show both irresponsible and criminal behaviors often have both neurological and biological abnormalities that contribute to these types of behaviors (Allen Garland E., 2001). Criminal behavior is one of the most interesting topics in the field of psychology. Many experts believe that both environmental factors, as well as genetic factors, play an important role in a person criminal and antisocial behaviors. Such argument, of course, revives the old debate of nature versus nurture that’s been around for decades. Many among those experts argue that there is evidence that proves a person’s genetic makeup (code) is somewhat responsible for his/her criminal behaviors. While others argued that environmental factors are very determinant in a person developing criminal/antisocial behaviors. So who's wrong and who's right? Well, the truth is that both genetic and environmental factors do play an important role in a person’s criminal or anti-social behaviors. The evidence for such a conclusion has been supported by many research studies conducted on twins, families, adopted children as well as laboratory experiments.

Their finding is that there is indeed an interaction between genes and the environment that can predict both criminal and antisocial behaviors of an individual. In other words; biological forces can act upon psychosocial factors and generate a certain type of behavior, such as criminal or antisocial ones. With that says, biological causes can be blamed for certain crimes but not all crimes. But, why some people are still troubled by the idea that crime may have biological causes? There are various reasons why some people might still have great difficulty to accept the idea that crime has biological causes:

First, researches prove that genes are ruled by the environment rather than the environment being ruled by genes. This means; a person’s environment can either mute or aggravate violent impulse. A person's genetic code is what makes him/her who he/she is and it is also what makes him/her very unique from others. If a person's genetic code already has criminal and antisocial traits in it, and he/she finds himself/herself in an environment where psychosocial factors that can trigger criminal or antisocial behaviors are present, the chance for him/her to become a career criminal is very high.

However, those researchers conjointly go further more to prove that many people with the same genetic tendency for aggressiveness will never throw a punch at someone throughout their life span, depending on where they live and who they surround themselves with. While others who are without any sign of aggressiveness can easily become career criminals right under everyone's eyes, but no one would've never thought about it until they get caught on the act.

Second, many believe that the victims of those violent crimes committed by certain criminals should not suffer twice for behaviors they are not responsible for, so letting criminals go free in the concept of being mentally ill is encouraging the repetition of that same behavior in the future (Unnever James D. et al., 2008).

Thirdly, people don’t really believe that many of those who commit crimes are insane or mentally ill. They believe that, this is nothing but excuses and that they should still be held accountable for their actions. So to conclude, there is a vast majority of people who believe that the idea of crime has a biological cause is just a way to beat the justice system, which crimes remain crimes regardless of both environmental and genetic factors' argument.

*References:*

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