

Crime in our society essay sample

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



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What is Crime?

Crime has so many faces, and is perpetrated by people at so many different levels of our society that you may ask yourself what exactly it is.

The answer is simple; crime is any activity in conflict with a just law - laws made to protect the citizens of this country and enforced by our Constitution.

The task of fighting crime is becoming more complex, and therefore more challenging. Criminals are becoming more organised and sophisticated, operating with little regard for national boundaries.

As organised crime becomes increasingly globalised, foreign criminal groups are extending their operations - something that affects every one of us.

Coping with Crime

Whether you have been a victim of a criminal act, or are simply traumatised by living in a society, where crime and violence appear to have become the rule, rather than the exception.

Crime can happen to anyone; the key is to be aware of what is happening around you and to trust your instincts regarding people's behaviour that might make you uneasy. We simply have to discard the 'not me' attitude towards crime.

If we don't get involved, we have no right to complain. If you don't become a good citizen, it is unfair to expect the same from others, as long as it does not infringe upon human rights.

It also requires a concerted effort by government, in partnership with civil society, to prevent crime before it occurs. But unless we revive a spirit of lawfulness, morality and our humanity, not even the best policing in the world will be adequate in the fight against crime.

Thanks to the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS), which the government adopted in 1996, we now have a single police service created from eleven separate police forces, and the foundation has been laid for the police to become service accountable and community-oriented.

Causes of crime

In order to understand what crime prevention is about, we have to understand the causes of crime. Crime is not caused by any one event, but is the result of a combination of several factors. In general, the causes of crime fall into six categories:

* Need - caused by poverty and deprivation. In future we might be faced with a special type of crime among the AIDS generation, which feels it is being abandoned by the government and resorts to violent and survival crimes as a way of hitting back at society.

* Greed - usually committed by those who have already made money, but want to become even richer by whatever means at their disposal. Greed

makes this type of crime all the more unforgivable as it is prompted by wants rather than needs.

* Power – this can involve financial, personal or political power. Gangsters who have made some money want to become leaders in their communities, even though they may already be rich. Sexual assaults and domestic violence fall into this category.

* Diminished responsibility – committed by those with insufficient control over their actions – most often caused by drugs or drink.

* Ideology – committed in the name of what is sometimes called a ‘counter-culture’ where the person’s political or religious ideology differs from that of the country.

* Fun – these crimes are committed by hedonists who enjoy the thrill of exposing themselves to the risk of arrest by virtue of a dare, or a risk-friendly lifestyle.

However, the causes of crime seldom operate in isolation. For example, a drug dealer who needs more money for the next hit will rob, steal, or even murder to achieve his goal.

What is crime prevention?

Crime prevention is about stopping crime from happening rather than waiting to respond once offences have been committed. Many people believe that it is only through action by the police and the courts that crime in our communities will be reduced. This is usually seen as the tough, ‘no-

nonsense' approach resulting in punishment to deter offenders from committing crime again.

Prevention, often seen as the 'soft' approach, saves the government vast amounts of money. It also lessens the impact of crime on victims, as well as the destructive effects of imprisonment, particularly on young offenders and those who have committed petty crimes.

Crime prevention improves the quality of life in communities, which in the long term helps create a safer environment.

What should happen in order to achieve long-term success in preventing crime is that hard policing is coupled with social crime prevention.

Social Crime Prevention

This means changing the mind-set and behaviour patterns in social environments so that people live lives less troubled by crime. This is the toughest and most difficult method of crime prevention to sustain, but also the most rewarding.

The theory is that even though people are poor, not everyone living in poor residential areas resorts to crime. Those who don't resort to crime should become role-models rather than the ones who resort to a life of crime and gangsterism.