

# Durkheim's view on crime

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Durkheim's view on Crime A) Emile Durkheim in his book "Suicide: A Study in Sociology" portrayed crime as healthy practice but categorically mentioned that too little crime or rapid increase in crime rate is unhealthy and dangerous for the development of the society (Simpson, ed. 1951). Durkheim suggested that assured level of crime and deviance is necessary for a healthy society as it brings change in the society norms and crime acts as a catalyst for innovation in society. It is further stated that increased rate of crime and deviance may disturb the functioning of society while low crime rate is unhealthy because it puts innovation at halt (UKEssays. com, n, d). According to the theory of Durkheim, crime is essential because it is functionally useful providing assistance in maintaining healthy society through adaption and boundary maintenance (Pelovangu, 2010). Referring to suicide rates in "Suicide: A Study in Sociology" Durkheim mentioned that social integration is necessary for normal functioning of the society and it was because of low social integration in Protestant community that led to high suicide rates (Simpson, ed. 1951). Durkheim clarifies that it is the punishment that makes the act a crime making the society aware of the offense and developing conscience in the society. It is after this punishment that society takes action to formulate laws and legislations and other innovations follow (Jones 1986). Crime has received a special attention through the work of Emile Durkheim making in positive development in the formation of integrated society and establishing a need for healthy rate of crime, as too little crime will not add to the cause of innovation in the modern society. B) In modern society, crime occurs every hour and it is hard to distinguish whether crimes are important for the development of present society. However, considering the observations of Durkheim and anomie

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theory, drug abuse is one such action or incident that has gained attention from all over the world (Jones, 1986). While Durkheim advocated mechanical and organic forms of social integration, drug abuse disorganized the society with number of youngsters getting addicted. Drug abuse poses various kinds of problems affecting not only the individual user but also the family and community (UNDCP, 2002). Drug abuse is considered as crime because it is punishable under legal laws thereby supporting the theory of Durkheim (Jones, 1986). Durkheim further suggested that crime evolves the social integration, brings innovation and change in the society. Drug abuse is recognized as a severe threat by the international community which has developed programmes to curtail the drug use. Similarly various governments have rise to the cause and prepared a legislative framework for countering drug abuse and creating awareness among the public regarding the ill effects of drug use (UNDCP, 2002). It is assumed that drug abuse has been useful in making the society aware of the hazardous drugs and its ill effects thereby strengthening the observation of Durkheim that crime is essential for development of society as it promotes change and innovation.

C) The Crime in England and Wales 2009/10 Report, in regard to violence, according to British Crime Survey (BCS), mentioned that 50 percent of the violent incidents cases have been reported to be under the influence of alcohol while 20 percent were under the influence of drugs (Flatley et al , 2010). It is further reported that there were estimated 396000 incidents where the victim perceived the offenders to be under the influence of drugs. This statistics reveal that drug abuse cases have not changed statistically as compared to the previous year which is a matter of concern. The number of incidents reveals the tendency of anomie as the crime disrupts the normal

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functioning of the society with utter violence. The society is disrupted with the deviant behavior of people under the influence of drug. However, considering the larger picture, longer term trend show there have been significant decrease in the number of violent crimes under the influence of drug since 1995 which gives an indication that society has changed and reacted to the situation. It correctly fits the theory of Durkheim that crime is necessary but little or too much crime can be dangerous, According to the Crime in England and Wales 2009/10 Report, the number of incidents pertaining to violence under influence of drug has dropped from 655 in 1995 to 396 in 2009/10 which is gradual but positive signs of development in the society (Flatley et al , 2010). Thus crime, according to Durkheim's theory, plays an important role in transforming the society and bringing out changes for better living. References 1. Flatley J et al 2010 Crime in England and Wales 2009/10 Findings from the British Crime Survey and police recorded crime, 3rd Ed., Home Office, UK 2. Jones R. A. 1986 Emile Durkheim: An Introduction to Four Major Works. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., Pp. 60-81 3. Pelovangu R 2010. Emile Durkheim Theory: Functionalism, Division of Labour, Anomie, Crime as inevitable, Suite 101 [online] Available at [Accessed on 4th August 2011] 4. Simpson G (Ed) 1951 Suicide: A Study in Sociology, Simon and Schuster, New York 5. Telangana n. d. [online] Available at [Accessed on 4th August 2011] 6. UK Essays n. d. Critically assess the contribution of the Chicago School, Sociology Essays, [online] Available at [Accessed on 4th August 2011] 7. UNDCP 2002. Women and Drug Abuse: The Problem in India, Highlights of the Report, Ministry of Social Justice, Govt. of India, Delhi