



CRIMINOLOGY : PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES. By Ahmad Siddique. 1976. Eastern Book Company, 34 Lal Bagh, Lucknow. Pp. xvi + 334. Rs. 25.

TEACHING, RESEARCH and publications in criminology are so scarce in this country that any effort in this area is a welcome step. Crime has always been a fascinating subject from the times immemorial and reactions towards it have always been coloured by extremes of emotions. We tread softly in fear of it, panic at the face of it, react indignantly to it and awe ceaselessly at its novel facets which appear from time to time. The non-availability of a book in Indian context providing our frame of reference had prompted the author to attempt this book which provides a panorama on these problems. The books that are available in this field, according to the author, have been written keeping in view the requirements of students of sociology and social work. They, therefore, lack legal treatment which is essential to the understanding of the practical application of various principles through courts of law and other agencies. The legal bias can be appreciated by keeping in view the fact that criminology is taught as a subject both at LL.B. as well as LL.M. level in the Indian universities.

The book contains eleven chapters covering different aspects like : crime and criminology; explanation of crime — individualistic approaches; explanation of crime—environmental approaches; reactions to crime—punitive approach; therapeutic approach —prison reform; therapeutic approach —probations and parole; therapeutic approach — juvenile institutions; the police; criminal law and its administration; the sentencing process; and white collar crime. The book also contains two annexures, *i.e.*, the Children Act, 1960 and the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958.

In the first chapter, the author describes the scope of criminology and points out the difficulty encountered by the criminologists due to the lack of unanimity about the definition of crime. Legal norms have their own limitations and the sociological norms are too wide to be taken as valuable indicators by the members of the criminal justice system. In view of these facts, from the point of view of criminology, the legal definition should just be broadened and social norms should be more pragmatic. Criminology depends not only on the question whether the conduct is moral or immoral but also on the consideration of the possibilities of its implementation through legal agencies. An important aspect has been discussed in the book namely the question of morality. It is possible to divide morality into two compartments — public and private morality — and to leave private morality untouched by law as recommended by the Wolfendon Committee in the United Kingdom. *H.L.A. Hart* rightly asserted that two questions must be answered in the affirmative before declaring an activity as criminal. First, whether the activity which offends moral feeling is harm-



ful independently of its repercussions on the general moral code? Secondly, whether the whole moral fabric of society would go into pieces if the offending act is not made criminal. The author feels that even if it is conceded that the state has no theoretical limits to prevent and punish immorality the more pertinent point is to evaluate the practical limits of the state in this area. Surely it is one thing to make the activity criminal and quite a different to enforce it. It is common knowledge that many offences, for all practical purposes, are confined to the statute books and laws are not enforced either because there is no will to enforce them or the machinery is inadequate and unsuitable to enforce them. There are various factors that lead to non-enforcement of particular laws. The effects of such laws which are seldom enforced are formidable on the persons involved in the prohibited activities. It is, therefore, imperative that criminal law should not act with misplaced overzeal. It should come into picture only when it becomes necessary and where it can provide an appropriate and effective machinery to cure the intended evil.

The book describes that criminology is a discipline that studies crime in all its aspects and, in its wider sense, it also includes penology, the study of punishment and all similar methods of dealing with crime, and all problems of preventing crime by non-punitive measures. A question arises as to whether criminology is a science or not. The answer will be determined by the use which we want to make of criminology. Criminology is a science if its aim is only to study the crime, criminal, criminal law and prison, *etc.*, as a scientific discipline. A short description of the classical and positive schools of criminology has also been given in this chapter.

In the subsequent two chapters the author describes the contribution of the classical and the positive schools. Lambroso's theory encouraged many other researchers like Charles Goring, Hooton, William H. Sheldon and others to undertake research on criminals. The chapter also describes mental deficiency as a factor in crime, psycho-analytical approach, physiological approach which seek to explain the criminal behaviour in terms of glandular mal-functioning and lastly the heredity and crime.

In the environmental approaches, the author shifts the subject matter for criminal behaviour from the individual delinquent to the community, social institutions and group relationships which shape both criminal and non-criminal behaviour. Criminal behaviour is looked upon as resulting from social interactions. According to the author the environmental approaches may take two forms. One is to make a sociological study of crime and criminals with reference to society and the other is to find the causative factors of crime in the institutions of society. The process of imitation, social disorganisation theories, differential association and criminality, theory of anomie, theories of juvenile gang delinquency, family and crime, formal education and delinquency, economic factors and crime and mass communication media and crime has been discussed. As per the author's understanding, these theories have been given the Indian input.



In the chapter on reactions to crime the author evaluates the efficacy, relevance and anomalies of various kinds of punishment as per their prevalence including different forms of punishment. The controversy around capital punishment has also been discussed at length.

In the chapters on therapeutic approach he describes the juvenile institutions and stressed the importance of prison reforms and parole. Probation has been given a unique place in the book and it traces the factors relating to its improper implementation. Not only there is a need of attitudinal change of the judiciary but the need of the support machinery is also stressed. Without a comprehensive policy on parole and probation, the major objective of reform and rehabilitation, the author feels, cannot be achieved. In the subsequent chapter on police, the author not only highlights the organization, structure and functions of the police but also various aspects of their functioning, rural-urban deployment, weaknesses, image and other relevant aspects of police functions have been dealt with. In logical sequence, the chapter on criminal law and its administration and sentencing process follow the chapter on the police.

The last chapter on white collar crime not only provides conceptual framework but also gives an account of the nature and extent, rationalizations, its prevalence in India, judicial attitudes (as prevalent in the United States) towards offence, probation and white collar crime, *etc.*

The utility of a book on criminology has already been highlighted in this review but if the book has very wide coverage like this one, it lacks depth analysis and does not prove useful to the serious students of any discipline. Focus becomes the victim of a wide coverage in the book. The claim of the publishers that this book attempts to overcome anomalous situation by taking up sociological and economic factors operating in India, investigating them and analysing the various facets thus exposed, does not get ample support from the contents of the book. The chapter scheme also requires restructuring to maintain logical sequence. Moreover, at times, the publication lacks coherence between the title or subtitle and the content which disturbs the flow in reading. The wrong spellings of the authorities in criminology irritates a reader. More care was called for in proof reading. The cover page is attractive but the attraction does not continue when the reader turns the subsequent pages.

The pages allotted to the Children Act, 1960, and the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958, could have been used for more useful explanation relating to the phenomenon of crime except one or two, all other states have their own children Acts and the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958 is an old Act and the copies could be obtained easily.

The book is definitely an addition in the field of criminology as general reading but neither qualifies as a text book nor a reading in criminology.



The post-graduate students may be interested slightly according to their interests and motivations. It is hoped that it may encourage other students to attempt publications in criminology in the future.

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