Chapter 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES IN CRIMINOLOGY
In this chapter an attempt is made to analyse the various theoretical approaches and research strategies with more emphasis on sociological theories that have emerged during different periods of the history. This will enable us to have a better insight into the problem of juvenile delinquency which is the product of specific conditions and processes in the contemporary society.

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) is the first sociological positivist with a professional interest in criminal behaviour. He focused on the role that social forces play in determining human conduct (Williams III and McSchane, 1988, p.34). Many social scientists ever since Durkheim have subscribed that deviance is a normal characteristic of any society. Trying to identify the causes of deviance, many sociologists, Psychologists, social scientists and economists have come up with ideas like pathological reasons such as the malfunctioning of the social system, imperfect constitutional abnormalities or psychological disorders or deficiencies. These were the ideas about crime, which influenced the theorists right since Durkheim.

Various sociological theories have been put forward in order to understand female crime. Following are the important theories considered to explain female crime to a certain extent.

1. Anomie theory
2. Labelling theory
3. Differential association theory
4. Sub-culture theory
ANOMIE THEORY:

Robert Merton's Anomie theory first appeared in the article "Social Structure and Anomie" in the year 1938. Merton's Anomie theory has been considered as one of the most influential approaches to crime and deviance. Merton drew his concept of 'Anomie' from the classic work of Emile Durkheim who described. 'Anomie' is a situation of normlessness in a society where the collective order is disrupted and the aspirations are unregulated and not achieved. Merton, in his Social Structure and Anomie, rejected biological explanations of deviance and focused his concern on the role of social structure with special reference to the American social structure. According to Merton, the existing society is deeply ridden with inequality wherein greater emphasis is placed on money which drives a person to an unending desire to a mass wealth.

Attaining more wealth, thus becomes common to all and the legitimate access to it is ultimately restricted because of greater competition. Then those who lack this opportunity are subjected to severe strain and this leads to an illegal achievement of their goals through illegitimate means. Thus, there is a violation of the expected norms of the society and this kind of behaviour brings about a disturbance in the state of equilibrium in the society. When this process continues the society will have a very weak integrity and anomic or normlessness sets in the society. Thus, according to Merton "one must agree the lack of such coordination between the
means and goals of the social structure leads to anomie" (Merton, 1938, p.682). For Merton an ideal situation in a society exists when there is a balance and harmony between the goals and means. Thus state of Anomie is seen especially amongst the lower rungs of the society. Since they suffer more strain than the upper classes and hence, these classes are more prone to crime.

Merton distinguished five types of adaptations that would occur when the goals are internalized but cannot be legally achieved. They are:

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<th>Cultural Goals</th>
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<td>1. Conformity</td>
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<td>2. Innovation</td>
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<td>3. Ritualism</td>
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<td>4. Retreatism</td>
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<td>5. Rebellion</td>
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When cultural goals are attained by institutionalized means, individuals adapt with conformity. When cultural goals are present but institutionalized means are absent, individuals adapt to 'Innovation' i.e., by illegitimate means. There are no cultural goals however in ritualism as the ritualist has lost all hopes of attaining the goals but conforms tenaciously to the accepted means. But in ritualism Merton refers to these individuals as 'Alien's because they are in the society but not of
They include psychotics, vagrants, tramps, drug addicts and chronic alcoholics. While in the rebellion category, the cultural goals and the institutionalized means are rejected, substitution of new goals and standards are seen to be adapted by the individuals. Thus, a rebel attempts to bring about a new social order.

Merton's prime focus is on the innovator who endeavours illegitimate but effective means to attain cultural goals like a robber who achieves financial success. For Merton, the problem of the innovator might be corrected if everyone had equal opportunities. Merton points out this lacuna that is existing in the society (Merton, 1938, p.680).

Merton basically refers to the prevalent culture and social order in America. He argues that there is a competition towards the monetary success in the society. Therefore, the extreme pressure will push the individuals in the direction of illegitimate behaviour and they go to the extent of using any measure to gain what the society values. However, Merton admitted that all crime and delinquency are not explained in terms of anomie. According to Merton there is also a section in lower class, who endeavour to achieve financial success. They suffer more strain than the upper strata. Hence, these classes are more prone to crime. But often the lower middle classes adhere to the social goals though the opportunities for success are extremely limited.
This class looses the hopes (Ritualist). Anomie, according to Merton did not always produce the innovators but it also caused the development of new norms by the rebellion. In an essay in "Contemporary Social Problems". Merton closely distinguishes the differences of approach by the rebel (For example, an extremist of Communism) and by the aberrant (Robber). The rebel who is a non-conformist directly challenges the existing norms and appears to change the norms for the development of the society. Whereas a robber acknowledges the social norms but violates them in the pursuit of his selfish interests. Thus Merton's emphasis is that the deviant behaviour by the individual should be perceived differently by the authority.

Merton's theory of Anomie is applauded by many social theorists, it also came under criticism from various directions.

1. Scope and specifies: Taking the scope of anomie theory into consideration it has been criticised for not having adequately explained the mental, sexual deviants, such as drug addicts and homosexuality. Cohen (1966) point out that anomie does not demonstrate the fine adaptations and results. Gibbons and Jones (1975) argues that this theory is incomplete and cannot explain various forms of deviance. Taylor Walton Young (1973) points out that Merton failed to clearly distinguish between conformist and ritualist (E.B.Leonard 1982, p.55).
2. **Cultural assumptions**: Anomie theory has also been criticised for disregarding interaction with others which also explains about deviant behaviour. Merton was also criticised for completely neglecting the role of group or collective adaptation. He further pin-pointed the universally accepted values, goals, in the complex modern society. Taylor (1971) argues that goals develop within the demands of reference groups. But Merton instead of dividing the society into sub groups, assumed shared values throughout society.

3. **Lower class crime**: Merton's assumption that deviance is most under spread and among the lower classes was challenged by many critics. This theory is based on the official statistics which indeed shows more number of deviants among the lower echelons of society. Ironically, the conformists are also more in number amongst the lower classes.

4. **Reaction to deviance**: It is felt that Anomie theory has failed to deal with official reactions to deviant behaviour, Lemert (1972) criticizes him for ignoring the role of social control agencies (In E.B. Leonard, 1982, p. 56).

**LABELLING THEORY**

Labelling theory is also known as societal reaction theory. This theory took a different approach in criminological theory by challenging
previous definitions of deviance. It focused on the variety of ways, in which people reacted to deviance and spurred interest in the way official agencies operated.

Howard S. Becker in his book "Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance" (1963) tried to explain the problem of how and why certain individuals get labelled and the effect of that label on subsequent behaviour. Becker says "social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labelling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an 'offender'. The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied. Deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so label. Thus social agents create rules and label the rule breaker and the rule breaker gradually assumes the label and its accompanying behaviour (In Bartol and Bartol, 1982, p.180)

Edwin M. Lemert in his book "Social Pathology" (1951) provided the most sophisticated and systematic statement of the labelling view. He emphasized on how social sanctioning processes systematized and prolonged deviance by altering the self concept and the social identity of the person labelled. Lemert criticized the traditional theories for assuming
the 'natural existence of deviance and asserted that deviance was relative (Bartol and Bartol, 1989, p.177).

Lemert distinguishes between primary deviance and secondary deviance. He says primary deviance is neither identified nor punished by any one in the authority, thereby the individual escapes the reaction of others and does not affect his self concept or social roles when an individual is labelled 'Delinquent' by an official agency he incorporates these 'Societal Reactions' into his existing cognitive structure. Lemert says that at this point he may begin to do the things and play the role that others associate with humour what Lemert calls "Secondary Deviance". When a person begins to employ his deviant behaviour or a role based upon it as a means of defense, attack or adjustment to the problems created by the consequent societal reaction, his deviation is secondary (Bartol and Bartol, 1989, p.178): Secondary deviance affects the self concept or inner belief system as well as the performance of social roles, thereby an individual will react to the label and behaves accordingly. Labelling leads to symbolic reorganization. When an individual is officially labelled "Delinquent" it is socially stigmatizing, adversely affecting social relationships and opportunities. Then the labelled person comes to accept the image offered by others and change the self image accordingly. Thus, deviance in its secondary form is quite literally created by the labelling process. Lemert believed that the societal reaction process is affected by a number of
factors like age, sex, social class etc. which influence the responses of legal authorities to the young offences.

The needs of labelling theory can be traced in Frank Tannenbaum's (1938) book "Crime and Community" in which he argued that the proper study of crime and Delinquency was not the behaviour itself but society's reaction to it. He says once the individuals are 'tagged' or labelled delinquents, the others create them as such and treat them accordingly. The reaction of these others is the primary source of the individual conduct. According to him "the process of making the criminal" a process of defining, tagging, segregating, identifying, emphasizing, describing, making conscious and self conscious, it becomes a way of stimulating, emphasizing, suggesting and evoking the very traits that are complained of the person becomes the things he is described as being (Bartol and Bartol, 1989, p.115). This process is called "Dramatisation of Evil". Thus, he says the process of tagging delinquents creates delinquency.

Gibbs (1966) Taylor and Walton Young (1973) have criticized labelling theory as a very vaguely developed theory and that it could not bring about a distinction between the description and casual statements and according to them labelling theory only helps in building up the theory. Schur (1971) points out that the current formulations of labelling theory have no testable data in support of it but feels that perspective has a
greater scope for a research. Gibbs notes that the labelling perspective does not specify as to whether the particular kind of behaviour is a deviant act or is it only though a particular reaction that a deviant act is identified. He also points out that labelling theory does not specify its emphasis as to whether it is explaining the deviant behaviour or the reactions to it. Thus the general emphasis is that only those who are labelled are the true deviants (E.B. Leonard, 1982, p. 73-74). Not much statistical data is there in support to establish the effects of labelling but labelling theory gives the general impression that the officials effort to rehabilitate the deviants has negative consequences.

It also gives an impression that the actors are very innocent and they are given a label simply without any reason and are further confirmed and branded as deviants for their life time. Labelling theory's prime emphasis is on the secondary deviance, thereby ignoring the initial cause of deviance. Thereby the emphasis is more on the psychological effects of the reactions of the society. But this does not explain deviance at all (E.B. Leonard, 1982, p. 75-80).

**Differential Association Theory**

This theory has been propounded by the famous criminologist Edwin Sutherland (1883-1950). Sutherland too rejected the biological explanations to crime and described crime as any other behaviour which is learnt in
association with others. According to Sutherland the criminal behaviour is transmitted from one person to another person and these persons are associated especially with such groups.

For Sutherland there is greater tendency for a person to become criminal when the person is over exposed to the behaviour which involves the violation of law. Thus, crime is rooted very much in the association that a person has, Sutherland's theory of differential association is an outstanding attempt to bring about a general theory of crime, taking all kinds of crime into consideration, which explains the social influence of the individual and also all the variables involved in learning crime. According to Sutherland there is no one single thing that is associated with the criminal behaviour, but it involves hundreds of other things.

Sutherland explains that there is no concrete condition that would explain crime and criminal behaviour. Thus he took various aspects such as role of learning, interaction and communication in the development of the criminal behaviour. According to Sutherland there is no one single thing that is associated with the criminal behaviour but it involves hundreds of other things.

Sutherland in his famous text "Principles of Criminology" proposed seven propositions which describe the criminal behaviour. A revised
version of it came up in 1947 which contained nine propositions which explained all criminal behaviour.

The Nine Propositions with the Explanations are:

1. Criminal behaviour is learned. It is neither inherited nor invented by particular individuals, nor is it a result of physical deficiency, but it is learned.

2. Criminal behaviour is learned in interaction with others in a process of communication. Here Sutherland is concerned with both verbal communication and gestures.

3. The principle part of the learning of criminal behaviour occurs within intermate personal groups. Here, the focus is on primary groups and also impersonal agents like television, newspapers etc. as secondary roles in the criminal process.

4. When criminal behaviour is learned, the learning includes (a) techniques of committing the crime, which are sometimes very complicated, sometimes very simple (b) the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations and attitudes. Here, the criminals must learn to do certain things like posing a bad check, entering illegally into an apartment etc.

5. The specific direction of motives and drives is learned from definitions of the legal codes as favourable or unfavourable. Here, Sutherland contends that in a modern society like the United States, reasons for obeying and violating the law are simultaneously
expounded, and cultural conflict regarding the law results. Here, the individuals may simultaneously learn to maintain and violate a particular law.

6. A person becomes delinquent because excess of definition favourable to violation of law over definitions unfavourable to violation of law. This is the central proposition, and it refers to both criminal and non-criminal association, and contact with the criminal pattern will result in criminal behaviour.

7. Differential associations may vary frequently in duration, priority and intensity. This pertains to both criminal and non-criminal associations, and according to Sutherland the meaning of frequency and duration are obvious, while priority refers to time (childhood or Later) of exposure to the different patterns of life. Intensity refers to prestige.

8. The process of learning criminal behaviour by association with criminal and non-criminal patterns involve all the mechanisms that are involved in any other learning. Here, no special learning is involved. One learns crime through one's association.

9. While criminal behaviour is an explanation of general needs and values, it is not explained by those general needs and values since non-criminal behaviour is an explanation of the some needs and values. Here, the desire to have money and happiness is not an acceptable explanation of criminal behaviour since lawful behaviour also involves this (Sutherland, 1947, p.6-7).
Differential association has been criticised by many theorists as unclear, where they call all nine propositions as unclear, brief and all the statements are ambiguous. Differential association has been criticized for ignoring some types of criminal behaviour like murders and other hard core crimes of problems. Differential association is common as to explain criminal behaviour but actually it does not explain criminal non-criminal behaviour. Researchers view that the theory is untestable.

**SUB-CULTURE THEORY**

The main contributors to this theory are Albert Cohen, Walter B. Miller, Richard Cloward and Aloyd others. This theory is mainly rooted in the Anomie theory. The main emphasis of sub culture theorists is on the criminal behaviour of lower class adolescent boys in groups, the structure of society and human behaviour. Thus, their emphasis is on the low-class male delinquency. The sub-cultural theory came to be established with Albert Cohen's work "Delinquent Boys" in 1955.

Albert K.Cohen (1955) in his book "Delinquent Boys" the Culture of the Gangs" made an attempt to understand how a delinquent sub-culture would develop when observed that delinquent behaviour is mostly found among lower-class males in the form of gang delinquency which is characterized by behaviour that is non-utilitarian, negativistic and malicious. Lower class children tend to lack both material symbolic and advantages
when compared to middle class children. Cohen declared that all children (indeed all individual) seek social status, but all cannot compete equally for status. He believed that the lower class children are at a serious disadvantage position in the schools, when compared to the middle class children, because all children are constantly evaluated by adults who use the middle class measuring rod. Many lower class children who are trapped in this status frustration jointly establish a new cultural form - adolescent sub-culture to solve problems by inverting and abandoning the middle class value system through which the gang can achieve status, simply by doing those things they do well. This delinquent sub-culture will exist as solution for the lower class children. In his theory Cohen tried to explain how sub-culture is created in a society (Williams III and Mcshane, 1988, p.72).

In 1958 W.B. Miller published an article "Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency". In this article Miller criticized Cohen's theory and thereafter Miller's theory has brought about a major development in sub-cultural theory. Miller criticized Cohen's conceptions of the formation of delinquent groups and emphasized that the delinquent gangs are not formed in a frustrated attempt to achieve a middle class status by the lower class. But, according to Miller, the delinquent sub-culture is a long established tradition of the working class to which they conform and maintain. Miller points out that the formation of delinquent sub-
culture is an optimistic attempt to achieve a status in terms of lower class life.

Miller defines certain characteristics of lower class life which are prevalent amongst delinquent gangs. They are:

1. **Trouble**: In the lower class community, this constitutes one of the major issues. Though they do value the lawful activity, certain of trouble enhances the status of the person and moreover, it is through the creation of trouble, some of their goals and objectives are met.

2. **Toughness**: This involves manliness and physical ability to do certain things.

3. **Smartness**: This involves the capacity to cheat others without being caught. This also involves the proper application of mental ability and this adds to the prestige of the delinquent.

4. **Excitement**: This is brought about by booing and playing games like gambling etc.

5. **Fate**: These delinquents are entirely dependent upon their fate or work.

6. **Autonomy**: It is one of the criminal aspects of lower class life where they are totally independent.

According to Miller "it is the one sex per unit rather than the two parent family unit which represents the most significant relational unit for
both sexes in lower class communities". Miller further controls that the lower class families are characterized by single parents wherein the household is mainly maintained by the female only (E.B. Leonard, 1970, 277, p. 120-121).

Miller has been criticized by Cloward and Ohlin (1960, p.74) for ignoring to give a detailed picture of the types of delinquent sub-cultures. According to Gibbons (1976, p.123) he does not describe the type of delinquent sub-culture that exists with the lower class.

Cloward and Ohlin explained their theory in their book "Delinquency and Opportunity : A Theory of Delinquent Essays" (1960) after conducting field studies in Two Juvenile Institutions in New York. They theorized that an individual has different opportunities for reaching the cultural goals depending upon their position in social structure as well as their abilities.

Cloward and Ohlin believed that "pressures toward formation of delinquent sub-cultures originate in the marked discrepancies between culturally induced aspiration among lower-class youth and the possibilities of achieving them by legitimate means". (Bartol and Barto, 1989, p.227). Thus position in society dictated by the ability to participate in both conventional and criminal avenues of success.
Cloward and Ohlin found that the form of delinquent sub-culture depended on the degree of integration. Present in the community without which they would have no greater opportunity to succeed in life through criminal avenues (Williams III and Mcschane, 1988, p.75). Moreover, leaders in the legitimate and illegitimate businesses showed the goal of profitability.

Cloward and Ohlin proposed that there are three ideal types of delinquent sub-cultures. They are labelled as criminal conflict and retreatist sub-cultures. In criminal sub-culture the communities are fully integrated, gangs would almost act as an apprenticeship group for adult, organized criminal concerns. The members of this sub-culture are depend heavily upon illegitimate success models and are mainly interested in monetary gains. In conflict sub-cultures, the communities are disorganised exert weak said controls and create disorganised sub-cultures. The members are deprived of both legitimate and illegitimate criminal opportunities. Thereby they endanger their own lives and lives of others for minimal gain violence is the hall mark of the conflict sub-culture. Finally, in the retreatist sub-culture, the opportunities for the individual to participate in conventional or illegal activities are limited and their criminal activities are individualistic. Members of this sub-culture suffered from double failure. This sub-culture comprises drug users and social isolates. Cloward and Ohlin focused on how the individual reacts to the strain in the society depending upon his
Shrag criticized Clowards and Ohlin's theory for lacking of the empirical accuracy. He also criticized Richard and Ohlin for not presenting a general theory of delinquency because, their theory only explains the gang delinquency. Shrag also points out the fact that there is an uncertainty in Cloward and Ohlin's work as to whether they are describing the goals of delinquents and the non-delinquents as the source.

Cloward and Ohlin have been criticized for not having given explanation to those boys who have very few legitimate opportunities but still remains as non-delinquents. Shrag also points out that the concepts in the theory like perception of opportunity, denial of legitimacy, double failure etc. all these are the real trouble some concepts and these need to be redefined in order to operationalized the concepts.

A discussion of various theories on crime makes it appears as though there are large differences between the different explanations. In reality the different studies only offer different perspectives of various aspects of the problem. An awareness of all these would give a better insight into an empirical problem. A review of various perspectives also makes it possible to study a problem in a more wholistic way.
It is evident from the afore mentioned studies that studies on female delinquency are fewer in number especially in India. This group has been neglected due to various reasons. In the present investigation the investigator has concentrated on this group i.e., the girl delinquents. The investigator has tried to find out the various reasons for girl delinquency and the factors which make a normal girl into a delinquent.

All the theorists have seen the problem of crime through male eyes and thus viewed this problem of crime as a male problem and women are compared to male standards and thus analysed under the male perspectives. These theories of crime are acceptable, taking males into consideration, but these theorists cannot successfully explain female crime. These theories explain female crime only to a certain extent but total dependence on these theories cannot be sought while taking female crime into consideration.