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UACE Geography paper 3: S101 General Paper section A: Crime and punishments in Uganda

Crime is the intentional commission of an act usually deemed socially harmful or dangerous and specifically defined, prohibited, and punishable under criminal law.

Punishment is the infliction or imposition of a penalty as retribution for an offence. In Uganda punishments include fines, imprisonments ranging from a few hours to life imprisonment and death penalties depending on severity of the case/crime.

Common crimes in Uganda include

Assault is a violent crime that involves intentional or reckless bodily harm to another person..

DUI/DWI/ Driving under the influence or driving while intoxicated is a serious crime that involves operating a vehicle while impaired by drugs or alcohol.

Burglary involves unauthorized entry into a building or dwelling with the intent to commit a theft or other crime.

Theft is the unlawful taking of property or money that belongs to another person without their consent.

Fraud. Fraud involves the use of deception or misrepresentation to obtain property, money, or services.

Robbery involves the taking of property from another person by force or threat of force.

Embezzlement involves the theft of funds or property by a person who was entrusted with the property or funds, such as a business or organization's employee.

Vandalism involves the intentional damage or destruction of property belonging to another person.

Sexual Assault is a violent crime that involves non-consensual sexual contact

Cybercrime involves the use of technology to commit crimes such as hacking, identity theft, and cyberbullying.

Domestic Violence is a pattern of abusive behavior in an intimate relationship.

Stalking Stalking involves a pattern of behavior that causes fear or emotional distress to another person.

Drug Abuse and Trafficking involves the illegal possession, distribution, and sale of drugs.

Kidnapping is the crime of forcibly taking someone against their will, often for ransom or other purposes.

Homicide is the killing of one person by another.

Arson involves intentionally setting fire to property or land.

Human Trafficking involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to exploit individuals for labor or sexual purposes.

Trespassing. Trespassing involves entering or remaining on someone else's property without permission.

Disorderly Conduct involves behavior that is disruptive or disturbing to others, such as loud noise, fighting, or public intoxication.

White-Collar Crime involves non-violent crimes committed by individuals in positions of trust or authority, such as embezzlement, fraud, or insider trading.

Causes of crime

Poverty is one of the main reasons for crime. This is because poor people lack means of securing a living and thus resort to crime like theft to acquire these necessities such as food, clothing, housing and so on. In Uganda theft is very common in slums around cities which are inhabited by high densities of poor people.

Peer Pressure compels teenagers and young adults to join groups and subconsciously get drawn to vices like alcohol consumption and abuse of drugs just like their peers. Under the influence of alcohols and drugs, one is very likely to commit crimes like theft, assault due to lack of concentration or by deliberate attempt to get money for acquiring alcohols and drugs. The problem is that these gangs are continuously recruiting members on daily basis.

Crime and drug abuse are closely related. A person under the influence of drugs like marijuana tends to indulge in criminal activities that they may have not indulged in otherwise. Addiction compels a person to secure drugs by any means including illegal means such as burglary, robbery, and so on

The interrelation between politics and crime is overlooked many times. Many people have engaged in criminal activities such as violence and murder to punish or eliminate their opponents. Many political disputes, have ended into rampant violence and mobs that put various citizens at risk especially those on opposition.

Despite it being a basic human right, many people are deprived of practising their own religion that are taken to be inferior. Religion radicalism is still a major cause of the social rift leading to feelings of resentment among the people. The ill feelings often lead to crimes like assault, stalking, homicide, vandalism and so on.

Personal and family background are precursors of similar crimes in future. Children who were neglected or abused are more likely to commit similar crimes in future. Similarly, sexual abuse in childhood often leads these victims to become sexual abuser in future. Many inmates have been found to have experienced some kind of abuse in their past.

Capitalism/materialism is another source of crimes because people are never satisfied with what they have. The wealth in a person's bank account no longer quenches their thirst for money. A big percentage of rich people are thus compelled to indulge in crime such as fraud to make more money.

Unemployment is another source of crimes. Unemployment causes frustration causing many youngsters to rebel and resort to crimes such as theft, fraud and so on.

Unequal rights especially when it comes to get a job and better remunerations. Giving different pay checks for people doing similar jobs creates resentment in a company leading to crimes like fraud.

Unfair justice system is a major contributor to crime. When people believe that they are not given their due and are unfairly treated by the system itself, they harbour feelings of resentment towards it and start to rebel. This involves them engaging in criminal activities and doing the opposite of what is expected of them.

Hereditary has been linked to crimes. Research has found that identical twins were twice more likely to have similar criminal behaviours than fraternal twins with non identical genes. Also adopted twins were found to show criminal behaviours of biological parents than those of their adopted parents.

Mental illness such as mania lead to higher chances of individuals to commit crimes since they less likely to control their emotions. Mentally sick people will easily commit crimes like assault on slight provocation.

Measures to curb criminal activities in Uganda

Crime is widespread vice in all categories of people from the poverty stricken to the very rich. It unlikely that stringent punishments alone are sufficient to create fear in the minds of criminals and deter them from engaging in criminal activities. There is a need for concerted government and public effort to curb criminal activities.

Speedy justice system is one of the solution to curb crime. It is a common saying that justice delayed is justice denied. The excessive backlog of cases and inevitable delay of justice to the victims has led to people losing faith in the system and compel victims to take on their revenge thereby committing further crimes. Secondary delayed justice exonerate the criminals and encourage them to commit more crimes.

Creation of job opportunities can serve to curb crime since unemployment is one of the causes that force people to engage in crime. Employment not only provide a source of income for a living; it also keep people busy with little time to engage in crime activities even if they wished.

Raising awareness among the people against crime through civic education. Alongside this, the youth especially should be educated not only on how to be good citizens but also on how to avoid being victims of the criminals. People should also be equipped with self-defense skill in cas they are attacked.

Creating harmony among religions such as the creation of inter-religious council in Uganda helps to discourage religious radicalism and curb violence and crimes.

Strengthening the police and ani-crime intelligence to to avert acts of crime.

Focus on gun control is another measure of curbing crime. Armed violence can be minimized if there is a strict control of the flow of illegal guns.

The need to address economic inequalities is central in curbing crime. Provision of high quality childcare that is affordable and bridging the gap between the rich and the poor promotes harmony among the people and reduces crime

High penalties may deter crimes among people

Formulating provisions for cybercrimes

Thank you

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