

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OFFENCES

Socio-economic offences are those that have an impact on the social and economic well-being of society. These are non-conventional crimes in the sense that they lack mens rea. These crimes have a societal impact. It does not target a single person, but rather a group of people who are likely to purchase such goods or services. Socio-economic crimes are a new type of criminality. In which persons from the upper and middle classes are involved and are committed in the course of their occupations.

Sutherland refers to it as white-collar crimes, while others refer to it as public welfare offences, statutory offences, strict liability offences, and so on. This type of crime has spread to varying degrees throughout the world. The gravity of such offences is quite severe. Though several lawmakers in India have been established who may be classified as socio-economic legislators.

Definition and nature of socio-economic offences in India

The idea of socio-economic offences in India outlined in India's 47th Law Commission Report is critical. According to the study, socioeconomic crimes are social offences that have an impact on the health, morals, social, or overall well-being of the community as a whole, rather than just the individual victim. Economic offences are those that are harmful to society's economy and endanger not only individual money but the entire economic structure of a country.

White-collar crimes are perpetrated by members of the affluent and well-to-do classes. A socioeconomic offence, on the other hand, maybe committed by anybody. Socio-economic offences not only broaden the scope of white-collar crime as understood by Sutherland and acknowledged by others, but also have broader implications.

Socio-economic crimes differ from traditional crimes because they do not, to a common mind, involve or carry with them any stigma, while traditional crimes, unlike the socio-economic crimes have a symbolic meaning for the public and carry stigma involving a disgrace, depravity, and immorality and are thought of as decidedly the behaviour of the lower class of people.

Usually, in these types of offences, the victim is mainly public at large, especially the consuming public, and even if there is no harm to any particular person, the harm is caused to the society which has a very large impact upon the society.

In the case of conventional offences, culpability is not absolute and is rather connected to the wrongdoer's intent. However, in the case of socio-economic offences, the government has a propensity to reduce the need for mens rea for criminal responsibility.

The harm caused by these offences is higher than that caused by ordinary crimes. They harm the morals, health, and welfare of the population as a whole, and they have the potential to destroy the economic fabric. As a result, the legislature's policy in such instances is not to be indulgent in terms of prevention, control, and punishment, and the perpetrator is not permitted to go unpunished.

Traditional crimes were thought to be the result of the wrongdoer's physical, environmental, or sociological maladjustments. As a result, in such situations, reformatory efforts must also be made; on the contrary, socioeconomic crime is the result of hunger for money rather than any maladjustment. As a result, in these situations, harsh and frightening punishment is seen as acceptable, and reformer initiatives are not implemented.