

Dear students, my module will be from the paper on Indian Society: Issues and Concerns and the name of the module is Robert Merton's Theory of Anomie. He speaks of the tension between the cultural goals and means available to achieve the goals. When there is no balance between the goals and means the result is deviance. The tension between goals and means leads to five types of behaviors. Conformism, innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion. At the end of the module, the student will understand the structural strain theory of deviance. The student will be able to trace the origins of deviance to the strain caused by the tension between cultural goals and the means available to achieve these goals. Let's begin with Merton's theory of deviance. Now Merton gives us the structural strain theory. According to his theory, or his theory traces the origins of deviance to the tensions that are caused by the gap between cultural goals and the means available to people to achieve these goals. According to Merton, in a well integrated society or in a normal society, people use the accepted and appropriate means to achieve the goals that society establishes. In this case, the goals and the means of the society are in balance. Now the problem occurs only when goals and means are not in balance. That's the time we have deviance. It is only when there is an imbalance between goals and means that deviance happens. Now, economic success is a goal that almost everybody strives for. And there are also means, accepted means or legitimate means given by the society to achieve economic success and the means which are given by society or accepted by society are education and after education, after your qualifications by doing a good job, you get economic success. However, not all groups of people, not all categories of people, have equal access to these means or to these opportunities to achieve their goals. What happens then, is a structural strain and that strain produces deviance. Now, Merton says it is usually the lower class individuals who are likely to experience the strain as they want to achieve these goals, and they don't have the means which are accepted by the society. What happens is that for the lower class people, all opportunities are blocked. Opportunities for success are blocked and therefore these individuals are likely to turn to deviance to achieve economic success. In fact, Merton speaks of five categories of people. For him, the five categories are divided depending on their relationship to the culturally accepted goals and the means to achieving these goals. For him, the five categories, as I said, are Conformists, innovators, ritualists, retreatists, and rebels. Let's look at the first category of people, and there are conformists who believe in both the established cultural goals of society as well as the normative means for attaining those goals. Now, in every society, as I said, there are some goals which are accepted by the society and there are some means which are also appropriate means to achieve those goals. And as we see in the table there, there is a plus sign for cultural goals. There is a plus sign for institutionalized means, which means the people have accepted the cultural goals and the people have accepted the institutionalized means. That means then conformity with what is required in society. And these people are called conformists. Now since these people follow all the rules of society, they accept the goals, they accept the means. Therefore they are not deviants. Merton speaks of another category of people. These people, he calls them innovators. Now who are the innovators? Innovators are individuals that accept the cultural goals of society. But they will reject the conventional means. The appropriate methods of attaining these goals. Innovators, accept the goals, but have few legitimate means to achieve those goals. That is, they innovate their own means to get ahead, cause if they use the accepted means, they cannot achieve their goals. If they, if they rely on education, if they rely on jobs, they cannot get the economic success. They cannot get the success which they're aiming for, and therefore they think of other ways. They become innovative and therefore they are called as innovators

because they innovate means to achieve their goals. So in case of innovators, therefore, the cultural goals are accepted, but, they don't want to accept the cultural means because if they accept the cultural means then they cannot achieve the cultural goals. So what they do is they give up the cultural means and therefore we have a minus sign shown there under cultural means. In the table means to get ahead, they may think of robbery, may be some other crimes. So the innovator therefore innovates, go to crimes, go to robbery, go to some other way by which they can achieve economic success and therefore they are deviants. The third category of people are ritualists. Now who are the ritualists? Ritualists are those people who abandoned the goals which they once believed to be within their reach, but dedicate themselves to their current style. They play by the rules and have a daily safe routine. Ritualists, You know they have already realized they cannot cannot achieve the goal and therefore they give up the cultural goals. They don't have any goals, they just drift. But then the institutionalized means they accept, they carry on with the routine. So ritualists are individuals who do not believe in established cultural goals of society, but they believe in and abide by means for attaining these goals. The next category we have is that of retreatists. Now these are individuals who reject both the cultural goals and the accepted means of attaining those goals. They've given up the goals they've given up the means because they think that the goals are unattainable, and the means. Also, they're not happy with the means because they know that with the means they will not achieve their goals. So they simply avoid the goals. Simply avoid the means established by society without replacing those goals and those means. So if you see the table there, they have retreated since they have not accepted the cultural goals, they have not accepted the institutionalized means. Therefore these people are severe Alcoholics, drug addicts, homeless people. Retreatists, they often retreat into the world of alcoholism and drug addiction. They are escapists. These individuals escape into a non productive world. The last one is rebellion. But this final addition, that of rebellion, occurs when the cultural goals and the legitimate means are rejected, so they both reject the goals and the means. And not only they reject, they create their own goals and their own means and protest. They are like revolutionaries. So here you see in this table they have given up their goals and replaced by another goal. They've given up the means and replaced them by other means. So rebels not only reject the goals and the means, but they substitute them with new goals and new means of attaining those goals. Examples we have are terrorists, or, you know, Ku Klux Klan, etc. We have references. You can read the references to supplement the matter we have just spoken over here, thank you.