

## **Social Control**

Social thinkers have expressed their views in different ways about the need of social control.

### **1. Re-establishing the Old Social System:**

The main need of the social control is to keep the existing order intact. In other words it is the desire of the society to make its member to live in manner in which their forefathers have been living. Although enforcement of the old order in a changing society may hinder social progress, yet it is necessary to maintain continuity and uniformity in society.

### **2. Regulation of Individual Social Behaviour:**

Social control is necessary in order to regulate the individual behaviour in accordance with the social objectives and social values. This helps to maintain the social order. Unless the individuals live up to the prescribed norms of conduct and unless their self-seeking impulses are subjugated to the welfare of the whole, it would be quite difficult to maintain social organisation effectively. Hence, social control is necessary for the society in order to exist and progress.

### **3. Obedience to Social Decisions:**

Society takes certain decisions. These decisions are taken in order to maintain and upheld the values of the society. Through social control attempt is made to get the social decision obeyed.

### **4. To Establish Social Unity:**

Unity is not possible without social control. Social control regulates the behaviour of individuals in accordance with established norms which brings uniformity of behaviour and brings unity among the individuals.

### **5. To bring Solidarity:**

Social control is to create the feeling of solidarity in the minds of people. In the competitive world, the weaker group may be exploited by the stronger group or equally powerful groups may clash among themselves. This affects the harmony and order. Some groups may develop

anti-social attitudes and pose danger to the organisation of the society. Therefore, there is necessity for the different groups and institutions.

#### **6. To bring Conformity in Society:**

Social control is intended to bring about uniformity in the behaviour of the individual members of the society and to bring about different types of conformities in their societies.

#### **7. To Provide Social Sanction:**

Any marked deviation from the accepted norms, is considered a threat to the welfare of the group as a whole. Hence, sanctions are used by the group to control the behaviour of the individuals.

#### **8. To Check Cultural Maladjustment:**

Society is continuously undergoing changes. The individual has to adjust his behaviour according to changes taking place in the society. But all the individuals cannot adjust themselves to new situations. Some may become deviants. Thus, social control is necessary to check maladjustment of individuals.

No doubt social control is needed to prevent the society from disintegration. The need is greater in modern society because of its highly complex character and disintegrating forces present in it, says Kimball Young. It has become the habit of the people to violate rules and social norms. If the agencies of social control do not act effectively society may suffer from chaos and disintegration.

#### **Types or Forms of Social Control:**

Different social thinkers have categorized social control in different ways. A few classifications in regard to types and forms of social control are as follows:

##### **(1) Forms of social control as given by Karl Mannheim:**

Karl Mannheim, the famous social thinker, has categorized social control under the following two heads: (a) Direct social control, (b) Indirect social control.

**(a) Direct social control:**

That type of social control which directly regulates and controls the behaviour of the individual is called Direct Social Control. This type of control is to be found in family, neighbourhood, play-groups and other types of primary groups. In these institutions, parents, neighbours, teachers, classmates etc., keep control over the behaviour of the individuals.

**(b) Indirect social control:**

In this type of social control distant factors keep control over the behaviour of the individual. Such a type of control is exercised by secondary groups through customs; traditions, rationalised behaviour etc. and public opinion are important forms of indirect social control.

**(2) Forms of social control as given by Gurvitch:**

According to Gurvitch social control is of the following **four types**:

**(a) Organised social control:**

In this type of social control, the behaviour of the individual is regulated either through voluntary means or through democratic ways. This is done through natural ways of social control.

**(b) Unorganised social control:**

This social control is exercised by values of culture and usages, traditions, fashion, symbol etc. This is an elastic type of social control and is related to day-to-day life.

**(c) Spontaneous social control:**

This type of social control is exercised by ideas, rules and regulations, values, norms etc.

**(d) More spontaneous social control:**

Social control that is exercised by direct social and group experience, such as, aspirations, decisions, desires, etc., is called more spontaneous social control.

**(3) Forms of social control as given by Kimball Young:**

Well-known social thinker Kimball Young has categorised social control under the following **two heads**: (a) Positive social control, (b) Negative social control

**(a) Positive social control:**

In this type of social control positive steps such as reward, the policy of appreciation etc. are used for keeping the person under control. As a result of these steps man tries to behave in the best possible manner in the society.

**(b) Negative social control:**

This is just reverse of the positive form of social control. In this form of social control individual on the fear of punishment and derecognition by the society is made to behave in conformity with the values of the society.

**(4) Hayes's classification of social control:**

He has classified social control under the following two heads:

(a) Control by sanction, (b) Control by socialisation and education

**(a) Control by sanction:**

In this type of social control, those who act according to the values of the' society are rewarded, while to those who act against the norms of the society are punished.

**(b) Control by socialisation and education:**

Through education and socialisation, the child is taught to act according to the norms of the society.

**(5) Forms of social control as given by Lumbey:**

The well-known social thinker Lumbey has classified social control under the following two categories: (a) Physical force method, (b) Human symbol method

Under the first form, man is made to behave in a particular manner by application of physical force, but in the second form, he is made to behave in conformity with the values of the society through language, traditions, customs, religion, rituals, etc.

**(6) Forms of social control according to Cooley:**

According to Cooley there are two forms of social control:

(a) Conscious. (b) Unconscious.

Through conscious form or social control, society compels an individual to act according to its accepted objectives. Law, Propaganda, Education are such forms. Through unconscious

method, social institutions such as religion, customs, traditions, etc. keep control over the behaviour of the individual.

**General views about forms of social control:**

Generally social control is classified under the following two forms:

(a) Formal social control, (b) Informal social control

**(a) Formal social control:**

This type of social control is exercised by known and deliberate agencies of social control, such as law, punishment, army, Constitution etc. Man is forced to accept these forms of social control. Generally these forms are exercised by secondary groups.

**(b) Informal social control:**

These agencies of Social Control have grown according to the needs of the society. Folk ways, mores, customs, social norms etc. fall under this category of social control. Generally primary institutions exercise this type of social control.

**Means of Social Control:**

The working of the means of social control have generated immense interest among the sociologists. Social control has always been there, though its operational character has changed from age to age. The norms, values etc. were always there, but their constituents have always been changing.

The present day industrialization, urbanization, quick means of transport and communication; desertion of the villages; mobility of the people; the rise of towns, cities and metropolitan areas; and the mixing of the people, like of which never had been before, has brought the old values to shambles. The emergence of new is stimulating the social process.

L. Burnard classified Means of social control as exploitative such as punishment and constructive such as education. He speaks of them as conscious and unconscious means. F.E. Lumley classifies them as based on symbols such as rewards and force such as punishment. Kimball Young analyses them as positive and negative and Karl Mannheim speaks of them as

informal such as norms, values folk ways, mores customs, belief system, ideology and public opinion and, formal which includes among others education, law and coercion.

Social control becomes formal and institutional when any of the above process becomes structuralised into an institution. Social control is formalised and exerted by duly appointed functionaries and by formally approved methods.

### **Informal means of Social Control:**

#### **1. Norms:**

Norms are rooted in the institution. They provide the standard of behaviour and are regulatory in character. The choice of individual for striving towards the cultural goal is limited by institutional norms. These provide the guideline for action. The norms give cohesion to the society.

They influence attitude of individuals. Broom and Selznick described norms, as blueprint for behaviour, setting limits within which individuals may seek alternate ways to achieve their goals. A social norm operative in one social system is not equally operative in the other. Conformity to norms is qualified in view of the socially defined situation. Violator of norm may invite loss of prestige, social ridicule or even a more severe punishment.

#### **2. Value:**

It consists of culturally defined goals. It is held out as a legitimate object of realisation for all or for diversely located members of the society. It involves various degrees of "sentiments and significance". These may consist of inspirational reference. Values are "goals worth striving for". These are basic, though not exclusive.

#### **3. Folk Ways:**

Folk are a people with a community sense. They have a uniform and a common way of living. This constitutes the folkway. These are, according to F.B. Renter and C.W. Hart, "simple habits of action common to the members of the group; they are the ways of folk that are somewhat standardized and have some degree of traditional sanction for their persistence". These in the

interest of communal life and uniformity are accepted binding. Disregard shown to these brings forth disapprobation.

#### **4. Mores:**

Mores are such folkways as are based on value judgement and are deeply rooted in the community life. Any disregard shown to these invokes sanction. According to Green, mores are “Common ways of acting which are more definitely regarded as right and proper than the folkways and which brings greater certainty and severity of punishment if violated...”

#### **5. Custom:**

Custom is “a rule or norm of action.” It is the result of some social expediency. It is followed as it involves sentiment based on some rational element. It is automatic in character; no special agency is required to enforce it. Any disregard shown to it invokes social censure; It is enforced as it is.

It cannot be stretched to meet the changing requirements. It may with the change of circumstances fade into nonexistence. It at a given time, is a force, and reflects the social consensus. A law maker has to take it into consideration. He cannot disregard it. Custom is the handiwork of time. As a blueprint for specific social purpose it develops over the time. It takes time to, evolve itself.

According to Manu, a king must inquire into the rules of families and “establish their particular law”. King, according to him, is merely a disperser of Justice”. He is not to make law. Law cannot be made in disregard of customs. Custom is still a strong force in group ways. But, in general, custom, as a social discipline is at vanishing point. It has not the automation to adjust to the requirements of the fast changing society.

#### **6. Belief System:**

Belief system has deeply influenced man’s behaviour. It has provided the sanction to the social norms and conditioned the growth of culture. It has worked as a means of informal social control. Some of the beliefs hold a significant place in the social system. Belief in the existence of the unseen power has been with man from the primitive age. The feeling of fear made him believe that he is being watched.

This seems to be the spirit behind the prayer and meditation. The raising of hands in supplication, the kneeling before the symbol of faith or such other practices and ceremonials are indicative of it. The belief in the theory of incarnation is motivated by the faith in the continuity of life. Birth and death as the endless scheme of things came to be accepted as the change from one body to another.

It motivated man's belief in goodness. Wrongful actions, he felt, were bound to have bad consequences. He, therefore avoided these as best as he could. The belief in the theory of Karma, for this has been accepted fundamental in all the Indian religious systems. The belief in the immortality of soul has largely motivated religious thinking and practices.

### **7. Ideology:**

Social determination of thinking is ideology. Social thinking has always been influenced by ideology. Our social thinking has remained influenced by Varnashrama Dharma, Punarjanam and Dhamma. Politically, unity of the country has been the ideology. In ancient texts, this land is described as devanirmitam sthanam – the land fashioned by the gods themselves.

One of the commonest prayers requires one "to recall and worship the image of his mother country as the land of seven sacred rivers, the Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Sraswati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri, which between them covers its entire area.

### **8. Social Suggestions:**

Social suggestions and ideas are an important method of social control. Through these suggestions and ideologies, the society controls the behaviour of its members. Society generally controls and regulates the behaviour of its members through many several ways such as through books, writings and spoken words inculcation of ideas etc.

### **9. Religion:**

It includes those customs, rituals, prohibitions, standard of conduct and roles primarily concerned with or justified in terms of the supernatural and the sacred. Religion is powerful agency of social control. It controls man's relations to the forces of his physical and social environment. The extent to which religion controls the behaviour of men depends upon the degree to which its adherents accept its teachings.



## **10. Art:**

It is a method of sublimation and redirection of the instinct of an individual. It is a combination of religion, morality, ideal and so many things. Art is an indirect and inadvertent manner which trains the child or an individual for either way of life.

## **Formal Means of Social Control :**

### **1. Education:**

Education is a great vehicle of social control. After the family, it is the class room, the peer group and the leaders which exercise influence on a child by our ancients. The differences between-Dvija and Ekaja emphasised the importance of education in the social structure of the ancient society.

Education inculcates moral, intellectual and social values in individuals. It imparts a sense of continuity. It links one to one's heritage and sets a perspective before him. It gives the social vision of uniformity to the individual and fits him for social role.

The crisis of character that we experience today is no less due to the system of education, not rooted in our heritage, and is culturally alienating, socially non-collective, and politically factious. With the increase in the social role of education attention is being given to it at all levels – primary and adult, literary and technical.

### **2. Law:**

Law is for all practical purposes, as observed by Professor Holland "a general rule of external action enforced by a sovereign political authority". It is the general condition prescribed by the State, and the members of body politic are expected to follow it in given conditions. It is uniform and is meant for all.

Any disregard shown to it is bound to invite penalty. But as pointed out by Pollock it is bound to invite penalty. But as pointed out by Pollock it "existed before the state had any adequate means of compelling its observance and indeed before there was any regular process of enforcement at all".

The earliest law was the custom which was enforced by the accepted authority. As a prescribed course of action, it developed out of the general usages of the family, tribe or clans. Some of these faded away with the change of circumstances, and those which were repeated generation after generation gained influence. Custom thus came to be an important source of law. The other sources of law are Religion, Equity, Scientific commentaries, judicial decisions and legislation.

Law is a comprehensive term and includes common law, which is mostly based on custom and is enforced like law by the courts and statutory law, which is made by the Parliament. Another branch of law is the Constitutional law, that is the law as provided in the Constitution. The law of the Constitution determines the authority of the organs of the Governments in an appropriate manner.

### **3. Coercion:**

Force as a means of social control is as ancient as the society itself. In varying degree, it has been used by all societies. Some societies even now resort to force against the deviants. Our society has not given it a high recognition. Traditionally, our political ethics is based on nonviolence or least violence.

The only state that gave up force and coercion as the instrument of State policy was the Asokan State. Gandhiji made nonviolence a weapon, against the strongest empire, the British. In all civilized societies, penal codes are reviewed to humanize the law of crime. Force breeds revenge, it does not reform.

### **Agencies of Social Control:**

There are various agencies through which social control is exercised. By 'agencies' of social control we mean those arrangements through which values and norms of society are communicated. They are definite entities through which the institutional norms can be operative in a society. They are 'executive' agencies through which norms function effectively. They are the institutions for procedural' operation. The family, the school, State, and Public opinion an important agencies of social control.

### **1. Family:**

Family is a very important instrument agency of social control. On the one hand it socialises an individual and on the other it trains him about social behaviour. Family prescribes rules and regulations that the members have to follow. These rules and regulations form a part of social control. Family teaches the child to conform to the norms of the society. It exercises control over its members to bring about the desired action.

### **2. State:**

The state, as the society's overall regulative system, is the chief agency of social; control. It exercises control over its members through legislations, the police, the armed forces and the prisons. Really speaking, emergence of secondary group is a gift of modern complicated social order.

In such a social order the State exercises control through rules and regulations in! a more effective way. Law is the most important method of man-made social control. In the words of Maclver and Page "Law means the code upheld by the state, because of its inclusive applicability is thus guardian of society itself.

State is the agency of society that exercise its social control in the most effective manner.

### **3. Educational Institutions:**

The educational institutions – schools are powerful agencies of social control and these institutions are committed to the moulding of citizens. Formal education in modern societies communicate ideas and values which play a larger part in regulating behaviour. Education teaches to conform to the norms of the society. Education provides a conscious teaching programme that assist society in socialising children so that they will absorb its values, beliefs and norms.

As Gillin and Gillin say, "The only sense, therefore, in which education can be used as a means of social control is that in teaching people how to arrive at truth, it trains them in the use of their intelligence and thus enlarges the scope of control through feelings, customs and traditions".

#### **4. Neighbourhood:**

The neighbourhood reinforces the individual family as an agency of social control. In the neighbourhood group controls traditionally take the form of mores. They are kept alive and enforced by the older members of the locality.

#### **5. Public Opinion:**

Opinion of the people is the most important method of social control in a democratic set up. Every man tries to escape from the criticism and condemnation by the society. He therefore, tries to act according to public opinion and public sentiments. In a democratic set up, public opinion is more effective and important than any other agency.

#### **6. Propaganda and Press:**

Propaganda is the deliberate effort to control the behaviour and relationships of social groups through the use of methods which affect the feelings and attitudes of the individuals who make up the group. Radio, television, press and literature not only influence the ideas of the people but also bring about the changes in the way of life and way of thinking.

#### **7. Economic Organisation:**

With the rise of modern industrial organisation, the increase in the size of communities, a shift in the distribution of social control among the major institutions has occurred. The agencies which have risen to the forefront of social control are economic organisation, education and Government. The fear of losing a job compels an individual to follow the rules and regulations of the industry.