

Concept of Social Control

The social life of a man is controlled and directed by a number of rules and regulations of the society. Man is never free in that sense. For the greater interest of the social stability as well as for the welfare of the individuals there requires a control of the human behaviours. Disciplined and controlled behaviour should be orderly performed for well being of both the individuals and society. This concept of social control was first expressed in 1901 by E. A. Ross in his book 'Social Control'. According to this concept for the development of the society each and every citizen of a social order co-operate with others & feel sympathy for the others. That means all the social qualities and instincts of human beings are directed and controlled by the social environment. The selfishness and individuality require proper control otherwise it can bring serious damage to the social harmony resulting in pollution in social environment That is why a number of methods are there which should be followed by every citizen for maintaining social discipline. So social control is the collective methods of controlling the behaviours of the citizens required for the integrity and stability and discipline of the society as a whole. That is why orderly performances of behaviours by the citizen is essential. In every society there are some recognised and age old practices which should be strictly obeyed by the citizens. So the system which by controlling the order inculcate among the citizens social principles and values is known as social control. This control is possible through a number of methods and this control sustains the norms or standard of the society and maintain its equilibrium, So through social control the behaviours of the members of the society are controlled,

directed and channalised in a proper and desirable way for maintaining the equilibrium in the social environment. According to Maclver and Page, "By social control is meant the way in which the entire social order coheres how it operates as a whole, as changing equilibrium".

So far the well being of the entire society the influence which is enforced on the members is known as social control.

Methods of Social Control

There are different ways and methods of social control. In different societies, different types of methods are followed. In the societies where traditional ways of living are in vogue, infonnal means of social control are found to be effective. But in modern social order the effective methods are the formal methods.

The informal methods are - **(a) Ideologies (b) Belief (c) Customs (d) Folkways & Mores (e) Religion (f) Art and literature (g) Public opinion.**

The formal methods are :- **a) Law b) Education c) Coercion.**

The ideologies are usually the sources of inspiration for the social members. Through these ideologies the members can be activated and at the same time they are important to inculcate social values among them. As for example - the preachings of Ramkrishna or Vivekananda.

The Belief of the people in the society are effective media which can control the behaviours, activities and ways of living. Different habits are developed by means of belief.

Age old practices of customs and rituals though not imposed by any authority are spontaneously maintained and followed by all the individual members of the society. These traditional customs are followed as compulsory rules in their lives. So these served as strong controlling means for the integration of the people.

Folkways and Mores are the socially recognised

behaviours which are performed as habitual actions by all the social members. Mores are related to the ethical or moral aspect of our behaviour and that is why they are the most powerful means of social control.

Religion is the belief towards a super power. This is a type of relationship with the God. The belief in God is the basis of moral rituals and behaviours and social system. The religious institutions control human behaviours, enhance morality and direct towards honest and noble path. For healthy civilized life the religion plays an important role. It unites the members of the social order and keeps harmony in life. It makes the man stable in mind and body by bringing confidence. So it is an important controlling factor even in modern society.

Art and literature are also the controlling factors as these influence the social living. The behaviours of the social members are controlled by the arts and literatures. The national song can increase the sentiment strongly, classical dance can develop our pride towards our own culture. At the same time, the influence of higher quality literatures toward the society is great. It can change the mental make up, attitude, likings, interest etc. of the individuals. Therefore, these are also essentially important factors of social control.

Public opinion also acts as controlling factor in the society. In the rural society where interaction is very close it proves to be the strong social controlling agent. Though in the modern urban society there is no well and close knit relationships among the individuals, yet in democratic society the actions, behaviours, ways of life everything is influenced by the public opinion.

The formal factors of Social Control

Besides the informal means of social control there are some formal factors of social control. They are :-

(a) Law (b) Education (c) Coercion

a) Law : Law is the most essential, strong and powerful

factor which controls the behaviours and actions of the individuals. Law is imposed by the Government and that is why, it is essentially obligatory. Every citizen must abide by the rules and regulations of the society. Any violation of the law is subjected to punishment.

In the welfare state definite, clearcut and necessary laws are formulated and implemented for maintaining healthy social atmosphere and acts as controlling power in the society. Law ensures healthy social life for its citizens and as such controls the society effectively by enforcing it.

b) Education : Education is a process of transmission of socio-cultural heritage to the next generation. Through education the younger generations are socialized. Education means those experiences which help bring changes in behaviour, thinking and attitude of the individuals,

In this modernised era education should enable the individual to adjust with the dynamic, social order. In every sphere of the society scientific development is felt and as such the individual must be accustomed with all sorts of scientific and technological appliances so as to improve the social life. Scientific and technological enhancement is the ultimate output of educational development. It brings scientific awareness among the individuals, modifies their behaviours and ultimately makes them totally adjustable socialized person. At the same time, education inculcates moral values, punctuality, discipline sacrifice and develop fellow-feelings, co-operation and other social qualities essential for the wellbeing of the society as well as for the individuals. Again it is through education that the individuals develop ideas and concepts about the norms of the values in the society and the types of punishment in case of any violation of those norms. So we can safely state that education is the powerful controlling agent in the society.

Therefore, the younger generation requires to be grown up with properly and systematically organised education which should have the controlling power in the social order.

Coercion means bringing into control by applying powerful

physical strength, the violent behaviours harmful for destroying the peace and normal living condition in the society, This coercion can only be applied by the state machinery and no other institution or agency. This is applied as the last resort while all the other mechanism fail by the state to bring control over the citizens. But this coercion is purely mechanical and completely destroys the healthy and normal ways of development of the society. This coercive measure of social control has no permanent effectiveness.

All the above measures are not at all applied in the same way. It depends mostly on the nature and structure of the social pattern. The type of measure to be effectively applied for social control depends on the following factors.

The first consideration is the individuals who will be controlled through the measures and at the same time the authority who is going to apply. So both the controlling authority and the individuals upon whom the measures will be applied are the main considering factors.

Secondly, the success of social control depends mainly on the democratic methods. If the methods of social control are democratic then all the citizens can have their right to express their own opinion freely and as such the scope for uncertainty or feeling of being deprived does not exist at all. So the democratic ways of social control are more positive and effective as the citizens can obey it without any hesitation.

Thirdly, the effectiveness of the means of social control are dependent on the systematic living of the stable society. The simple social order of the rural areas are more easily controllable than the complex urban society.

Another important factor is the disparity among the citizens regarding education and culture. The more differences among the members of the social order, the more uncontrollable is the social environment. As a result continuous clash and conflict prevails there.

Education is the prime factor in the social control. The

lack of literacy is the main reason behind the disorganised social order. Due to this lack of education, stability and literacy the social life becomes weak and as such no means of social control can be effective.

The educational institution and schools play a great role in social control. Education modifies the raw and instinctive behaviours and gives them the desirable modified shape suitable for adjustment with the social environment. It also transmit socio-cultural heritage from generation to generation. So all the tradition, folk-ways and mores are transmitted to the children and these are essential for controlling and directing their behaviours towards the formation of desirable social order. The school should produce scientifically aware and technologically sound personalities upon whom depends the future advancement of the society. The school should at the same time inculcate healthy mental attitude and remove superstitions, develop social qualities like co-operation, fraternity and unite people for ensuring a stable peaceful society. Though in modern era of globalization medias have their adverse role on the students and adults, yet the importance of education as an important social means must be appreciated.