**Question:** **What is social control? Write a note on the meaning and nature of social control. (2016)**

**Answer:**

**Nature of Social Control:**

1. **Social control is the control of society over individuals:** Society imposes some control over its members. Each and every individual have their own rationality to control their self inner instincts. But sometimes these inner instincts over ride their self-control. Therefore, the self-control is not sufficient to establish a good social order. Some external control is essential to control the behavior of the people and it is society which can impose control over its members and as social animal it is the obligation of individuals to obey the rules and regulations of society to bring unity, solidarity and to establish an orderly society.
2. **Social control denotes some kind of influence:** Influence means the capacity to motivate the behavior of others. In social context, if it is used, social control also implies some kinds of influence imposed by society over its members to control their behavior. Society as welfare unit exercises various ways and means through which it influences and controls the behavior of the people. For instance, the public opinion, coercion, religion, leadership etc. are some devices used by the society to influence and control the behavior of it members.
3. **Social regulations are normative in Nature:** They are standards which individuals are required to attain and any failure to reach such standards may be regarded as a lapse. Every individual, for example, must speak the truth and lies, when detected, are looked down upon as acts that fall short of social dignity.
4. **Social controls are relative as well as partial:** Regulations are regarded as relative. They primarily make secure the interests of dominant sections of the society. Such sections may be religious or politically dominant and, in modern times, economic power is a strong determinant of interests that have to be preserved. Again, Codes and regulations are partial in the sense that no one category of them is effective enough to fully control human thoughts and actions; different agencies of social control complement the work of each other.
5. **Control can emanate from Different Agencies:** For example, there may be rules and regulations of voluntary ‘associations’ like the club or the church. Each set of rules has sanctions for violations and they vary in degree and intensity. A club or a professional organization may have certain agreed rules that work as its code and the sanctions take the nature of reprimand, suspension or expulsion. Similarly, ‘communal’ codes may regulate important customs as are observed in a community and the penalty for their disregard or violation may be ridicule or ostracism respectively.
6. **Backed by sanction:** For example, the moral and the religious codes now-a-days are less effective than they had been before, since the concepts of sin and sufferings in hell appear more as superstitious than as logical thoughts to modern men; but the intentions of the state are felt in very clear terms when its civil or criminal laws are violated.
7. **Social control is done by motivation:** Psychologists do not admit that a fear complex in the individual makes him obey the codes. In fact, the motivations of the individual even in respect of obedience to law may be taken as similar to those that condition his socialization process. Suggestions and imitation are a very common process in building up a social being and, with the habituation to certain ideas on his part, the stage of indoctrination naturally arrives. Such indoctrination may take place even in his family and he may willingly and readily respond to certain codes. The individual grows in himself a sense of loyalty towards principles that are taught to him, and he does not wish to question their propriety.
8. **Exercised for promoting the welfare:** Social control and welfare of community as a whole is co-related with each other. Sometime the self-interest creates corrupt society and it only fulfills the interest of particular section of people. But the prime goal of formation of society is the welfare of community as a whole, not merely to fulfill the personal desire. Social control is the only way through which the welfare of community can be promoted controlling personal interest. Without controlling the behavior of the people, it is not possible to promote welfare of all the individuals or the group as a whole.
9. **Social control is as old as human society:** The system of social control is not new concept. Since primitive society till now the social control has been continuing in society and will remain till the existence of human being. In primitive age though people spent their lives in forest yet as social animal they also maintained some natural rules and regulations in the state of nature as prescribed by Locke and Rousseau in their social contract theory. In ancient and medieval period also the behavior of the people were controlled by their traditional customs. In this modern period most of the societies have adopted the democratic ways and means to control the behavior of the people.
10. **Universal in Nature:** The influence of social control is universal. In every walk of life of human being, where there is society, there is social control. The human history reveals that in every society people followed some social control to regulate their society and as time passes the devices of social controls also have been changing. Again, though the types of social control are differ from society to society yet its presence as social phenomenon is universal, it exist in each and every society in different forms.
11. **Exercised through both formal and informal agencies:** Social control is exercised through both formal and informal agencies. Law, legislation, military force, police force administrative, different forms political, social, religious, cultural organizations are the formal institutions through which the behavior of the people are controlled. Violators of the formal control are given punishment depending upon the nature and type of violation.