1. **Question:** **What are various means through which social control was exercised in the past and exercised at present? (2015)**

**Answer:**

**Informal Means**:

Informal means of social control are very powerful particularly in primary groups. No man wants to suffer loss of prestige. He does not want to become the target of ridicule. He does not want to be laughed at by the people. He does not want to be socially boycotted. On the other hand, he wants praise, appreciation, honor and recognition by the society. Thus, informal means, like praise, ridicule, boycott etc. effectively control his behavior. Some of the informal means are explained as follows:

1. **Belief:** Belief is a faith, believed by man that a something is true. Belief may classified as - the existence of an unseen power; reincarnation, the Goddess of vengeance, hell and heaven and mortality and soul. These different beliefs control the behavior man in society. The belief of the existence of an unseen power controls an individual not to do wrong actions. He believes that his actions are being watched by an unseen power i.e. the God. The second belief, the theory of reincarnation which prevails specifically in Hindu society keeps the individuals away from anti-social activities. Here, he believes that if he does wrong acts, in next birth his birth will not good. The third belief is in the Goddess of Vengeance. Man believes that the goddess of Vengeance will punish him for his sins in future. The Fourth is the existence of hell and heaven which influences a man to do good acts and avoid sins in order to go to heaven or avoid going to hell after death. In this way, beliefs as the powerful means play a significant role to control human behavior.
2. **Suggestions:** Suggestions are another powerful means of social control. Suggestion as indirect means of communication can be used through various methods. The first method is the examples of great men to others. The ideals great personalities are placed before individual and suggestions are given to them to follow these ideals. The literature is the second method of suggestion. The literature may influence people to heroic actions and develop in them the feelings nationalism. The third method of suggestion education. The curriculum of education may change the behavior and ideas of the students and make them responsible citizens. The fourth and the most popular method in this modern and electronic age is the method of advertisement. It is the magazines, radio television, internets etc. through which suggestions are given to the people and control their social behavior
3. **Ideologies:** Ideology means some sets of ideas. Ideologies influence social life to a very deep extent. The followers of different ideologies interpret social realities from the context of their ideology and try to prove the correctness and to justify the ideals confronted by them in social life. The influence of Leninism greatly changed the social life of Russians. Gandhism as an ideology also influences social life in India. The ideologies give satisfaction to all men to believe in a system and control their social life. Ideologies play the role of motivators and control the social action of the people and provide a set of values which confine them within a particular area of thought. The success of any ideology is an effective means of social control
4. **Folkways:** Folkways are some recognized manner of behavior, which arise automatically in a group or society. People follow some behavior patterns consciously or unconsciously in their day to day life which arise spontaneously. The folkways are generally some habits of the individual and are common to all society. Though these arise unconsciously and automatically yet the people socially approve them. Nobody violates the folkways, because they are backed by some traditional sanctions. They are the strength of foundation of culture in society. The individual may be socially boycotted if he does not follow or violates the folkways.
5. **Modes:** Modes are also some folkways but they are considered more significant in social life. The difference between modes and folkways is that the modes fulfill the fundamental needs of society more directly than do the folkways. It is the collective expressions of the group sense arise for social welfare. Modes always play a significant role always molding human behavior. They prevent an individual from doing any acts which are considered as wrong in the sense of his group. They are more effective the instruments of control. In every society, there are number modes like to monogamy, p endogamy, prohibition anti-slavery etc. It is the duty of each and every member of society to know the conformity of modes and from social point of view it is regarded very essential. Behaviors contrary to modes are not permitted by society. In some society there are some modes which are harmful for the people but as a member of society they must follow them. Thus, mode controls man's behavior in society to a very great extent.
6. **Customs:** Customs are some established habits traditionally practiced by the people. These have been persisting for a long time. Customs are transmitted from one generation to another by socialization process. They rise automatically in society. There is no established authority to introduce or to safeguard them. They are accepted and recognized by individuals in society. Customs have great importance to control the behavior of the people. They are powerful means and no one can ignore them. They unit men together as social animal. Customs control the personal interest of the people. It is one of the most important means through which people are compelled to conform to accepted norms of society.
7. **Religion:** Religion is another powerful informal mean to control the behavior of the people. Religion is a belief that there is someone superior to men. Though different society practices different kinds of religions yet religion as a faith practiced in all the societies. Religion influences behavior of the people. Each religion have some common principles and these are– the children should respect their parents, people should tell a lie or cheat or other, people should be honest and faithful and should limit their self desires, they should not involve in anti social activities etc. These religious principles greatly control the behavior of the people in society.
8. **Art and Literature:** Art includes the painting, sculpture, architecture, music and dance etc. and literature implies many things like poetry, dream and fiction etc. Both art and literature influence and exert control on human behavior. Arts as a means of control influence the behavior of the people. The music played in military pared creates the feelings of strength of a nation. A classical dance creates respect and appreciation towards our traditional culture. The statute of Mahatma Gandhi teaches us the lesson of simple living and high thinking and controls us having from high standard of living. Like art, the literature also influences our behavior in society. There are two kinds of literature i.e. the good literature and bed literature. Almost all classical literature has their great social value. Motivating human mind the good literature can change the fate of a nation. In India the writings of Robindra Nath Tagor greatly influence the Indian people against British rule. The writings of Rousseau in France also change the fate of France people. In this way, both art and literature exert control through their influence on the imagination.
9. **Public Opinion:** Public opinion plays a great role to control human behavior. Public opinion greatly influences the action of the people. For fear of public criticism, the persons hesitate to indulge in immoral and anti- social activities. Naturally every individual wants to win public praise and avoid public criticism. They do not desire criticism but recognition from other. The efforts of the human race are to get love and praise and the persons who behave according to social norms will win public recognition and get love. Therefore, people do not want to against public opinion and thus control their behavior.

**Formal Means:**

Formal means of social control are most effective to control the human behavior. There are three formal means of social control and these are law, education coercion. Brief explanations of these means are explained as follow:

1. **Law:** The ancient and medieval societies depended upon the informal means of social control but when societies have been facing different types of complexity, they begun to formulate rule and regulations, which define the kinds of misdeed and fix the punishments to be imposed upon those who do not obey them. Law is some kinds of principles which are enacted by authorized structure and enforce them in practical fields. The violators of laws are given punishment with the prescribed rules which retains in either written or unwritten form. Due to large in size, the modem societies cannot apply the informal means of social control to bring harmony in society. Therefore, modern societies had to resort to formal means of social control.
2. **Education:** Education also plays a significant role controlling the behavior of the people along with law. The importance of education as a means of social control is being realized mostly in modern age. Education prepares the human being to live as social animal. It reforms the attitudes which are wrongly formed by the children at the early stage. A family may motivate a child towards superstitions. But it is education that corrects his beliefs and removes from his mind superstitions. It teaches him the discipline, co-operation, tolerance and sacrifice. It gives him the lesson of honesty, fair play and knowledge of right and wrong. The importance, of education for creating right social attitudes among the youth cannot be minimized. It controls his impulses and make more social.
3. **Coercion:** Coercion means the use of force to achieve a desired end. Most often the physical force is very essential for social control. When all other means of social control fails the physical force is used as ultimate solution of problems. There are different kinds of physical coercion and these are the bodily injury, imprisonment and death penalty. Physical coercion the last solution of the social control. Societies do not desire to use this kind of mean. It may have some immediate effectiveness but it cannot permanently control the behavior of the people. The use of coercive measure is not strength but a weakness of society because it only depends on external force. Sometime the coercion measures also imply the non-violent means and these are the strike, the boycott non-co-operation. It is also used to control the human behavior. For instance, the students may go on strike to force the principal withholding of social or economic intercourse with others to express disapproval and to force acceptance of demands.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion it can be said that social control is the way to control the social behavior of the people. The control of behavior is essential to bring unity and solidarity in the society. There are two ways of social control – one is formal ways and another is informal way. Informal ways are mostly traditional and less effective than the formal ways. The formal ways are modern and mostly backed by the legal structure of state.