1. **Question: Discuss the differences between the formal and informal means of social control. (2014)**

**Answer:**

**Differences between Formal and Informal Social Control**

**Formal Social Control:** Formal social control is implemented by authorized agents including police officers, employers, military officers, and others. It is carried out as a last option at some places when the desired behavior is not possible through informal social control. The situations and severity where formal control is practiced varies with countries. This is practiced through law as statutes, rules, and regulations against deviant social behavior. For example, certain laws like prohibition of murder can be directed at all members of a society. Fishing and hunting regulations are made for certain groups. Corporate laws are laid for governing the behavior of social institutions. Formal control is conducted by government and organizations through law enforcement mechanisms. It can also be conducted through some formal sanctions including fines and imprisonment. Processes of formal control in democratic societies are determined and designed through legislation by elected representatives. Courts or judges, military officers, police officers, school systems or teachers, and government agencies or bureaucrats, enforce formal control.

**Informal Social Control:** It is exercised by a society without stating any rules or laws. It is expressed through norms and customs. Social control is performed by informal agents on their own in unofficial capacity. Traditional societies mostly embed informal social control culture to establish social order. Shame, sarcasm, criticism, ridicule and disapproval are some of the informal sanctions. Social discrimination and exclusion are included in informal control at extreme deviant cases. Self-identity, self-worth and self-esteem are affected in informal control through loss of group approval or membership. The severity and nature of informal control mechanisms differ from varied individuals, groups, and societies. Informal is effective in small group settings including friends, family, neighborhood, work group and others. However, in some large and complex societies, informal social control and disapproval is ignored easily. At such situations, it is necessary to follow the formal one.

**Some of the differences of formal and informal social control are:**

1. Formal social control includes written, formalized and codified statements in laws, rules, and regulations. Whereas informal control does not contain any written rules.
2. Formal control agencies are authorized are created by government and informal control agencies are created by social networks and organizations but not by government.
3. Formal control is much effective and stronger than informal social control. Any situations which cannot be handled by informal control are subjected to formal one.
4. Formal control is effective for even large groups of population but informal control is effective only for a small group of people.

Social control, formal or informal, thus helps in regulation of society. The study of social control includes disciplines of sociology, anthropology, psychology, law and political science.