SOCIAL CONTROL, CUSTOMS AND SOCIAL INTERACTION PROCESS

Definitions

Social control is the way in which social order coheres (joins together) and maintains itself, how it operates as a whole as a changing equilibrium (balance) – Maclever

Social control is the sum of those methods by which a society tries to influence human behaviour to maintain a given order – Mannheim

Meaning of social control

Social control is an influence exerted by the public or society for promoting the welfare of the group as a whole.

Customs

The sociologists have used various terms in order to classify various human acts of behaviour. If these various types of human behaviour are organized, they are called customs. **Mac lever** defined customs as socially **accorded** (agreed) or **accredited** (given) ways of acting.

Customs are the **accepted** ways in which people do things together. Customs are socially **prescribed** forms of behaviour transmitted by tradition and enforced by social disapproval of its violation (not doing). Our acting, our dressing, our worship are controlled to a great extent by customs. It has some definite forms. It occurs in regular fashion. Customs are thought of as being well-established and **difficult** to change. Customs are generally a group action. Unconsciously we conform to the customs of our own society.

The **classification of customs** and their origin are as follows:

Folkways:

- Folkways are **expected** forms of behaviour but are not rigidly enforced
- Folkways are the **customary** ways of behaving in society, in which society exerts some force for **conformity**
- Folkways are **recognized** ways of behaviour in a society
- The Folkways are socially **acceptable** ways of behaviour. The customary norms of society that do not imply moral **sanction** (punishment)**.** Folkways are otherwise called as **Usages** sometimes.

- The folkways are the **right** ways to do things because they are the **expected** ways.
- **Folkways** help individuals in a group to order social life in a smooth and harmonious way.
- People who have similar needs began to satisfy these needs in a similar way in the same environment give rise to **folkways.**
- Folkways usually arise without prior intention in the process of living.
- They are the results of frequent **repetition** of petty (little) actions often, by large number of people acting in the same way when faced with some needs.
- An observation of folk-ways is not a must. So violation of folkways is not punished severely.

Examples of folkways are:
- Good manners
- Entering home only after removal of shoes
- Lady touching the feet of her mother-in-law
- Rajput wearing a turban
- Greeting others with folded hands

Mores:
- Mores are the plural of Latin word '**More**'.
- The mores are the customs or patterns of behaviour, which are regarded by members of social system as **vital** and **essential** to the welfare of the group.
- They show what is **right** for the welfare of group. Mores may be defined as those customs, which are held to be **essential** to ethical or moral values of people.
- Mores are the socially **acceptable** ways of behaviour that do involve **moral standards** (regulations) and violation of **more** may result in severe **social action** or **sanction**, such as ostracism (exclusion of individual or family from the village or society).
- Religion provides foundation for **mores** of the society.
- The term **more** is used for those things that are **ought to be done**.
- It is used for **positive** actions.
- Society exerts pressure to conform the regular pattern and it not followed individual gets penalty from society.

Examples of Mores:
- Inter-dining of high-caste Hindus with out-caste Hindus
- Honesty is one of the recognized mores of the society
- Saluting the National Flag

- Standing during the playing of National Anthem
- Monogamy (having one wife or husband)
- Women and children first in the event of crises

Taboos:

- The term '**taboo**' is used for the **negative** action and for the things that one **ought not to do**.
- Taboo means forbid.
- It refers to the prohibitions of the types of behaviour because of some magical, supernatural (God) or religious sanction

Examples of taboo: Total abstinence (self denial) of eating beef in a Hindu village (eating beef in Hindu religion) and eating pork in Muslim religion.

Rituals:

- **Ritual** is prescribed form of behavior for **certain occasions** and certain actions are **designated** in prescribed manner.
- **Ritual** may be defined as a pattern of behavior or ceremony, which has become the **customary** way of dealing with **certain situations.**
- Religion is found in all established form of activities. It may include prayers.
- Military organization and other formally organized groups have adhered to a prescribed form of behavior known as **ritualism**

Examples of rituals:
- Playing with crackers on 'Diwali'
- Celebration of Independence Day
- Celebration of Republic day

Conventions:

These are customs regulating more significant social behaviour. Parents generally do not care to leave such learning to chance. Parents instruct their children the conventions though often they (parents) cannot explain why the child must confirm.

Examples of Conventions:
- Being polite to others
- Wearing clothes in public
- Dating or courtship (found in western countries) and engagement practices

- Using knife, spoon or fork for eating etc.

Social Interaction Process

Human being by nature and necessarily a social animal. As a social animal he meets with other human beings, interacts with them and establishes social relationship. Thus, when individuals and groups meet and establish social relationships they interact with each other. Such interaction is known as social interaction. Dawson and Getly say that "social interaction is the process whereby inter-penetrate the minds of each other. This interaction can take place between two or more individuals or groups. Interaction occurs in the form of social processes. The social processes are the fundamental in which people interact and establish social relationships.

Definitions:

Gillin and Gillin: "By social process we mean those ways of interacting which we can observe when individuals and groups meet and establish system of relationships or what happens when changes disturb already existing modes of life".

Ginsberg: "Social processes mean the various modes of interaction between the individuals or groups including co-operation and conflict, social differentiation and integration, development, arrest and decay".

Horton and Hunt: "The term social process refers to the repetitive form of behavior which is commonly found in the social life".

Thus, social process consists of sequence of events, repetition of events, relationships between the events, continuity of events and special result.

There is lack of unanimity among the sociologists regarding the types or forms of social processes. In 1905, Ross had listed thirty eight social processes. Gillin divided social processes into six categories. Park and Burgess reduced the list to four fundamental types. However, social processes can broadly be categories into two types i.e. Associative and Dissociative. The German Sociologist George Simmel was the first thinker for the first discussed theoretically the associative and dissociative processes. Associative processes always work for the integration and benefit of society. Therefore, they are called as integrative social processes; these social processes bring progress and stability in the society.

Cooperation, accommodation, assimilation etc. are the examples of associative social processes.

Co-operation

Co-operation is the first fundamental and associative process of social interaction. It is an integrating activity and is believed to be the opposite of competition. The word 'Co-operation' has been derived from the Latin words 'co' meaning together and 'operarf' meaning 'work'. Thus, co-operation generally means working together for achievement of common goal. **Fairchield** defines co-operation as "the process by which individuals or groups combine their effort, in a more or less organised way for the attainment of common objective". Merrill and Eldredge defines cooperation as "a form of social interaction wherein two or more persons work together to gain a common end".

Characteristics of co-operation

1. Co-operation is a conscious process

2. Co-operation is a continuous process

3. Co-operation is a universal process

4. Co-operation is personal process.

5. Co-operation is an associative process of social interaction which takes place between two or more individuals.

Role of Co-operation

All the progress that mankind has made in the various fields to be attributed to the co-operating sprit of the people. The initial success of man in his flight to moon is also the result of co-operation.co-operation for human is both a psychological and social necessity. It creates direct contact between the individual and individual, group and group. Cooperation maintains the balance in the society.

Accommodation:

Life cannot go along if groups are engaged in conflicts. Therefore, conflict must be resolved for making social life peaceful. Accommodation is resolution of conflict, which means adjusting oneself to the new environment. Accommodation is an associative process of social interaction. **Lundherg** defines accommodation as "the adjustments which people in group make to relieve tension of competition and conflict" Maclever defines accommodation

as "a process in which a man attains a sense of harmony with his environment'. **Ogburn and NimKoff** define, "Accommodation is a term used by the sociologists to describe the adjustment of hostile individual or groups".

Characteristics of accommodation

1. Accommodation is the result of conflict. If there were no conflict there would be no accommodation.

2. It is mixture of both love and hatred.

3. It is a universal process.

4. It is a continuous process.

According to Young and Mark there are five methods of accommodation. They are:-

1) Pressure

2) Compromise

3) Mediation

4) Consensus and

5) Tolerance

Gillin and Gillin have mentioned seven methods of accommodation. They are:

a) Yielding to coercion

b) Compromise

c) Arbitration and conciliation

d) Toleration

e) Conversion

f) Sublimation and

g) Rationalism.

Considering the views of the above sociologists we discussed some of the method of accommodation as follows:-

a) Coercion or pressure:

Coercion means the use of force. Coercion or pressure presupposes the existence of parties of unequal strength and powerful and the other weak. In this method of accommodation the weaker of the two conflicting parties submits to the stronger one out of fear. For example, the vanquished accepts the decision or will of the victor. In the wars, the victorious country imposes its will on the vanquished.

b) Compromise

When the conflicting parties are of equal strength or power want to replace quarrel through accommodation that method of accommodation is known as 'compromise'. This process is based on the principle of give and take. The parties involved scarifies voluntarily for each other because they realize that the continuation conflict would cause loss of their energy and resources. That is why, compromise is a conscious effort. Management- labour agreement on wages, hours of work, promotion, etc., involves accommodation of this kind. This method is similar to consensus.

c) Tolerance:

The method of accommodation in which there is no settlement of difference but there is only the avoidance of overt conflict is known as 'tolerance'. In this method, each group bears with each other. It is based on the principle of "live and let live". It is a form of accommodation without any formal agreement. Here no concession is made by any of the parties and there is no change in basic policy. It is the best method of accommodation. The existence of Hindus, Muslims and Christians in India is the bright instance of tolerance.

d) Conversion:

This process takes place when one of the contending parties tries to convert his appoints to his viewpoint by proving that he is right and they are wrong. Generally, the term conversion is used in the religious context to refer to conversion into some other religion. But, is may also occur in political, economic and other fields.

e) Sublimation:

This method involves the substitution of non-aggressive attitudes and activities for aggressive ones. To conquer violence and hatred by love and compassion is the example of sublimation.

f) Rationalisation:

The justification for action or conduct based on imaginary premises is called rationalisation. It is that method of accommodation in which the contenting parties tries to justify their action or conduct on purely imaginary grounds. Thus, rationalisation involves plausible excuses or explanations for ones behavior instead of acknowledging one's own fault. For example, a student who fails in the examination for his own negligence blames the teacher or the examination system or the valuation system.

g) Accommodation through third party:

When the contending parties are of equal strength and are not able to resolve their conflict or differences, they may have compromise with the help of a third party. With the attempts of the third party accommodation is achieved by means of arbitration, mediation and conciliation.

1. **Arbitration :**

   When the decision of the third party is binding on both the parties the method of accommodation is known as arbitration.

2. **Mediation :**

   It is the technique of bringing conflicting individuals together and creating in them the willingness to consider the possible settlement of their differences. In other words, in this method of accommodation, the mediator has no power to settle the conflict as his decisions are not binding on the parties. He simply acts as an advisory agent. The acceptance of the advice or suggestions is up to the contending parties.

3. **Conciliation :**

   It is closely related to compromise. In this method of accommodation an attempt is made by the third party to persuade the conflicting parties to develop friendship. Thus, in case of the conciliation the conciliator offers only suggestions in order to terminate a conflict.

Generally the labour-management disputes, political disputes, family disputes etc... are resolved through the intervention of a third party.

Role and importance of accommodation.

Society hardly goes on without accommodation. Accommodation checks conflicts and maintains co-operation in social life. It enables the individuals to adjust themselves to changed conditions. Thus, it not only reduces or controls conflicts but also maintains the necessary security of a social order without which it may be difficult for individuals to carry on their life-activities together. Society is essentially the result of accommodation.

Assimilation

Assimilation is the process where persons and groups acquire the culture of the other group in which they come to live, by adopting its attitude and values, its patterns of thinking and behaving. In short, it is a way of life. Assimilation is another associative process of social interaction. According to **E.A. Bogardus** "Assimilation is the process whereby attitude of many individuals are united and thus developed into a united group".

Characteristics of Assimilation

1. Assimilation is the universal process

2. It is a slow and gradual process.

3. It is an associative process which is closely related to accommodation.

4. It is a cultural and psychological process.

5. It is also an unconscious process.

6. It is not a simple but a complex process.

Role and importance of assimilation:

Like socialization, assimilation is a process of learning, but it starts when the individual comes in contact with cultures. Assimilation is a social and psychological process. It is a result rather than a process. The social contacts thus established finally result in assimilation. The speed of the process of assimilation depends on the nature of the contacts. The ancient culture of India provides a number of examples of assimilation. The Aryans

assimilated the Dravidian ideas. The Hindus and the Muslims in India through their prolonged living assimilated the culture of each other.

Dissociative processes are the negative type of interaction which often works towards disintegration in society. This includes

1. Competition and
2. Conflict

Competition

Competition is less violent form of opposition, in which two or more persons or groups struggle for some end or a common goal. Attention is focused on the reward or the goal rather than on the competitor. It is based on the fact that the people can never satisfy their desire. Competition takes place whenever there is an insufficient supply of things that human beings commonly desire. There is no competition for sunshine and air which are unlimited. Competition is an effort to outdo the competitor is achieving some mutually desired goal. Its aim is not to banish or destroy the opponent. The competitor observes the rules of the game which eliminate force and fraud. When these rules are broken, it becomes conflict.

According to Bogardus, "Competition is a contest to obtain something which does not exist in a quantity sufficient to meet the demand.

Mazumdar defines competition "as the impersonalized struggle among the resembling creatures for goods and services which are scarce or limited in quantity".

Characteristics:

- Competition is impersonal struggle.
- Competition is an unconscious activity.
- Competition is universal.
- Competition is a cause of social change.
- Competition may be constructive or destructive.
- Competition is continuous.
- Competition is dynamic
- Competition is always governed by norms

- Competition is the source of motivation for the individuals.

Value of social functions of competition:

Competition like co-operation is indispensable in social life. Competition performs useful functions in a society.

1) Competition determines the functions of individuals.

2) Competition is conducive to economic as well as social progress.

3) Competition is a source of motivation.

4) Competition provides better opportunity to satisfy their desire.

According to H.T.Mazumdar, competition performs five positive functions.

1) It determines the status and location of individual members in a system of hierarchy.

2) It aims to stimulate economy, efficiency and inventiveness.

3) It tends to enhance ones ego.

4) It prevents undue concentration of power.

5) It creates respect for the rules of the game.

Conflict

Conflict is universal and occurs in all times and places. There never had been a time in which some individuals or groups did not come into conflict. It arises primarily from a clash of interests within a group or society. Conflict is, in other words, a competition in its more occasional, personal and hostile forms. It is an ever present process in human relation which seeks to obtain rewards by eliminating or weakening the competitors.

According to **A.W.Green,** "the deliberate attempt to oppose coerce or force the will of another or others".

According to **Horton and Hunt,** conflict is "a process of seeking to monopolise rewards by eliminating or weakening the competitors".

According to **Young and Mack,** "conflict takes the form of emotionalized and violent opposition in which the major concern is to overcome the opponent as a means of securing a given goal or reward".

Characteristics

1) Conflict is affected by the nature of the group.

2) Frustration and insecurity promote conflict.

3) Conflict is always conscious

4) Conflict is personal

5) Conflict is not continuous but occasional

6) Conflict is universal

7) Conflict may be personal or impersonal.

Role of Conflict:

H.T. Mazumdar mentions the following role of conflict:

1) Conflict leads to redemption of value system

2) Conflict may lead to change in the relative status of conflicting parties.

3) Conflict may lead to new consensus

4) Conflict tends to still end the moral and promote the solidarity of the group.

5) Conflict may lead to change in the relative status of conflicting parties.

6) Conflict, concluded with victory, leads to the enlargement of the victor group.

Conclusion:

Competition is always governed, by moral norms while much of conflict is not, as proved by the maxim "everything is fair in war". The line dividing competition from conflict is thin. The desire to attain ones ends for one's self is often so strong that competition crosses over into conflict.