# UNIT - 11: DEVIANCE, CONFORMITY AND SOCIAL CONTROL

**Structure**

## 11.0    OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the types of deviance;

- describe the meaning and causes of conformity;

- analyse the need of social control;

- discuss the different forms of informal social control;

- bringout the significance of formal control.

## 11.1    INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we have understood the concepts of socialization  as a process; its meaning, types and you have also appreciatied the theories of socialization. We have noted that socialization is a process by which humans will be transformed from biological being to social being. Here you will learn the concepts of deviance, conformity and social control. This unit, being intimately connected with the concept of socialization both as a conceptual and logical sequel, discusses the meaning, causes and factors  responsible for eliciting and facilitating  conformity and deviance respectively. An essential feature of social life is that it is possessed of a set of norms which regulate the behaviour of individual members. No society completely succeeds  in getting all its members to behave in accordance with the social norms.  Some of them fail to conform to these norms. *Failure to conform to the customary norms of society is deviant behaviour.* Thus, deviant behaviour is any behaviour that fails to conform to some specified standards.

## 11.2    MEANING  OF  DEVIANCE

Through socialization and social control, society ensures the maintenance of social system. Majority of the people adhere to the soical norms of the society.  But we cannot say that all the members in the society will stick to the norms of the society. According to young and Mack, societal norms will not be followed at anytime, some of than fail to conform to these norms. Failure to conform to the customary norms of society is deviant behaviour or deviance.  Thus, deviant behavior is any behaviour that fail to conform to some specified standard.  Deviant behavior disturbs the social equillibrium. It is contravention of the social norms.  It is a departure from the usual

modes of behaviour. It consists of disapproved activities. Cheating, Unfairness, malignig, delinquency, immorality, dishonesty gambling, betrayal, corruption, wickedness and sin, drunkardness, theft, robbering, violation of law, tax evasion, favourism, enmity, pornography, false allegation, malice, deviant behavior will exist in one or the other form. Since, deviance exists everywhere anytime, but it is the lacuna which will appear in man's behaviour.

## Definition

According to **Orville.G. Brim Jr**. "Deviance can be defined as failure to conform to the expectation of other persons".

As stated by **Louise Weston** "Deviance can be defined as behaviour that is contrary to the standards of conduct or social expectations of a given group or society".

As defined by **M.B. Clinard** "the term deviance should be reserved for those situations in which behaviour is in a disapproved direction and of sufficient degree to exceed the tolerance limit of society".

In simple words, deviance may be defined as the act of going against the group shared expectations and norms.

## Types of Deviance

### Innovation

Society sets forth goals for the individuals to aim at and also lay down means to achieve them. Sometimes, a person may accept the goal but not the means. He may innovate or create his own means for achieving the goals and in this sense, he becomes deviant. If this innovated means brings positive results, it poses no problem for the social order and if it brings negative results, poorer people and pleasure seekers may resort to illegitimate 'dishonest' means to get money. Such persons are problematic deviants.

### Ritualism

Some times a person gives up important social values and yet does lip service to them by carefully observing related norms of behaviour. They abonden the pursuit of success as fruitless and yet strictly adhere to the prescribed means. They regard rules as sacred. They tend to lower their aspirations and never expect success. For example, a

person is to stabbed to death with in the sight of a number of neighbours.  But, they refuse to get themselves in the case.  This kind of behavior is ritualistic.  It is difficult to criticize such behavior harshly. It is also a form of deviance because norms should exist to serve values.  They should not eclipse values.

**Retreatism**

The rejection of both values and norms is 'retreatism'. It is one way or another 'dropping out' of society.  The person who drops out  from 'rising' to speak.  Those who 'retreat' from the society refuse to lead a 'conventional' life. They are unable to get success 'honestly'.  They are not able to break the conventional procedure because of the strongly internalised norms. The best solution to their dilemma is to 'drop out' of society.  Hence 'retreatism' is a kind of passive rejection of the goal of success and of respectable occupational activities.

**Rebellion**

Rebellion is another response open to those who reject both ends and means. Some people reject the prevailing order and engage in efforts to replace that order. They try to substitute new ends and means for those that exist. They are called 'rebels'. Rebellion is produced by alienation from both values and norms. Instead of 'retreating', the rebel gives active support and loyalty to an incompatible set of  values and norms. He feels that they are superior to those of conventional society. He seeks some reconstruction, some charge in the existing order.  He may even attempt at the complete destruction of that order or struggle to replace it with another order.  Rebellion may vary from small scale to that of greater scale.  For example, a student giving up education in the name of doing greater things is an example of small scale rebellion.  A law abiding young man going away from society to form criminal gang to take revenge upon some authority is an example of greater scale rebellion.

## 11.3    FACTORS  FACILITATING  DEVIANCE

Social deviance refers to the non-conformity to or violation of the norms of the group.  The violation of norms is not evenly spread in a population.  In the same way, all   norms are not violated.  What we normally observe in society is that some particular norm is violated or some particular persons violate a given norm or both. Harry.M.Johnson has listed some factors that facilitate deviance.

**Faulty socialilzation**

Socialization is the process which the individuals learn to conform to the norms of the group.  When he fails to conform to the norms systematically he becomes a social deviant.  Socialising agents often  fail to inculcate in the new born person the strong morals.  Sometimes socialising agents themselves may directly or indirectly, overtly or covertly encourage such deviant behaviour of the new members.  Parsons has pointed out that deviance proneness is more potential in the lower classes, mainly because of failure of socialization.

**Weak sanctions**

Sanctions refer to the rewards or punishments used to establish social control or to enforce norms in a society.  If the  positive sanctions (rewards) for conformity and the negative sanctions (punishments) for deviance are weak, the individual may simply neglect them.

**Poor enforcement**

Even though the sanctions are stronger they are often not enforced effectively due to the too small enforcement staff.  Because of this the validity of the norm is Weakened. For example:  it is  not possible for a handful of traffic police staff to enforce traffic rules on all vehicle riders.  The result is, many ignore and some even openly violate traffic rules.

**Ease of rationalization**

The violators of norms  try to satisfy their conscience by inventing some plausible rationalization such people have constructed an intricate system of 'ego defence' which  they use to brushaside the reactions and comments of other people. They are picking on me, I could not help myself;  I did not do it for myself; they asked for it is a deal;  it is all a matter of luck' -  These expressions reflect the attitudes of such violators.

**Corrupt enforcement**

People may lose respect for law and norms when they have no faith in law enforcement agency  or authority.  It is known that police corruption and illegal violence damage very much respect for law in the areas affected by such practices.  It is

also observed that in some instances police maintain 'informal relations' or secrete understandings with the violators. As a result such relations condone the activities which the police are supposed to suppress.

## Ambivalence of the agents of social control

Ambivalence refers to the co-existence in one person of opposing emotional attitudes towards the same object. For example, a person may consider women not only as an object of respect, but also as an object of love, particularly of sexual love. A doctor with such ambivalent attitude may inflict sexual crime on young and beautiful female patient, policemen, teachers, parents, business superiors, all may have such complex personalities with unconscious deviant tendencies. These tendencies may lead them unconsciously to encourage certain kind of deviation rather than to counteract it.

## Sentiments of loyalty to deviant groups

When once a person is involved in a deviant group he obliged to co-operate with other members. He will find it difficult to 'betray' his 'co-members' and suffer their disapproval and rejection. He is forced to approve of the behaviour even if he is no longer believes in their activities. As parson has remarked, deviant groups deal harshly with disloyal members. Because of such members not only pose a threat of exposure to enforcement agencies but also a threat to the stability of the groups. The defection of one member may tempt other members to go away from the group. Defection destroys the very solidarity of that made the deviant group strong and satisfying in the beginning.

## Indefinite range of norms

Some norms relating to some values are not probably specified. For example: the scope of patriotism and freedom is not clearly defined. Hence, some even defend their deviant behaviour in the name of patriotism and freedom.

## Secrecy of violations

Some susceptible persons are more prone to commit deviant acts if they are assured that such acts are not going to be made public. Forexample: Sex crimes and illegal abortions very often take place because of the confidence on the part of the actors that their behaviour would remain secret.

## Check your progress-1

1. **What is deviance?**

2. **What is ritualism?**

3. **What is retreatism?**

4. **Socialization is one of the causes of deviance.**

   True                          False

5. **Rebellion is not the type of deviance.**

   True                          False

6. **Innovation is not the form of deviance.**

   True                          False

7. **Faulty socialization is the cause for deviance.**

   True                          False

8. **According to ………………….deviance can be defined as a failure to conform to the expectations of other persons –**

   **A.** Auguste Comte             **B.** Herbert Spencer

   **C.** Orville G.Brim Jr.           **D.** Karl Marx

9. **Retreatism is one form of ……………………..**

   **A.** Conformity                 **B.** Deviance

   **C.** Folkways                   **D.** Mores

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## 11.4   CONFORMITY

The society maintains its order  by means of normative system.  Normative system refers to the system of rules which the people are expected to accept, obey and appreciate.  People follow most of the rules.  But some may violate some of the rules. When people act in consonance with the norms they become 'conformity'. And when they go against them, they become 'deviants'.  Both conformity and 'deviance' go hand in hand.

## Meaning

When a person accepts both goal and means, the result is 'conformity'. Thus, a student, who values higher education thinks that the college rules are necessary for earning a degree, tries to conform to the rules to get the degree,. This is the typical, normal, conventional attitude and behaviour. "Conformity" implies behaving in accordance with the norms. It is not limited to the external behaviour alone. It implies that the individual consciously approves of a particular behaviour and is prepared to follow the same. It does not mean that the norms must always be present in activities in accordance with the norms without being sufficiently aware of the norms. Example: Showing respect to the national flag when it is hoisted in a programme, respecting elders etc. our behaviour is in conformity with rules that we know.

## Causes

Harry M. Johnson has mentioned about causes of conformity to the social norms. They are:

## Socialization

It is through the process of socialization that social norms are interanlised by the individuals. Therefore, norms become inseparable part of people.

## Insulation

Role conflict and conflict in the norms that apply to the same actor contribute to deviance. However, some built in arrangements will serve to reduce normative conflict and there by contribute to conformity. Among such arrangements one of the most important is the fact that social norms that might conflict are largely prevented from doing so by applying to different times and places. Another kind of insulation is that given actor carries-out the activities of his various roles with, or face to face with different role sets. For example, a bank manager may learn music from his subordinate during non-official working hours accepting him as his own teacher. He may give rewards and show respect to his subordinate in this regard. But during the working hours the subordinate will have to accept his inferior status and obey the commands of the manger. Thus, even though the individual remain the same in both the context, their roles and role expectations differ markedly. The clarity with regards to the role expectations helps reduce uncertainty and conflict and support conformity.

**Hierarchy of norms**

Norms that apply to same actor are found to be in the form of a hierarchy. It means the norms are ranked in order or precedence. Hence if role expectations conflict with one another the actor has grounds for making a choice. The hierarchy of norms, as well as the time and place aspect of norms, is a part of culture. For example, soldier may be put to such a conflicting situation in which either he will have to attend to the needs of the ailing mother who is on the death-bed or rush to the battle ground to attend to the urgent call of the army. The hierarchy of values and norms of his society help the soldier to take appropriate decision. It is through socialization that the hierarchical aspects of the norms are learnt. If the different aspects of a cultural system are properly integrated and if socialization helps the individual to understand this integration, he will have no difficulty in following the expected forms of behaviour. The integration of the cultural system serves as a guide for the individual behaviour.

**Social control**

Different means of Social control help the socialized actor to imagine and anticipate what will happen to him if he violates the norms. Thus sanctions lead to conformity eventhough they are not actually applied.

**Ideology**

People's conformity to group norms depend, to some extent upon the ideas and ideology they hold. The norms partly express broader values that are more purely and precisely emphasized in ideology. Ideology strengthens faith in the existing system. It adds to the norms a kind of intellectual support. Hence, it helps to motivate people to conform to its norms.

**Vested Interest**

Conformity to social norms does not always depend upon idealistic motives. Sometimes, due to vested interest or self interest, people conform to them. Norms define rights as well as obligations. Some of the rights protect the exclusion of other members. Those who enjoy such advantages are likely to be satisfied with the norms that protect them. Hence, they support these norms with a greater sense of conviction than the disadvantaged persons". Property rights are a good example in this regard.

Robert Bierstedt gives four causes for the question 'Why people conform to the norms'. They are briefly discussed here.

### Indoctrination

People conform to the norms simply because they have been indoctrinated to do so. Indoctrination refers to the process of injecting into the personality of the individual and the group norms. We are taught, for example, to take both at certain time, to respect elders, to avoid vulgarity, and so on. The norms are indoctrinated through the process of socialization. As a result they become a part and parcel of the personality of the individual.

### Habituations

People conform to the norms because they become habituated to them. What is customary is likely to become in many cases habitual. Some of the norms are indoctrinated in the beginning. But they become habitual practices afterwards. We are taught to wash our hands and mouth after the meal but after a while it becomes a matter of habit. Repetition makes a practice a habit and most of the folkways come to be rooted in the individual in this way. When one is habituated to a practice, one observes it automatically, without thinking or putting forth-deliberate attempts. Habituation reinforces the norms and guarntees the regularity of conformity.

### Utility

People appreciate the utility of norms and hence conform to them. Norms help us to interact with others with much comfort and ease. For example, we recognize that the flow of traffic at busy intersections is smoother and less dangerous when signal lights are installed. Thus, we stop at red light and start at green. In many social situations, we realise the utility of the norms to which we conform.

### Group Identification

People conform to the norms of social groups to which they belong. We conform to the norms because conformity is a means of group identification. By conformity to the norms we express our identification with the groups. Sometimes we even conform to some irrational folkways because they are our own and they identify us with our own society and our own social groups. For example, a particular student tries to bring

home prepared lunch to the college to eat during the lunch interval just to be in the company of his fellow-members of the "Clique"

**Check your progress-2**

1. **What is social conformity?**

2. **What are the causes of conformity?**

3. **When a person accepts both goal and means the result is 'conformity'.**

   True                      False

4. **When people act in consonance with the norms they become 'conformity'.**

   True                      False

5. **Social control is one of the causes of conformity.**

   True                      False

6. **Insulation is one of the causes of …………..**

   **A.** Conformity                      **B.** Deviance

   **C.** Folkways                      **D.** Mores


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**11.5   SOCIAL CONTROL**

**Introduction**

   Rousseau's book 'social contract' begins with a famous sentence, "Man is born free, and every where he is in chains" (Rousseau 1762:01). It is true that man cannot be absolutely free in society. The collective life of man is possible only in the context of social constraints. The sustained social experience of man has revealed to him that in his own interest and in the interest of others he must subject himself to some kind of control. Attainment of individual happiness is the main aim of social life. The happiness can be attained not with unsounded freedom for action but with restrained behavior. Man has given to society the power of exercising its control over the behavior of its members through various mechanisms which can be referred to as social control.

**Meaning**

   Human society is a system of values based on conformity to social norms.

Society must have harmony and order. This can be accomplished by regulative principles. They are the standards or norms set up by a group for controlling the conduct of its members.  Absence of regulation leads to disorder, conflict and confusion. Hence, there is a need to regulate the behaviour of individuals to the realization of common interests. The method of social regulation is known as social control.

E.A. Ross was the first American Sociologist to deal with this concept of  social control in his famous book "Social Control" published in 1901.  Infact, it was he who first used the concept of "Social Control" in sociological discussion.  According to him, the individual has deep rooted sentiments that help him to co-operate with other fellow members. These sentiments are sympathy, sociability and a sense of justice. However, these sentiments by themselves are not enough to suppress the self-seeking impulses  of the individual.  Society has to make use of its mechanisms to accomplish the necessary order and discipline.  Ross has stressed upon the roles of public opinion, law, belief, religion and ideals, in establishing social control.

## Definition

Some definitions of social control may be examined here:

**MacIver & Page** (1952) 'defines social control'  as a way in which the entire social order coheres and maintain itself-here it operates as a whole, as a changing equilibrium.

**William F. Ogburn and Meyer E. Nimkoff** define social control as "the  pattern of pressure which a society exerts to maintain order and establish rules" (p. 182)

For Ross, Social control is a system of devices, where by, society brings its members into conformity with the accepted standards of behaviour".

**Peter Worsely (**1977) defines social control as "a process with in social groups which operates to prevent the violation of social rules" .  The term social control used in a general sense to refer to any means employed by the group to achieve social order. The above definitions indicate that social control is a device to regulate the behaviour of individuals.

## Need

Social solidarity is essential for the existence of society.  No two persons are alike in their nature, ideas, attitudes and interests.  Every individual is a separate personality. There are cultural differences among the individuals. Some worship an idol, others do

not. Some eat meat, others are vegetarians. Some are orthodox, others are modern. Some are fashionable, others are simple. As a matter of fact, society is a heterogeneous organization. If every individual is allowed unrestricted freedom to act and behave, it may create social disorder. For an orderly social life social control is necessary. Social control is necessary for the following reasons.

**To maintain the old order**

It is necessary for every society or group to maintain its social order and this is possible only when its members behave in accordance with that social order. An important objective of social control is to maintain the old order. Family helps in the realization of this objective. The elder members in the family enforce their ideas on the children. In religious matter parents in the family influence the behaviour of children. Though enforcement may hinder social progress, continuity and uniformity in society is desired.

**To establish social unity**

Without social control social unity would be difficult. Social control regulates behavior based on established norms. It brings uniformity that leads to unity among the individuals.

**To regulate individual behavior**

No two persons are alike in their attitudes, ideas – interests and habits. People believe in different religions, dress differently, eat different food, and have different ideologies. There are so much differences in the ways of living of the people that there is the possibility of clash of interest between them. Social control is necessary to protect social interests and satisfy common needs.

**To provide social sanction**

Social control provides social sanction to the social ways of behaviour. There are folkways, mores and customs present in society. Every individual has to follow them. If an individual violates the social norms, he is compelled through social control to observe them. Thus social control provides sanction to social norms.

**To check cultural maladjustment**

New inventions, new discoveries and new philosophies continue to emerge in every society. The individual has to adjust his behaviour to the changes taking place in society. But all the individuals cannot adjust themselves to the new conditions. Some become progressive, others remain conservatives. When a person from the village moves into the city he may face new conditions, new cultural standards and it is possible that he may wrongly adjust himself to the new cultural environment. He may become slave of passion, visits bar and spend time in night clubs. During this period in his life social control is very necessary, let he may become a deviant. It has become a fusion to violate social norms.

**Social control brings about social conformity**

This is the main purpose of social control. Contemporary society is a multi group society where differential norms co-exist. As a result, behavioural patterns of different groups differ significantly. However, these differences should not be allowed to exceed the limits of tolerance. People must be made to feel the need for security. For the sake of security they are obliged to accept conformity. Social control thus provides for conformity.

**Social control brings about solidarity**

Social control is to create in the minds of people the feelings of identity and of solidarity. For the proper and smooth functioning of the society, the different organization and institutions of the social system must be properly integrated otherwise, in this competitive World, the Weaker group may be completely dominated by the stronger one. Some group may develop anti-social attitudes and pose permanent danger of the organization of the society. It becomes necessary for the society to establish a reasonable balance between different groups and institutions. This would repose confidence among people. Society does this through various means of social control.

**Social control assures the continuity of social group**

Societies not only strive for stability and solidarity but also for their own survival or continuity It is the bedrock on which the future of the society depends. Society maintains its continuity by controlling effectively its groups. Consequently the means of

social control become in course of time a part of culture. Culture is transmitted from one generation to another. Thus various means of social control function to maintain the continuity of the society.

## Check your progress–3

1. **What is social control?**

2. **What is the need of social control?**

3. **The book 'Social Control' written by MacIver & Page.**

   True                    False

4. **Society can exist without harmony and order.**

   True                    False

5. **Social solidarity is essential for the existence of society.**

   True                    False

6. **Social unity would be difficult without ...................**

   **A.** Social control                    **B.** Socialization

   **C.** Social mobility                    **D.** Social stratification

7. **The concept of social control was first dealt by ...........**

   **A.** Auguste Comte                    **B.** Herbert Spencer

   **C.** Karl Marx                    **D.** Edward Alsworth Ross

8. **Social control aims at ...............**

   **A.** Individual welfare                    **B.** Disorganization

   **C.** Collective welfare                    **D.** Social deviance

## 11.6    FORMS

Social control though universally found among all human groups, it differs from community to community and from time to time. It implies the imposition of rules to regulate the behaviour of members in any organized group. There are many means of social control and it is difficult to classify them. Broadly, the means of social control may be classified into two categories, viz., formal and informal. The informal means has indirect enforcement and the formal means have developed from the informal practices.

Historically, the informal means of social control are earlier and serve as a background for the formal means of social control.

**Informal social control**

**Customs**

Custom is a social phenomenon. Custom refers primarily to "practices that have been often repeated by a multitude of generations, practices that tend to be followed simply because they have been followed in the past". According to Emory S. Bogardus, "customs and tradition are group-accepted techniques of control that have become well established, that are taken for granted and that are passed along from generation to generation" Anderson and Parker Write "The uniform approved ways of acting we follow are customs, transmitted from generation to generation, by tradition and usually made effective by social approval".

Custom is a broad term embracing all the folkways and mores. Customs are the long established habits and usages of the people. Habits precede and create customs, though these may be certain customs which presuppose no habit, for example, the custom of widows wearing weeds as a sign of mourning for their husbands.

Custom regulates social life and it is an important means of controlling social behaviour. The importance of customs in society cannot be minimized. They regulate social life especially among illiterate people to a great extent and are essential to the life a society. Custom is the repository of social heritage. It preserves our culture and transmits it to the succeeding generations, brings people together and develops social relationships among them. Enemies are turned into friends by custom. It is needless to say that Hinduism is alive today because of customs. It would have died long ago had not the Hindus been forced to abide by customs. Customs mould personality; customs play an important part in personality building. From birth to death man is under the impact of customs. It is thus evident that customs play a major part in regulating our social behaviour. They determine our culture, preserve it and transmit it from generation to generation. They are essential to the life of a society and are held so sacred that any violation of them is regarded not only a challenge or a crime, but also a sacrilege calling upon the people vengeance of the gods. Custom exercise such a powerful hold over men that they can be called the "King of men". On account of its control potential the custom has been called "**tyrant**" by Shakespeare.

The authority of customs diminishes in complex society where impersonal relations largely replace personal contact and where individuals are removed from the direct control of the group as a whole. In modern society the force of customs has loosened. According to Mannheim "Money, economy disintegrates customs because they are too slow in their workings. Modern society requires legal rules that can be promptly and uniformly enforce.

## Folkways

Folkways and Mores represent different kinds of social norms. The term "Folkways" was introduced into sociological literature by **W.G. Sumner** in a book with the title "Folkways" published in 1906. The word 'Folk' means people and 'ways' refers to their behavioural. habits". Folkways are the accepted ways of behaviour. The term is often used to include customs, conventions, usages, etiquettes etc. It includes several modes of behaviour to meet the needs of social life. The ways of eating, talking, dressing, playing, walking, working, greeting, conversing, expressing love and affection etc. represent folkways. Walking on the right side of the road, driving on the left, wearing different kinds of dresses at different times, regular brushing of the teeth, taking bath regularly, respecting the elders, saluting, shakings hands, giving tips, wishing good-bye, etc., represent different kind of folkways.

## Definition

"Folkways are the typical or habitual beliefs, attitudes and styles of conduct observed within a group or community" – Lundberg.

"Folkways are behaviour pattern of everyday like which generally arise unconsciously in a group" – Gillin and Gillin

"Folkways are literally the ways of the folk, that is social habits or group expectations that have arisen in the daily life of the group" – Merill

"Those way of acting that common to a society or a group that are handed down form one generation to the next are known as folkways" – A.W. Green.

## Nature and characteristics

Folkways are the products of man's group life. They are created by the groups for their sustenance and maintenances. Individual get social recognition by conforming

to the folkways. A social practice becomes a folkway when majority of people observe it regularly. The practices of the majority normally become the folkways because such practices become standardized practices by constant repetition.

Folkways constitute one of the types of informal means of social control. They are not as compulsive and obligatory as that of laws or morals. Conformity to the folkways is neither required by law nor, enforced by any agency of the society. Those who violated folkways are not punished by formal means. They are not absolutely obligatory though they are considered as necessary. For example, one who does not brush his teeth regularly, take bath daily, and wash his clothes regularly and properly, is not going to be punished by law. But such an individual is put to gossip and ridicule.

Folkways differ from group to group and society to society. They may also undergo changes in course of time. Within the same group or society. For example, table meals are common in the west whereas , majority of the Indians squat on the floor and take their meals with hands. But now changes have occurred. Further folkways vary with age and sex in all most all the places. They vary according to the social class status. They differ according to region, ethnic group, caste, class and occupation.

It is not possible for anyone to enlist all be folkways. They are so diverse and numerous. No social act of man can escape from its – boundary. Folkways change with changing social conditions. Some folkways undergo relatively rapid change. Sumner called them 'fashion', Fashions relating to dress, hairstyle, architectural designs etc. have undergone rapid change. However, folkways associated with beliefs and practices regarding the family, property etc, resist change very often.

**Importance**

The folkways are the foundation of every culture. When fully assimilated they become personal habit. Hence all are free to solve problems and strive toward, individual and collective goals W.G. Sumner believed that 'the life of society consists in making folkways and applying them.

Folkways have become a universal characteristic of human societies. Hence, they constitute an important part of the social structure. Human infants learn the folkways through the elders as naturally as they grow older. They become a part and parcel of the personality of the infants. They provide predictability to behaviour, being one of the

types of informal means of social control, folkways have assumed importance in the study of social control.

## Mores

The 'Mores' represent another category of norms. It is a term used to denote behaviour patterns which are not only accepted but prescribed. All the folkways are not equally important. Some of them become more compulsive and regulative in character. Those folkways which become regulator of behaviour are normally referred to as 'mores'. W.G.Sumner applied the term 'mores' to those folkways which are considered by the group to be essential for its Welfare and existence. When the elements of truth and right are developed into doctrines of Welfare, the folkways are raised to another plane to the plane of mores.

## Definition

Accoring to Gillin & Gillin "Mores are those customs and group routines which are thought by the members of the society, to be necessary to the groups continued existence" R.M. MacIver and C.H.Page defined that "When the folkways have added to them- conceptions of group welfare, standards of right and wrong, they are converted into mores".

"The term 'mores' is best reserved for those customs which connote fairly strong feeling of the rightness or wrongness of mode of behaviour"- Edward Sapir.

## Types

There are two types of mores, namely *positive mores* and *negative mores*. Positive mores always 'prescribed' behaviour patterns. They represent the 'do's'. They give instructions and provide guidance for the people to behave in a particular way. Examples include respecting elders, protecting children, taking care of the sick and the aged people loving one's country, doing service to the society, worshiping God, speaking the truth, leading a righteous, life, etc.

Negative mores proscribe behaviour patterns. They represent the don'ts. They are often called 'taboos'. Taboos prohibit certain behaviour patterns. Taboos put severe restrictions on the range of one's behaviour. Example, Don't appear before the people without dress. Don't be cruel to the wife and children, don't steal, don't commit

adultery, don't tell lies, don't be irreligious, don't disrespect the God, don't be unpatriotic.

**Nature and characteristics**

Mores are the regulators of our social life. They represent the living character of the group. They are always considered as right by the people who share them. Violation of mores morally viewed as wrong. Hence, they are more compulsive in nature and put restrictions on our behaviour. Mores are relatively persistent, long lasting than folkways. They may become conservative elements in society. They also put up resistance to changes. For example, people at one time resisted the efforts of the law makers to abolish the so called morals such as slavery, child marriage human sacrifice, practice of 'Sati' etc. But it is wrong to conclude that mores are fixed things that do not change. They change subtly over a period of time. In the examples given, considerable changes have taken place. Mores vary from group to group and have not always been uniform. What is prescribed in one group is prohibited in another. Eskimos, for example, often practice female infanticide, whereas, other practice is as strictly forbidden. Some tribals of New Guinea practice cannibolism, whereas such a practice is beyond comprehension in the modern society. Similarly, some practice strictly monogamy, whereas other practice polygamy. Further, what is right at one time may be wrong at another and vice versa. The practice of 'Sati' was 'moral' then but not now.

Mores normally receive the sanction and backing of values and religion. When this occurs they become more powerful and binding. Mores backed by religious sanctions are strongly justified by people. Ten Commandments, for example, are considered to be important and essential for the Christians, because they are backed by their religion.

**Importance**

MacIver & Page have listed the following social functions of mores. Firstly mores always bring pressure on our behaviour. They mould our character and restrain our tendencies.

They act as powerful instruments of social control. Mores are indoctrinated into the personalities of the individuals from the beginning and hence they help them exercise constraints over their own behaviour.

Second, mores are the means by which the individual gains identification with his fellows.  As a result of that, individuals mountain social relations with others that are clearly essential for satisfactory living.

Finally mores bring the people together held them into strong cohesive group. Those who share common mores also share many other patterns of  behaviour. Every group or society has its own mores.  There are mores for men and women of all ages, for all class, for all groups from the family to the nation.  The mores of each of these to help maintain solidarity of the group.

With the evolution of society, the mores have become more 'specialized'.  Their hold on people is diminishing.  Hence they are supplemented with law and legislations.

## Differences between Folkways and Mores

Folkways and Mores can be distinguished in the following manner.

Mores are relatively wider and more general in character than the folkways.

Mores imply a value judgment about folkways.

Out of the mores come convictions of right and wrong and not out of the folkways. Individuals may disobey folkways without incurring punishment. But violation of the mores brings disapproval and severe punishment.

Mores are more compulsive regulative and rigid than the folkways.  Hence, mores are more effective and influential in moulding our character and restricting our tendencies.

When the folkways take on a philosophy of right living and a life policy of welfare, they become mores; hence, the mores always contain a welfare element in them.

Folkways are less deeply rooted in society and change more rapidly, on the other hand mores are deeply rooted in society and change less frequently.  Folkways may change with one's social status and occupational position. But, mores donot change in that manner  for they are permanent standards of right conduct.

The line dividing the folkways from mores is clear and definite.  However, some differentiating one from the other becomes extremely difficult especially in some cases. For example,  drinking liquor is regarded by some as simply bad and  must be avoided.

But, some others may condemn it as highly immoral practice.  Generally, conceptions of right and wrong proper and improper are determined by the folkways and mores. They can make anything right and anything wrong. Of the two, mores are dominant than the folkways.  Even the laws are often called the 'Codified mores'.

The main purpose of social control is to bring about conformity, solidarity and continuity,  of the social  group.  Social relations imply a sense of obligations appealing to the feelings and reason of members who are governed.

## Formal control

Formal social control is a direct imposition of rules on the behaviour of members in society.  In modern society, where the relationships are heterogeneous, the devices of social control are largely formal.  For instance, state, laws and codes are the formal agencies of social control.  The impersonal relationships in modern society are regulated chiefly by legal sanctions, enforced by the state.

The distinction between the formal and informal means of social control depends upon the nature and development of human society. In tribal societies feelings were upper most and the behaviour was controlled by convention, usage, faith and custom. These were no laws except the religious practices. In modern society there is a scope for deviation and behaviour is based more on reason. As such, the effective devices of social control are found in the  form of legal enactment.  Laws are not, however, independent of customs since their authority is derived from a good number of informal means of social control several informal means of social control have acquired a new meaning in the context of laws.

## Law

Among the formal agencies of social control, the law is the most effective device in modern society. The state is a social organization, the government is its instrument and law is its enactment. The authority of the state is vested in the government and it is exercised through laws.  Presently, the legal system has come to play an important role. Among tribal groups, there is little need for a separate legal code. Tribal people respect and obey the customs, traditions, and morals.  They believe in the existence of gods, ghosts, spirits, and souls.  They think that any misconduct on their part would displease the gods and would invoke their anger.  Custom and morals are being looked upon as

commandments of god. And these customs regulate the everyday business of life. They assign to each his rights and duties, adjust the claims and interests of each to those of the rest. Hence, in the primitive society, social life runs smooth and there is a balance between the moral standards of society and the behavior of people.

But, in the industrial society, this balance between moral standards and behavior of people is absent. Present day society is divided into conflicting social classes, caste groups, divergent interest groups, rival political parties and competing for religious dominations. In such a society the informal agencies of social control are no longer sufficient. Hence, we are forced to resort to more formal methods of social regulation. In other words, in the modern complex socio-economic society, it is difficult to get along without formalized controls, because the personal and intimate relations have largely been replaced by more impersonal and indirect contacts. For example, in the agrarian community barter and direct dealing in product was possible. Today, in an intricate economic organization, such relations are possible only in limited way. All kinds of control have been involved to meet the needs of buyers and sellers of producers and consumers of merchants, bankers, shippers, manufacturers, farmers and others who have a part in the complex web of economic life.

Law and lawyers play a dominant role in modern society. The rules of marriage and divorce, property and inheritance have been drafted by legal experts. The lawyers regulate our conduct right from the kitchen room down to the international politics. They regulate the relation between parents and children, producers and consumers, workers and employers, the government and the citizens and between the nations of the world.

Every nation require good laws. They are required to guide people. They are made and enforced by the state. In modern society, the state is the supreme authority. Every state with in its territory maintains a system of law which is universally applicable to all people. All people living with in the territory are its members and they should obey the law and inturn they are protected by the law. And the law of the state carries with it physical force hence it can compel obedience, punish the wrongdoer, award imprisonment or death sentence.

Compare to customs, law is more deliberate and more clearly stated. It is a product of conscious thought and planning. Being deliberate, the law is highly adaptable to changing conditions.

Generally, the law performs the following functions **1.** In the first place, it maintains a fundamental order within which men shall find security and the common conditions of opportunity. **2.** It attempts to bring about an adjustment of those conflicts of interests between individuals or groups which they cannot settle for themselves or in settlement of which they encroach on the interests of others. And finally, it makes attempt in given social environment to realize the ideal of justice.

It is not difficult to maintain a basic order. It is the obligation of law particularly democratic law, to remove social and economic inequalities and thus help the realization of political and economic justice. Democratic law cannot be a silent witness to the economic, political and social justice.

## Education

Education is a process, where by, the social heritage of a group is passed on from one generation to another. It is in this sense, Durkheim conceived education as **"the socialization of the younger generation".** He also states "it is actually a continuous effort to impose on the child ways of seeing, feeling and acting which he could not have arrived at spontaneously". According to Brown and Roncek education is "the sum total of the experience which moulds the attitudes and determines the conduct of both the child and the adult". Education does not connote merely literacy but is employed in its most comprehensive sense. It teaches man the use of the various capacities, abilities, intelligence etc., bestowed upon him by nature. Education gives him the ability to succeed in his struggle for existence. It is the art of adaptation. For individuals adaptation is more social than natural. Therefore, education adapts man to society. Hence, education is an important means of social control.

At every stage the individual is taught something and socialized. In the family, in school, on the playground, the child learns to obey the rules of the family, the school, the playground and learns the use of polite behavior to respect the various values, to imitate the various patterns, to have a regard for the opinion and advice of others mores. Education is not just transmitting a way of life. It is largely devoted to the communication of empirical knowledge. Formal education has been communication ideas and values. It can be viewed as type of social control. Education has contributed to the regulation of conduct in the early socialization of the child.

Education makes social control quite normal. It converts social control into self-control. In the absence of a well-organised educational system; social control would remain merely as an arbitrary pressure which may not last long. Hence, education is necessary condition for the proper exercise of social control.

## Check your progress-4

1. **What is informal social control?**

2. **What are the agencies of informal social control?**

3. **Define mores.**

4. **Law is deliberate and clearly stated.**

   True                          False

5. **Education has not been communicating ideas and values.**

   True                          False

6. **The term 'Folkways' was introduced by William Graham Sumner**

   True                          False

7. **................. means people.**

   **A.** Mores                     **B.** Folkways
   **C.** Law                       **D.** Education

8. **Positive mores.**

   **A.** proscribe behaviour patterns  **B.** prescribe behaviour patterns
   **C.** both prescribe and proscribe  **D.** none of these

9. **Negative mores called …………..**

   **A.** Law                       **B.** Taboos
   **C.** Habit                     **D.** Education

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## 11.7    SUMMARY

In this unit, you have studied the concepts of deviance, conformity and social control. You are now acquainted with factors which elicit conformity and also those factors facilitating deviance. The concepts we have discussed in this unit are intimately connected with the concept of socialization. Variations in socialization concurrently

produce variations in the occurrence of deviant acts and conformity. Among social control, you are now aware that there are several means of social control, which are broadly classified under the heading of informal and formal social control. Social control means that every society has some rules which have to be obeyed and some standards of conduct which have to be followed. This is so because no society can exist without social control.

Most of the people follow many rules. But, some may go against or violate some of the rules. When the people act in consonance with the norms they become 'conformist'. 'Conformity' thus implies behaving in accordance with the norms. But, when they go against them, they become 'deviants'. 'Conformity' and 'deviance' go hand in hand.

## 11.8  KEY WORDS

**Deviance:** The act of going against the norms.

**Conformity:** Implies behaving in accordance with the norms.

**Folkways**: The word 'Folk' means people, ways means refer to their behavioural habits.

**Mores:** It is a term used to denote behaviour pattern.

## 11.9  ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

### Check your progress–1

**1.** 20.2

**2.** 20.2

**3.** 20.2

**4.** False

**5.** False

**6.** False

**7.** True

**8. C.** Orville G. Brim Jr.

**9. B.** Deviance

### Check your progress–2

**1.** 20.4

**2.** 20.4

**3.** True

**4.** True

**5.** True

**6. A.** Conformity

## Check your progress–3

**1.** 20.5

**2.** 20.5

**3.** False

**4.** False

**5.** True

**6. A.** Social control

**7. D.** Edward Alsworth Ross

**8. C.** Collective welfare

## Check your progress–4

**1.** 20.6

**2.** 20.6

**3.** 20.6

**4.** True

**5.** False

**6.** True

**7. B.** Folk

**8. B.** prescribe behaviour patterns

**9. B.** Taboos

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## 11.10  SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS  AND  ANSWERS

**1.** Analyse the types of deviance.

**2.** Write an essay on deviance.

**3.** What are the causes of conformity?

**4.** Describe various forms of informal control.

**5.** Discuss law as an agency of social control.

**Answers**

**1.** 20.2          **2.** 20.2          **3.** 20.4          **4.** 20.6          **5.** 20.6

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