

Q. Deviant behaviour is the result of ineffective social control. Comment on the flaws existing in the formal and informal mechanism of social control with examples. How these mechanisms can be improved?

## 1. Introduction :

Social control includes the ways or mechanism through which a society is controlled through formal and informal methods. Social control makes a society stable and acceptable. On the other hand, when an individual or a group deviates from social norms, values and practices, it constitutes deviant behaviour. According to various sociologists, there is a strong reciprocal link between social control and deviance. However, there is a concern that ineffective social control leads to deviance i.e. flaws in the legal proceedings, unavailability to basic education, detachment from religion, xenocentrism, negative role of media and production houses. These flaws can be improved through different reforms.

## 2. Deviant Behaviour and Social Control :

Deviance is a concept that refers to behaviour that violates social norms, expectations or laws. It involves actions or characteristics that are considered abnormal, unacceptable or outside the boundaries of what is deemed and acceptable in the society.

According to Robert K. Merton, "Deviance arises when individuals experience a disjunction between socially accepted goals and means to

achieve them."

According to Howard S. Becker, "Deviance is a result of social reactions to an act."

On the other hand, sociologists apply the term social control to those mechanisms by which any society maintains its normative social system. It refers to all the ways by which a society enforces conformity to its norms.

According to Reiss, "Social control refers to the system of devices whereby society brings its members to conformity with the accepted standard of behaviour."

### 3. Theories of Social Control :

Albert Reiss Theory  
Social control through formal and informal ways.

Albert Bandura-Social Learning Theory  
Learning through socialization

Control Theory by Travis Hirschi  
Social bonds control deviant behaviour

Labelling Theory by H. Becker and E. Lemert  
Fear of being labelled control deviance

Rational Choice Theory  
Cost-benefit analysis helps in decision-making.

Self-Looking Glass Concept by Cooley

#### 4. Flaws in the Mechanism of Social Control:

##### a. Flaws in Formal Social Control:

Formal social control refers to the methods and control mechanisms that are enforced by formal agencies or institutions in a society i.e. LEAs, education etc. Whenever these social control mechanisms are ineffective or fail to adequately regulate behaviors, it can contribute to increase in deviance within a society. Some of flaws are as follows:

##### i. Inefficiency and Backlogs:

Formal social institutions such as courts and correctional institutions can suffer from inefficiency and backlogs. Overburdened courts, lengthy legal proceedings and overcrowded prisons can result in delayed justice and prolonged detention periods. According to website of Supreme Court of Pakistan, there are 52000 cases pending in the court.

##### ii. Legal loopholes and inconsistencies:

Loopholes and inconsistencies in the legal system allow individuals to exploit legal technicalities, or frameworks, or ambiguous laws can result in cases being dismissed or individuals receiving lenient sentences.

For example, according to article "Legal Loopholes" published on Pakistan Today, <sup>due to</sup> the withdrawal of magisterial powers from Mukhtarkars and AEs, they are unable to apprehend and punish the offenders during <sup>vacating</sup> land encroachments.

### iii- High Drop Out Rate in Schools :

Education constitutes the social capital in the society. It is an agent through which individuals learn to differentiate between right and wrong. In the rural areas, the number of students and teachers are limited.

According to the UNICEF report, 22.7 million children of age 8-16 in Pakistan are out of school, constitutes 44% of the population.

## b. Flaws in Informal Social Control:

### i. Detachment from Religion :

Religion provides a sense of moral guidance and community cohesion. There are many religions across the world and every religion preaches the sense of conformity. However, in the recent times, detachment from religion is observed. According to Karl Marx, religion is the "opiate of masses." By this he meant that religion is a drug that makes people happy with their existing conditions.

Example: Atheists who don't believe in God will not be afraid from concept of accountability by God, can lead them to deviant behaviour.

### ii. Clash between traditions and Laws :

Customs, norms and traditions are means of social control according to E.A Ross. In a society, these traditions

are inherited to next generations, as people love to do what their forefathers was doing in the past. So, whenever there will be clash between traditions and laws, it will lead to ineffective social control and deviance. Those acts will be unacceptable. ~~According to laws~~ but not according to their traditions.

According to UNICEF, marriage before the age of 18 is illegal and is fundamental violation of human rights.

In 2014, Sindh Assembly in Pakistan passed Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act, which raised minimum legal age for marriage is 18 years. However, ~~the~~ the findings of report Child Marriages in Sindh: A Political Economy Analysis showed increased ratio in child marriages as their traditions have acceptance of child marriages.

### iii- Incorrect or misguided public opinion:

Incorrect or misguided public opinion can have detrimental effects on social <sup>control</sup> ~~media~~, leading to ineffective outcomes. For Example misconception about a specific ethnic or religious group is responsible for significant portion of criminal activity. Though ~~the~~ belief is not accurate but is fueled by misinformation, stereotypes or biased media. As a result, public opinion becomes completely hostile towards that group, leading to negative perception and prejudices.

According to article published in "The Nation", the mob that killed Marshal Khan due to false accusations was just an extension of ideas.

#### iv. Xenocentrism :

Xenocentrism is an indirect cause of deviant behaviour and ineffective social control. In a society where xenocentrism is prevalent and the preference for foreign cultural elements is highly valued, the individuals may feel pressured to conform to these ideas. The excessive admiration and emulation of foreign cultures can result in rejection or devaluation of local norms and values, potentially leading to deviant behaviour.

As per BBC news, Alcoholism is a growing problem in Pakistan despite it being illegal for Muslim majority to drink.

#### v. Promotion of deviance by Production Industry :

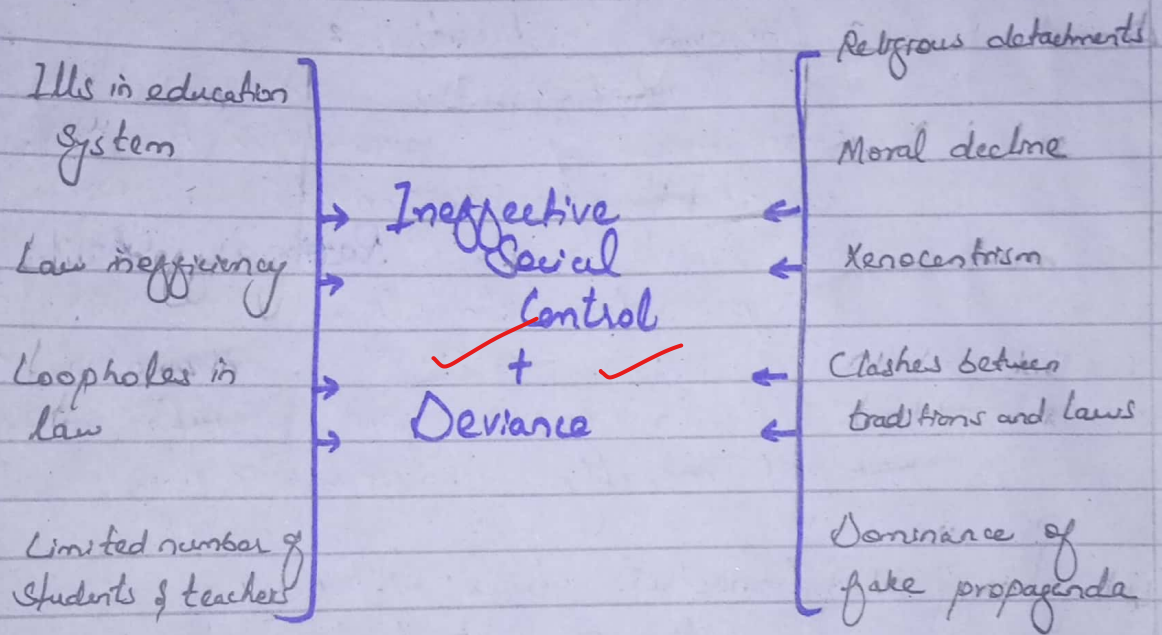
In the current information age, television plays an important role in crafting the public perception. People ways of living, prospect of thinking and their manners of dealing are largely impacted by content aired on television. Unfortunately, media now-a-days is promoting content and scripts that break the traditional style of society.

For Example, in famous Netflix series Money Heist, media had portrayed the wrong means to gain money and success.

#### vi. Declining Moral Values :

With the increasing use of social media platforms and digital communication, there has been a noticeable increase in instances where individuals engage in harmful and offensive behaviour online. In the past,

individuals may have expressed their opinions or disagreements face-to-face or in more controlled environments. However, the anonymity and distance provided by online platforms have emboldened the people to engage in behaviours that they would not otherwise exhibit in person. This can include the use of derogatory language, personal attacks, false information etc.



## 5. Recommendations or Solutions to overcome flaws :

In a social system, it is inevitable to have some flaws that could be resolved through proper strategies. Some of them are as follows :

### i- By Increasing Awareness :

Increasing awareness about societal norms, values and expectations helps individuals develop a better understanding.

write the sources of formal and informal social control in a separate heading education religion and family as social institutions etc

to understand what is considered as acceptable behaviour. Awareness campaigns and public discourse can help reinforce and promote social norms that discourage deviant behaviour. When individuals are made aware of the expectations and standards set by their community, they are more likely to conform to these norms and exhibit socially desirable behaviour.

## ii- Improving education :

Education can provide insight of consequences of deviant behaviour, and importance of conformity to social norms as identified by **Rational Choice Theory**. By promoting empathy, critical thinking and ethical reasoning, education can contribute to a more socially responsible and morally conscious society. ✓

## iii- Immediate trial of pending cases and promotion of instant justice :

Law Enforcement Institutions are overburdened that cause delays in immediate justice to the offenders. ~~Immediate trial~~ and instant justice will create a sense of fear among those, who are thinking of non-conformity.

## iv- Role of effective leadership :

Leadership play a crucial role in maintaining social order and addressing deviance in the society. Effective leaders can influence behaviour, shape social norms and establish mechanisms to



deter and address the issues. Leadership contributes in social control through setting and promoting standards, establishing and enforcing laws, creating a culture of accountability, building and strengthening institutions, inspiring and mobilizing collective actions.

## 6. Conclusion:

It is important to strike a balance between social control and individual rights, ensuring that measures taken to address deviance respect fundamental human rights and are fair, just and proportionate. Effective social control requires a comprehensive approach that combines legal, educational, rehabilitative and social support strategies to create a harmonious and orderly society.

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over all is acceptable  
main ideas addressed  
theoretical needs more elaboration  
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