Social Control and Religion

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Social control symbolizes all those means and processes whereby a society seeks the smooth functioning of all his members. In this way, social institutions play a key role in seeking the conformity of al its members. The famous sociologist Emile Durkheim also elaborated this role of religion in this context. He specified that religious institutions are very significant when it comes to maintaining a social role in society. This function of religion is even relevant today as it maintains social control in various ways all around this modern globalized world. It is no blinking the fact that religions maintain social control in a positive way as they have a pivotal role in maintaining social harmony, inculcating ethics and morality, promoting good conduct, curbing materialism, and molding personalities of individuals in societies.

To begin with, religions maintain social harmony in society. Social harmony is achieved when there is no tussle among groups, individuals in society. Nevertheless, achieving social harmony is never an easy task, but religions have a role in it. This is a key characteristic of religions all over the world as they promote the feeling of goodwill, compassion in society. A religious society is never antagonistic in nature. This is the universal feature of all divine and man-made religions where the promoted love, emotions, kindness in societies, rather than hatred, rebellions, and revolts (Stark & Bainbridge, 2013). So, when social harmony s maintained, it indirect maintains social control in societies. Thus, this social harmony created by religion becomes a reason for social control in society.

Moreover, religion maintains social control in societies by inculcating the same values and traditions among its members. This is a prime feature of religion as they promote the same normative patterns and behaviors among its people which become a regular part of their minds. The internalization of the same norms and patterns is effective when it comes to maintaining social control in societies. The normalization of same norms and beliefs in persons and groups as they do not consider that deviation is an option for them, and never diverge from their righteous paths (Cretacci, 2003). In short, this is how the same values by religions promote social control.

Religion is a source of good conduct and ethical behavior which indirectly improves the quality of social control in society. Religion is the elaborate system of ethics and morals which once inculcated shape the total outlook on life. A religious being is never interested in the materialism or any otherworldly ambitions as he is guided by ethics and moral teachings. This adherence to ethical values inculcates a sense of feeling in believers as they choose good lifestyles, free from any evil. Hence, this adoption of good conduct is the force behind social control in society.

Furthermore, religion controls the predilection to be animalistic in nature. This is the prime function of religion in this competitive world as everyone wants to climb the ladder of social status and power. This desire often motivates a man to opt for unethical means of acquiring wealth and power in society. As a result, this animalistic desire is controlled by religious scripture as they fear their Lord and they do not attempt to cross prohibited lines. This is the hidden check of religion on greedy and evil people in society. Hence, religion is really effective in controlling animals' desires in a man.

Lastly, religion is the code of life which influences and mold people's behavior. It is the spirit of responsibility which reduces the amount of deviance in society. Every society has deviant souls in its premises. No society can claim that its members are conforming the culture with absolute conformity. So, this potential of deviance is controlled by the religious doctrines as their teachings never favor rebellions. The institution of the family at first use religious means to socialize the child and this becomes the permanent part of his life. As a result, this code of life given by religious edicts molds and transforms people in a better way as they are conformist in nature and maintain social control in society.

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