

BCS ODITI Online Class

Summary Practice by Abdul Latif Sir

The number of CCTV (or closed-circuit television) cameras in Britain has grown enormously in recent years. There are now more than 4 million, which makes an astonishing one camera for every 14 people.

CCTV has been used for many years for the surveillance of public areas associated with an obvious security risk, such as military installations, airports, casinos and banks. However, since the 1990s, there has been a huge increase in the surveillance of everyday locations such as city and town centers, car parks, shops and traffic. Added to this, more and more individuals are buying their own consumer CCTV systems for personal or commercial use. The most common function of these systems is to survey the area in front of a house or business and secondary antisocial or criminal behavior. People who buy these systems range from wealthy individuals who are afraid of being targeted by burglars, to people who are not wealthy at all but who live in high-crime areas, such as a sinner city, and are trying to protect themselves.

For some people, the huge increase in public surveillance is a threat to the individuals' civil liberties and is a sign that society is becoming increasingly authoritative. They argue that the individual's right to privacy and right to live anonymously is an important aspect of being British. They also fear that present or future governments might abuse the information gathered by surveillance in order to manipulate, control or persecute the population, as happens in George Orwell's novel 1984.

Individuals and groups in favor of CCTV, including the police, believe that it is a valuable weapon against crime. In fact, there is no strong evidence that CCTV reduces crime overall. It may act as a deterrent in certain locations, but the crime is displaced to another location. It is not even always a good Deterrent. Many criminals aren't afraid of CCTV because they know that the cameras may not be running or that no one is likely to be watching the screens. Few crimes are solved through CCTV. Sometimes CCTV footage is analyzed retrospectively to identify criminals after a crime has taken place, but even this process is enormously time-consuming and expensive. One promising new development is the computer monitoring of CCTV, where computers are programmed to notice unusual movements, such as those of a car thief in a supermarket park, and sound an alarm. Meanwhile we can expect the argument about the rights and wrongs of CCTV to continue.