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SELF LEARNING MATERIAL
M.A SOCIOLOGY

SEMESTER – II

TITLE: SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND MOBILITY

COURSE NO. SOC-C-204 UNIT: I-IV LESSON: 1-20

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SOC-C-204

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND MOBILITY

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Syllabus of Sociology M.A. 2nd Semester for the examination to be held in the year May 2026, 2027 and 2028 (NON-CBCS for CDOE)

Course No: SOC-C-204 **Title: Social Stratification & Mobility**
Credits: 6 **Maximum Marks: 100**
Duration of Examination: 3 hours.

a) **Semester Examination (External): 70**
b) **Session Assessment (Internal): 30**

Objective: Social stratification besides being a persisting empirical reality is constantly changing. It implies unequal placement of people in terms of positions, rewards, assets and power. Social mobility and social movement acts as a reform and corrective measure to replace some of these inequalities. These and some other issues will be debated in this course.

Unit-I **Meaning & Elements of Social Stratification**
Social Stratification - Meaning, Characteristics & Dimensions, Social Differentiation, Hierarchy, Inequality.

Unit-II **Forms of Social Stratification**
Caste, Class, Estate, Gender, Ethnicity & Race.

Unit-III **Theoretical Perspectives**
Weberian, Functional- Parsons, Davis & Moore, Marxian and Dahrendorf.

Unit-IV **Social Mobility**
Nature & Types of Social Mobility, Measurement of Social Mobility, Mobility within Caste & Class system. Emergence of Middle Class.

NOTE FOR PAPER SETTING:

A. Session Assessment Internal (30 marks)

There will be three Internal Assessment Assignments carrying the total weightage of 30 marks.

IAA1. Long Answer Type Questions (10X1=10 Marks)

Long answer type question (of maximum 1200 words) of 10 marks (one to be attempted, out of two, each from unit I and II).

IAA2. Short Answer Type Questions (5X2=10 Marks)

Two short answer type questions (of about 600 words), each of 5 marks. These shall be taken from units III and IV.

IAA3. Very Short Answer Type Questions (2.5X4=10 Marks)

Four very short answer type questions (of about 250 words), each of 2.5 marks. These shall be taken from all the four units.

B. Semester Examination External (70 marks)

The question paper will consist of two sections A and B.

Section A will consist of eight long answer-type questions, two questions from each unit. The candidate will be required to answer four questions, selecting one from each unit. Each question will carry 13 marks (13 X 4=52 marks).

Section B will consist of eight short answer-type questions, two questions from each unit. The candidate will be required to answer four questions, selecting one from each unit. Each question will carry 4.5 marks (4.5 X 4=18 marks).

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Course No: SOC-C-204 **Unit–I**

Semester-II **Lesson No. 1**

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION: MEANING, CHARACTERSTICS AND DIMENSIONS

STRUCTURE

1.0 Learning Objectives

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Differentiation, Inequality & Social Stratification

1.2.1 Differentiation

1.2.2 Inequality

1.2.3 Social Stratification

1.2.4 Characteristics of Social Stratification

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1.8 Let Us Sum Up

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1.11 Lesson End Exercise

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1.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- **The concept of social stratification**
- **Difference between Differentiation, Inequality and Social Stratification.**
- **Different elements and dimensions of Social Stratification.**
- **Functions and dysfunctions of social stratification**

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The world around us consists of human beings divided into different social segments based on caste, ethnic and racial attributes on the one hand and social strata, status groups and social classes based on economic and political dimensions of the individual and the groups on the other. Based on these criteria there exist inequalities among human being's terms of rulers and the subjects, rich and poor, elite and commoner and so on. While segmental divisions are based on non-economic factors, the social strata and classes come into being on the basis of economic and political positions occupied by the individuals or their group in the social structure of the society. All this exist despite all religions since time immemorial and the constitutions of almost all the countries ever since their implementation all over the world have been proclaiming equality among all irrespective of caste, creed, sex, color and religion.

- **MEANING**

Social stratification is a particular form of social inequality. All societies arrange their members in terms of superiority, inferiority and equality. Stratification is a process of interaction or differentiation whereby some people come to rank higher than others. In one word, when individuals and groups are ranked, according to some commonly accepted basis of valuation in a hierarchy of status levels based upon the inequality of social positions, social stratification occurs. Social stratification means division of society into different strata or layers. It involves a hierarchy of social groups. Members of a particular layer have a common identity. They have a similar life style. The Indian Caste system provides an example of stratification system. The society in which divisions of social classes exist is

known as a stratified society. Modern stratification fundamentally differs from stratification of primitive societies. Social stratification involves two phenomena (i) differentiation of individuals or groups on the basis of possession of certain characteristics whereby some individuals or groups come to rank higher than others, (ii) the ranking of individuals according to some basis of evaluation. Sociologists are concerned not merely with the facts of social differences but also with their social evaluation.

DEFINITIONS:

1. Ogburn and Nimkoff: 'The process by which individuals and groups are ranked in more or less enduring hierarchy of status is known as stratification".

2. Lundberg: "A stratified society is one marked by inequality, by differences among people that are evaluated by them as being "lower" and "higher".

3. Gisbert: "Social stratification is the division of society into permanent groups of categories linked with each other by the relationship of superiority and subordinations".

4. Williams: Social Stratification refers to "The ranking of individuals on a scale of superiority-inferiority equality, according to some commonly accepted basis of valuation.

5. Raymond W. Murray: Social stratification is horizontal division of society into "higher" and "lower" social units."

6. Melvin M Tumin: "Social stratification refers to "arrangement of any social group or society into hierarchy of positions that are unequal with regard to power, property, social evaluation and psychic gratification".

7. Lundberg writes, "A stratified society is one marked by inequality, by differences among people that are evaluated by them as being lower and higher". As Gisbert says, "Social stratification is the division of society into permanent

groups of categories linked with each other by the relationship of superiority and subordination.

8.According to Bernard Barber, "Social stratification in its most general sense, is a sociological concept that refers to the fact that both individuals and groups of individuals are conceived of as constituting higher or lower differentiated strata or classes in terms of some specific or generalized characteristic or set of characteristics." Sociologists have been able to establish several strata or layers which form a hierarchy of prestige or power in a society.

- **ORIGIN OF STRATIFICATION**

Regarding the origin of stratification many views have been given.

(i) According to **Davis**, social stratification has come into being due to the functional necessity of the social system.

(ii) Professor **Sorokin** attributed social stratification mainly to inherited difference in environmental conditions.

(iii) According to **Karl Marx**, social factors are responsible for the emergence of different social strata, i.e. social stratification.

(iv) **Gumplowioz** and other contended that the origin of social stratification is to be found in the conquest of one group by another.

(v) According to **Spengler**, social stratification is founded upon scarcity which is created whenever society differentiates positive in terms of functions and powers.

(vi) Racial differences accompanied by dissimilarity also lead to stratification.

- **NATURE OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION**

1. By stratification we mean that arrangement of any social group or society by which positions are hierarchically divided. The positions are unequal with regard to power, property, evaluation and psychic gratification. We add social, because positions consist of socially defined statuses.

2. Stratification is a phenomenon present in all societies that have produced a surplus. Stratification is the process by which members of society rank themselves and one another in hierarchies with respect to the amount of desirable goods they possess.

3. The existence of stratification has led to the centuries old problem of social inequality. In societies that have closed stratification systems, such inequalities are institutionalized and rigid. An individual born into a particular economic and social stratum or caste, remains in this stratum until he dies. Most modern industrial societies have open or class stratification systems. In open stratification systems, social mobility is possible, although some members of the population do not have the opportunity to fulfill their potential.

4. The term stratification refers to a process by which individuals and groups are ranked in a more or less enduring hierarchy of status. It refers to the division of a population into strata, one on the top of another, on the basis of certain characteristics like inborn qualities, material possessions and performance.

5. **According to Raymond W. Murray** "Social stratification is a horizontal division of society into higher and lower social units. As Malvin M. Tumin says, social stratification refers to arrangements of any social group or society into a hierarchy of positions that are unequal with regard to power, property, social evaluation, and/or social gratification.

6. The consequence of layering process in a society is the creation of structural

forms – social classes. Where society is composed of social classes, the social structure looks like a pyramid. At the bottom of the structure lies the lowest social class and above it other social classes arranged in a hierarchy.

7. Thus, stratification involves two phenomena,

7.1Differentiation of individuals or groups where by some individuals or group come to rank higher than other and

7.2The ranking of individuals according to some basis of valuation

Viewed in this way it can be stated that every society is divided into more or less distinct groups. There is no society known which does not make some distinction between individuals by ranking them on some scale of value. There has been no society in which every individual has the same rank and the same privileges.

8. As Sorokin pointed out, "Unstratified society with real equality of its members is a myth which has never been realized in the history of mankind". In simpler communities we may not find any class strata apart from the distinction between members of the groups and strangers, distinction based on age, sex kinship. But in the primitive world chieftainship, individual prowess and clan or family property introduce an incipient stratification. However, modern stratification fundamentally differs from stratification in the primitive societies.

9. Among the primitive people class distinctions are rarely found. In the modern industrial age estates pass into social classes. Hereditary ranks are abolished but distinctions of status remain and there are great differences in economic power and social opportunities.

10. Every know society, past and present, thus differentiates its members in terms of roles they play in the group. These roles are determined by the formal positions or statuses in which a society places its members. Society compares and ranks individuals and groups on the basis of some differences in values it attaches to different roles. When

individuals and groups are ranked according to some commonly accepted basis of valuation, in a hierarchy of status levels-based j upon inequality of social position, we have social stratification.

1.2 DIFFERENTIATION, INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

1.2.1 Differentiation

1.2.2 Inequality

1.2.3 Social Stratification

There is no society where there have neither been differentiation, inequality and social stratification. Such a state of human society raises many questions about the proclaimed "equality of all before the law" and equality opportunity for all in democratic as well as socialist states. The most basic question that needs to be considered first is: What do the prevalent differentiation, inequalities and stratification arise due to natural differences in human propensities and capabilities or caused by certain other mechanism? Do these terms mean the same or connote differently? In order to understand the prevalent terminology signifying segmental divisions and inequalities of income, wealth, status and rank there is need to put them in a historical sequence of time and space in which these emerged and acquired varying dimensions. Methodologically, putting the trio in the given sequence also enables us to understand to what extent nature played an

important role and where the natural differences ceased to matter in creating social structure with such features. In view of the preceding questions three aspects of the problem has been discussed. The first deals with the rise and development of the three terms, namely differentiation, inequality and stratification in their histology-social context. The second deals with the meaning of social stratification. The third describes the elements of social stratification in the contemporary human society.

Although the concept of differentiation, inequalities and stratification are often used inter-changeably but the three constitute distinct analytical categories, substantiated in the time and space context. The time -context, though may not be able to accurately point out when did the three modes of divisions came into being in the human society yet it would not be wrong to suggest these are, perhaps, as old as the human society itself.

1.2.1 DIFFERENTIATION

The most fundamental differentiation that the man could think of was in the primitive society in which he differed from other biological beings: The differentiation was based on the process of development of human beings and animal species. This required a detailed understanding of the process of biological changes that took place over a period of three billion years, the time when' the man is supposed to have had his Origin. Charles Darwin in the book "On the Origin of Species" in 1859 attributes emergence of differentiation in the process of evolution of human beings. Darwin refers to the emergence of differentiation in the process of gradual transformation of man from an animal like to a human being. This implied that apart from the differences that are observed between an animal and the human being, even the evolution process of growth of the human species indicates that two factors playing an important role. First, the natural selection due to which differentiation among people comes into being due to their differential endowments and capabilities in the adaptation process. Second, "the process of genetic changes affecting the biological characteristics and even the competitive abilities in some individuals for

their advantage over the others". Since the nineteenth century thinking about human society was influenced to a very great extent by the principles of natural and physical sciences the differentiation in human society could also be attributed to adaptive abilities and differential genetic endowments among the people. All such attributes not only distinguished human

beings from the other animal species but also indicated the differences between the human beings themselves.

The other stream of thought that combined the social and the biological together argued about the basic differences between human beings themselves. The socio-biologists, therefore, view the differences between men and women by using reproductive processes and procreation and the role of women from conception of the child to his care. It is believed that such a strategy not only ensured that the women provided security to the children looked after the household chores and in the process, sex-based division of labor intensified differentiation in the society. Emile Durkheim's mechanical solidarity, state of human society, can be taken as the case of homogeneity with differentiation among the people. Since the aggregates of people are united by the communality of sentiments and beliefs the mechanical unity reflects similarly as the differentiated biological system. The higher form of differentiation in the society starts occurring with the formation of segments based on kinship groups and clans. It is important to mention here that due to communality of sentiments and beliefs in this stage of human existence the collectivism than individualism dominates the society. Individualism is not developed and the private property is completely absent. The control of the collectivity over the individual remains quite strong.

However, in Durkheim's views more subtle differentiation emerges with development of specialization of production based on division of labor on the one hand and interdependence of individuals and groups with a systematized mechanism of exchange. The social and economic circumstances conditioning the rise of subtle differentiation in the society include development to commercialism and Industrialization Durkheim reached these conclusions on the basis of his analysis of post-medieval Europe. Subsequent rise of capitalism with development of private property, property created hierarchy of wealthy and the commoner and structural variations cause inequalities in the society.

1.2.2 INEQUALITY

Inequality, in Oxford Dictionary is described as “lack of equality in size, degree, circumstances etc., especially unfair difference in rank, wealth, opportunity etc.” In general, the dictionary meaning of inequality implies existence of unfair differences which in general can be in terms of size, degree and circumstances which can be natural as well as social.

But more importantly these differences are expressed in social and economic terms based on the ranks that the people enjoy, the wealth they possess and the opportunities, depending upon their circumstances, they are able to avail for their advantages in their lives. The concept 'unfair' implies 'unjust'. What is unfair and unjust? These terms refer to the inequitable division of the income, wealth, profits, ranks and opportunities in the society resulting in privileges for some and deprivation for many. Related with inequality is the concept of inequity that indicates the inequity of the system. In other words, inequality in a society basically arises out of social system with in-built inequalities that perpetuate generation after generation. The consequently the entire system is internalized by people in the society. Their expressions of differentiation, inequality and social stratification are rich and poor, high and low, black and white as these refer to definite meanings, understanding of the social structure and the patterns of relationships existing in a society.

Table: 1 shows the basic features of hierarchy, stratification and inequality

TABLE: 1

FEATURE	HIERARCHY	STRATIFICATION	INEQUALITY
Definition	A system where people or groups are ranked one above another	The division of society into a system of layered groups or strata	The unequal distribution of wealth, power, and prestige
Nature	A structure or ordering mechanism	A system of social layering or division	An outcome or condition of disparity
Relationship	The mechanism that structures stratification	A system of social layering that is often built on a hierarchy	The result of stratification and hierarchy, representing the unequal access to social rewards

Example	A military command structure: General > Colonel > Captain	The division of society into different social classes (e.g., upper class, middle class, lower class)	The fact that people in the lower class have less access to quality healthcare and education than those in the upper class

1.2.3 SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

The study of social stratification involves many issues- theoretical as well as the ones related with social structure of the society, distribution of social justice, power and privileges. All these concerns are not recent but can be traced from the antiquity as there was no society where there was no social stratification. The only difference that one could observe throughout the human history perhaps is found in the form of social stratification and its underlying principles. The issues and the questions related with stratification have rather been of important concerns even during the times when man acquired a collective living on the earth. Since then, the human beings have been evolving norms and values guiding their interaction with others. In the process of their interaction, they not only form certain standards of behaviour but also carry on evaluation of others to rank and place them at some level in the social structure in terms of high and low. In evaluating people their qualities are compared with others in the society.

This process of evaluation evolved on the basis of qualities and attributes of the person and the group is described social stratification. Tumin argues that good things in life that are everywhere both scarce and desired are property, rights over goods and services, power or the ability to secure one's way in life even against opposition; and prestige or social honour. These are the basic things on the basis of which the evaluation

and ranking of the people is carried out in a society. The structure of positions prepared on the basis of these attributes is called hierarchy of positions. This is also called strata. Therefore, arrangement of society into hierarchies of positions commanding unequal amount of property, power, prestige and honour is called social stratification. Sorokin, describing deep roots of stratification in human society, argues "unstratified society with real equality of its members is a myth which has never been realized in the history of mankind".

One of the often-raised issues pertaining to social stratification in human society is when did it originate? Some of the social thinkers like Oppenheimer believe that it originated in the process of warfare and conquest of one group by another and the one who conquered became higher in status in relation to be conquered for instance, the invasion of North America by the European immigrants and the consequent subordination of the native Indian tribes. Such a process however is not a smooth transition as it involves both resistance and conflict. Such a process also at times may involve racial differences, cultural dissimilarities and other differences ultimately resulting in the formation of a structure of inequalities based on rank, privileges and power of the group concerned.

Spengler argues that when a society face the situation of scarcity i.e. when the demand for goods and services surpasses the possible supplies, a situation of scarcity arises. There are always chances that some people due to their rank and status in the society are able to monopolize more goods and services than those who do not have power and privileges. The entire arrangement is made in such a way that owning and, non-owning is differentiated in terms of lights and duties. It is through this mechanism that allocation of scarce resources, power and privileges is done in the society. In other words, the system of stratification has come to be evolved over a long period of time and space. This is perhaps due to this reason that Kingsley Davis described social stratification as an unconsciously evolved device by which societies ensure that the most positions are conscientiously filled by most qualified persons. It is therefore also assumed that every society must possess a certain amount of institutionalized social stratification.

1.2.4 CHARACTERISTICS

Melvin M Tumin gives five main characteristics of social stratification, namely antiquity, ubiquity, socially patterned, diverse and consequences and implications. The study of these

characteristics reveals not only the presence of social signification in all the societies during all times but also the elements that constituted its basis.

1. It is Ancient (Antiquity)

The antiquity of social stratification based on the study of historical and archeological sources refer to age, sex, and physical strength as important determinants in the primitive times. The placement of women and children at the bottom of the social hierarchy was the result of such an order or arrangement. Later property, power, and prestige constituted the basis. The stratification system is very old. Stratification was present even in the small wandering bands. Age and sex wear the main criteria of stratification. Difference between the rich and poor, powerful and humble, freemen and slaves was there in almost all the ancient civilization. Ever since the time of Plato and Kautilya social philosopher have been deeply concerned with economic, social, political inequalities.

2. It is Universal (Ubiquitous)

The ubiquity of social stratification refers to its presence in literate as well as non-literate societies. Even in the socialist societies, based on the principle of social ownership of resources, social stratification can be found. Whatever, may be the nature of the social structure of the society, the socially sanctioned inequalities based on power, property and prestige are imminent. These elements are highly significant in the social patterning of the population of a society and exist as part of their complex social and cultural system. The other mechanism that are built into the structure of the society such as education, skills, personality, character etc. add to the criteria of defining the population and arranging them in an order of hierarchy. Social stratification is universal. Difference between rich and poor, the 'haves' or 'have notes' is evident everywhere. Even in the non-literate society's stratification is very much present.

3. It is Social

The social and cultural complex constituted by the norms and sanctions plays a very important role by regulating the system of rewards and punishments. These are

called conventional rules and enforced by the society and the people by and large conform to such rules. In the process, those in the dominant positions are found. Protecting their power and privileges through such mechanism and the deprive those who do not have power and privilege. In a way the norms and sanctions reinforce rules and regulations and thereby reinforce the system of social stratification. The process of socialization, another process of social and cultural transmission, helps in establishing conformity to the system. The reflection of operation of social cultural complex in the

system of stratification can be found in the linkages and the determining effects that it has on polity and economy of a society. It is argued that structure and function of the economy are closely interwoven with the system of stratification.

The social stratification therefore is also a system that apart from social-cultural complex also involves social, political and economic elements. The social; is measured in terms of prestige, honor, status and role, and social acceptance and recognition of an individual irrespective of his property and power. The political stratification refers to the amount of power and authority one enjoys in relation to others. The economic stratification is based on the relations of production i.e. who owns the forces of production and who works on these on wage basis. The other component of it is the distributive. This refers to the political economy of the state based on a method of distribution of good and services, income and wealth of a society.

4. It is in diverse forms

Diverse in nature and remains same with only differences in the name. Caste stratification, slavery stratification, racial stratification, gender stratification, class stratification etc. Social stratification has never been uniformed in all societies. The ancient Roman society was stratified into two strata: the Patricians and the Plebeians. The Aryan society was divided into four Varnas namely the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Sudras, the ancient Greek society in to freemen and slaves, the ancient Chinese society into mandarins, merchants, Farmer and soldiers. Class and estate seem to be the general forms of stratification found in the modem world. Social stratification has never been uniformed in all societies, the ancient Greek society in to freemen and slaves, the ancient Chinese society into mandarins, merchants, Farmer and soldiers. Class and estate seem to be the general forms of stratification found in the modern world.

5. It is Consequential

Those are consequences to the stratification system. Because of stratification in human life, the most desirable and rarest things are distributed unequally. Two kinds of

consequences result from the system:

(i) Life chances: It includes factors such as infant mortality, life expectancy, disease, separation and divorce.

(ii) Lifestyle: The term lifestyle includes a variety of factors such as housing, residential area, education, recreation, modes of transport etc.

1.3 Elements of Social Stratification

All stratification systems have some common elements. These elements have been identified as differentiation, ranking, evaluation and rewarding. Here Tumin has been referred to discuss the elements of social stratification. Apart from the above attributes the structural elements of social stratification as discussed in many of the contributions include the status and role. We can identify these elements by examining social structure which constitutes a hierarchy of relationships based on status and role occupied by different individuals in the society.

1.3.1 STATUS

The concept of status is related with the concept of role and has been called by Linton as "the dynamic aspect of status". Each society's functioning depends upon the presence of patterns for reciprocal behaviors between individuals or groups of individuals. Each pattern has certain polar positions these polar positions in the patterns of reciprocal behavior are statuses. A status in abstract is a position in a particular pattern. But an individual is a member of more than one pattern which implies that he occupies various positions. Thus, his social status will be the sum total of all the statuses he occupies. In the words, it is individual's overall position with relation to total society. A status is not individual. It is different' from him because status is associated with Rights and Duties. But these rights and duties can be expressed only through the medium of an individual.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Match the following:

1.	Prestige	a) Legitimate power
2.	Power	b) People at the same economic level
3.	Authority	c) ability to impose one's will on others, regardless of their own wishes.
4.	Class	d) depends on the respect that others are willing to give

Answer: 1. D 2. C 3. A 4. B

Q2: What is meant by social stratification.

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……

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Q3. Discuss briefly the elements of social stratification.

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1.3.2 STATUS DIFFERENTIATION

Status differentiation is the process by which social positions are determined and distinguished from one another by way of associating a distinctive role, a set of rights and responsibilities such as father and mother.

Status differentiation operates more effectively when:

1. Tasks are clearly defined.
2. Authority and responsibility are distinguished.
3. Mechanism for recruiting and training exists.
4. Adequate sanctions including rewards and punishment exist to motivate persons.
5. Responsibilities, resources and rights are assigned to status not to particular

individuals. For only by doing so societies can establish general and uniform rules or norms that will apply to many and diverse individuals who are to occupy the same status e.g. all the different women who will play the role of apparent. Differentiation is not independent process in itself. The most important criteria for understanding the process of differentiation is ranking.

1.3.3 RANKING

Ranking is done on the basis of:

1. Personal characteristics that people are thought to need if they are to learn and perform the roles effectively such as intelligence, aggressiveness and politeness.
2. The skills and abilities that are believed necessary for adequate role performance such, as surgical, numerical or linguistic skills.
3. General qualities of the task e.g. difficulty, cleanliness, danger and so forth. Purpose of ranking is to identify the right person for the right position.

Ranking non-valuative i.e. jobs are rated as harder or easier, cleaner or dirtier, safer or more dangerous and people are judged slower, smarter or more skillful than others without implying that some are socially more important and others less because of these characteristics. Ranking is a selective process in the sense that only some statuses are selected for comparative ranking and of all criteria of ranking only some are actually used in ranking process e.g. the status of Father and Mother is not ranked.

1.3.4 EVALUATION

Differentiation and ranking are further solidified by the evaluation process. Whereas the ranking procedure pivots about the question of more of or less of, the evaluation process Centre's in the question better and worse. Evaluation is both a personal and societal attribute.

That is, individuals assign a relative worth, a degree of preference and a priority of

desirability to everything. To the extent that evaluation is a learned quality, a consensus tends to develop within a culture individuals tend to share a common set of values. This value consensus is the societal dimension crucial to evaluation stratification.

There are three dimensions of evaluation:

1. **Prestige:** Which refers to honour and it involves the respectful behaviour. Radcliffe Brown says that among hunting societies three groups usually are accorded special prestige: the elderly, those with supernatural powers, those who have special personal attributes such as hunting skill. In the more advanced society, prestige is the commodity that is in scarce supply and it is, therefore, more valued.
2. **Preferability:** Those positions i.e. status roles which are preferred by majority of I the people are evaluated higher e.g. ". I would like to be a doctor."
3. **Popularity:** Those status roles which are popular, about which people know to be very prestigious are evaluated higher e.g. nowadays there is fashion among students to go for Engineering job. It is the most popular occupation.

1.3.5 REWARDING

Statuses which are differentiated, ranked and evaluated are allocated differential rewards in terms of good things in life. Social units such as families, subcultures, social classes and occupations that are socially differentiated are differentially rewarded in various ways. Health care, education,' income and positions of prominence are a few of the advantages.

Rewards can be of two types:

1. Abundant: Which are spiritual or psychic rather than material and are secured in the process of role performing e.g. pleasure, love, and respect.
2. Scarce: Social stratification becomes relevant in this area of desired and scarce rewards. In society where there is an unequal distribution of rewards, those who have power take hold these rewards.

1.3.6 ROLE

The other structural element is role. It is described as when an individual expresses himself through the rights and duties assigned to his status. In other words when an individual puts his rights and duties into effect, he is performing his role. This fact makes us to realize that we cannot separate status from role and role from status. Since every individual occupies different positions in various patterns of his society, it is therefore implied that an individual has variety of roles. The sum total of his roles which he performs while participating in various patterns and at the same time performing this role in general determines his role for the society and in return what he can expect from the society.

Both status and role perform important functions in the society. The combination of status and role become models for organizing the attitude and behaviour of the individual in relation to other individuals who are members of the patterns and participating in the

expressions of the patterns. The assignment of the position to an individual limits and defines his activities and establishes minimum of things which be must learn. In the similar way" one can apply this to individual's status and roles in the operational context of the society as a whole. As such, the society can function smoothly when there is no outside interference. But this smoothness just cannot be there in the functioning of society because the individuals differ in their habits. A status congenial to one may be uncongenial to the other. Certain roles require more training than others. The problems and dilemmas which rise out of the above said can be solved as the human nature is very much mutable and as such any individual can be trained to his adequate performance of each role. The dilemma has been met by societies by developing, what Davis and Moore describe as two types of statuses. (i) Ascribed: assigned without reference to innate differences or abilities, majority of the statuses are ascribed, principles of status ascription are age, sex, kinship societies/class societies. (ii) Achieved: filled through open competition and individual effort, through education and specially acquired skills. Whether a status is ascribed or achieved it is related to certain type of role performance. The latter is constituted by culturally defined expectations.

1.4 DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Sociologists have recognized three major dimensions of social stratification:

CLASS, POWER, STATUS, STATUS GROUPS AND AUTHORITY.

The dimensions of social stratification refer to the different levels of differentiation which are made to allocate people in a given society. Natural inequalities take the form of social inequalities when the members of society assign some meaning of them. Age, sex, and color are natural bases of inequalities. But now it becomes the bases of social stratification because society has attached some meanings to them. On the basis of some empirical findings, sociologists present three bases of stratification wealth, power and prestige i.e.

class, power and status. These can be listed as follows:

i) **Class:** It refers to differentiation at the level of wealth. In this sense it can be termed as economic differentiation. Wealth is generated in societies only when technologies advancement takes place and there is a change in the mode of production. Examples are: change from hunting and food garnering economy to settled agriculture, change from agriculture-based economy to one based predominantly upon manufacturing and industry. Such changes, not only brought about the institution of social stratification, but in course of time also altered the principles of organization of social stratification. Economic advancement led to generation of more wealth in society, more accumulation of markers of wealth is it in the form of food grains or cattle, or metals and minerals (silver, gold precious stones etc.) or money. At this stage, the groups which had greater control over the economic resources and wealth or which possessed more wealth were ranked higher in society than groups which controlled less of it, or groups which had little or negligible access to wealth (for example, landless workers or industrial workers). The social stratification based on class is its prime example.

ii) **Power:** It refers to differential access to power in society. It includes political, social and other types of power. It is always possible that a group with higher status in society or that which enjoys greater wealth, also exercises more power in society. Nevertheless, one could make a distinction between say, principle of privileges whereas the latter tends to be based on the group's ability to use coercive means for other group's conformity with actions, values and beliefs determined by it. The concept of power as Max Weber has discussed in his treatment of

social stratification rests on the fact that it endows the persons or groups which have power to impose their will on other groups by legitimate use of coercive method. In this sense, state offers us a good example of an institution which has maximum power. It has sovereign authority to impose its will on citizens of the society. When legitimacy of exercise of power, is widely accepted by groups, in other words, when it is institutionalized in society, power becomes authority. Authority as a concept could be defined as legitimate power. Power as a principle also enters into the notion of social stratification when its functions or its social ramifications begin to be influenced by the political processes in society, and when state begins to take more active or direct role in influencing the principles of social stratification. A relevant example of this could be found in the policy of positive discrimination or reservation of jobs, political offices and entry into educational institutions in our country by the state in favour of castes and tribes now declared as 'scheduled' or as 'other backward classes'. Max Weber, in his treatment of power as an element in the formation of social stratification has rightly emphasized the significance of politics, political parties and their role in optimizing their access to power.

iii) **Status or Prestige:** It refers to distribution of prestige or social honour. Status in the language of social stratification means ranking of groups in a society on the basis of their relative position in terms of honour or respect. Honour is a qualitative attribute which members in a status group enjoy by birth. Any Bases of Social Stratification such attribute which is inherited by birth is ascribed and cannot be acquired by effort. Therefore, status principle of social stratification is also termed as the principle of ascription. In our country, caste is a very

appropriate example of status groups. The qualities which go to make a status groups are related more to values and beliefs, to legends and myths perpetuated in societies over a period of time than to principles which are achievable by efforts, whether economic, political or cultural.

iv) **Status groups**: These are based on prestige, whose members share a common lifestyle. Just what qualities earn respect will vary from one society to another. Parties are political groupings that may or may not be organized around class interests.

v) **Authority**: Authority refers to the power that belongs to a socially recognized status, such as the power exercised by the president, police officers, or employer and therefore, considered to be legitimate by other members of the society. Influence in contrast to authority is the ability to persuade others to bend to your will and is based more on interpersonal skills than on occupying a particular position. Influential people are often close to those in authority or possess unique skills and knowledge.

1.5 FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

For the proper functioning of society, it has to work out some mechanism by which people engaged in different occupations get different recognition. If each activity is associated with same type of economic returns and prestige, there will be no competition for different occupations.

Functions of Social Stratification is that system by which different positions are hierarchically divided. Such a system has given rise to different classes like Upper, Middle, Working and Lower or caste groups like Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras. The

importance of stratification can be seen with regard to the functions it performs for the individual and society**.**

1. **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL:** No doubt system of stratification is applicable to the whole society yet it serves some functions for the individual also.

1.1 Competition: Individuals based on their attributes compete with each other and only those individuals who have better attributes get greater recognition. This may be in the field of sports, education, occupation etc.

1.2 Recognition of Talent: The persons with more training skills, experience and education are given better positions. The deserving individuals are not treated at par with deserving candidates. Such a system helps people to acquire better talents.

1.3 Motivation: The system of stratification motivates the individuals to work hard so that they can improve upon their social status. It is truer in case of those societies in which statuses are achieved.

1.4 Job Satisfaction: As the jobs are given to the individuals according to their skills and education, the workers get job satisfaction. In case, a person with higher qualification is not allowed to move higher in the social ladder, he feels dissatisfied with his job.

2. FUNCTIONS FOR THE SOCIETY: The system of social stratification is also useful for the progress and the well-being of the society. This can be seen if we take into account two forms of stratification.

- **Ascriptive Form of Stratification:** Under the caste system, the status of the individual is fixed at birth and different castes are hierarchically arranged. However, even within the caste system those members who perform their caste roles effectively and efficiently occupy higher' status. On the other hand, those members who do not perform their role properly occupy lower status even when

they belong to the same caste. This functional base has given rise to sub castes. In other words, one caste is further divided into different sub castes and these sub castes are hierarchically divided within a caste group.

Fixation of status of a caste group also facilitates better training of the members. As the members are made aware about the future roles, they start getting training from the childhood. Such a situation was more applicable in the traditional societies where knowledge was foil knowledge and it could be acquired through membership of a caste group.

In this way we find that under ascriptive form of stratification, society was being well-served and there was interdependence of the caste because of the specialization of their roles.

- **Achieved Form:** Under the achieved form of social stratification, the social statuses are assigned according to the worth of the individual. This system serves the following functions for the society:

1. **Occupational Hierarchy:** Depending upon the importance of a particular occupation, different occupations are hierarchically divided. The occupations which are very important for the well-being of the society are associated with high prestige and those occupations which do not need specialized training are given low status. Such a system is free from confusion, and motivates the people to work hard, so that they could take up occupations of high prestige.
2. **Division according to Intelligence:** All persons are not equal with regard to their intelligence. Those persons with higher level of intelligence can perform more complicated functions of the society. Hence, they are provided with different opportunities and high prestige.
3. **Training:** Society makes elaborate arrangements for the training of younger

generation. Those who spend more time on training and acquiring new skills are compensated with high returns. Even though such persons start working later yet the economic returns and social prestige associated with their work is higher than others.

4. **Work Efficiency:** Persons with appropriate knowledge and training occupy appropriate positions. Hence, their work efficiency is also higher. Under this system there is no place for parasites and those who shirk work. The fittest to survive is the rule which is followed.
5. **Development:** The competition to move higher in the social ladder has resulted into new inventions, new methods of work and greater efficiency. This system has led to progress and development of the country. The Western societies are highly developed; it is attributed to the fact that these societies adopted open system of stratification.

Other functions include:

The functional significance of social class is to some extent implicit to what is known. In giving attention to a more explicit functional assessment of the various aspects of class and the basis of stratification in a hierarchy of values and in role differentiation; the fact of prestige tanking; the fact that the unit of social class is the family, and more generally the fact that class implies some differential association between the families of which a society is composed; and the tendency of social classes in the same system to have different styles of life, apart from the differences implied in role differentiation. Functional assessment in this field as in others is not a simple matter. Let's discuss the functions and dysfunctions which are bound up together bear various possibilities of functional balance.

Functions of Social Stratification are discussed below:

1. Encourages hard work:

One of the main functions of class stratification is to induce people to work hard to live up to values. Those who best fulfill the values of a particular society are normally rewarded with greater prestige and social acceptance by others. It is known that occupations are ranked high if their functions are highly important and the required personnel are very scarce.

Hard work, prolonged training and a heavy burden of responsibility are associated with such occupational positions. People undertaking such works are rewarded with money, prestige comforts, etc. Still, we cannot say that all those positions which are regarded as important are adequately compensated for.

2. Ensures circulation of elites:

To some extent class stratification helps to ensure what is often called "the circulation of the elite". When a high degree of prestige comforts and other re-wards are offered for certain positions, there will be some competition for them. This process of competition helps to ensure that the more efficient people are able to rise to the top, where their ability can best be used. Indian Society Books

3. Serves an economic function:

The competitive aspect has a kind of economic function in that it helps to ensure the rational use of available talent. It is also functionally necessary to offer differential rewards if the positions at the top are largely ascribed as it is in the case of the caste system.

Even in the caste system, the people at the top can lose their prestige if they fail to

maintain certain standards. Hence differential rewards provide the incentives for the upper classes to work at main-taining their positions.

4. Prevents waste of resources:

The stratification system prevents the waste of scarce resources. The men in the elite class actually possess scarce and socially valued abilities and qualities, whether these are inherited or acquired. Because of their possession of these qualities their enjoyment of some privileges such as extra comfort and immunity from doing menial work, are functionally jus-tified. It becomes functionally beneficial for the society to make use of their talents without being wasted.

For example, it would be a waste to pour the resources of society into the training of doctors and engineers, and then making them to work as peons and attendants. When once certain individu-als are chosen and are trained for certain difficult positions it would be dysfunctional to waste their time and energy on tasks for which there is enough manpower.

5. Stabilizes and reinforces the attitudes and skills

Members of a class normally try to limit their relations to their own class. More intimate relationships are mostly found between fellow class members. Even this tendency has its own function.

It tends to stabilize and reinforce the attitudes and skills that may be the basis of an upper-class position. Those who have similar values and interests tend to associate comfortably with one another. Their frequent association itself confirms their common values and interests.

6. Helps to pursue different professions or jobs

The values, attitudes and qualities of differ-ent classes do differ. This difference is also functional for society to some extent. Because society needs manual as well as non-manual workers.

Many jobs are not attractive to highly trained or 're-fined' people for they are socialized to aspire for certain other jobs. Because of the early influence of family and socialization, the individuals imbibe in them certain values, attitudes and qualities relevant to the social class to which they belong. This will influence their selection of jobs.

7. Social Control

Further, to the extent that 'lower class' cultural characteristics are essential to society, the classes are, of course, functional. In fact, a certain amount of mutual antagonism be-tween social classes is also functional. To some extent, upper-class and lower-class groups can act as negative reference groups for each other. Thus, they act as a means of social control also.

8. Controlling effect on the 'shady' world

Class stratification has another social control function. Even in the 'shady' world of gamblers and in the underworld of lower criminals, black marketers, racketeers, smugglers, etc., the legitimate class structure has got respectability. They know that money is not a substitute for prestige but only compensation for renouncing it. Hence instead of continuing in a profitable shady career, such people want to gain respectability for their money and for their children. They try to enter legitimate fields and become philanthropists and patrons of the arts. Thus, the legitimate class structure continues to attract the shady classes and the underworld. This attraction

exerts a social control function.

- **DYSFUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION**

Social stratification has also many dysfunctions for society as discussed below;

• Lack of capability and competence to perform necessary roles.

• Essential roles of society are sometimes neglected or made subordinate when status is ascribed not to them but to some other roles that are less important to the essential interests of society.

• Conflict may occur between the upper and tower stratum to share equal rights when stratification system may be weakening.

• Difficulty in conformity.

Other Dysfunctions of Social Stratification includes:

The dysfunctions of class stratification are probably more obvious than the functions. Let's put forth some of the dysfunctions of the following below:

1. Class in the family:

The tendency toward inheritance of class position, which is revealed in every study of the relationship between fathers' occupations and those of their sons, inevitably means that to some extent the circulation of the elite is hampered, there is some waste of talent, and presumably some social positions are filled less efficiently than they would otherwise be. Family loyalty is not the only cause of this. To whatever extent social-class consciousness exists (not necessarily in the rather narrow Marxist sense) there is inevitably a tendency toward class favoritism. In the caste type of system, constriction of the circulation of the elite is elevated into a principle.

2. The aspect of a class system:

In this system, the tendency for the upper classes to accumulate wealth and the distribution of wealth in all forms probably never fulfills perfectly the function of giving greater rewards to those whose contributions to society are the more important. From a sociological point of view, the dysfunction involved in this mal-distribution lies not in its abstract injustice but, rather, in the sense of injustice, in the danger to morale involved in the spread of the feeling that effort is not rewarded according to the desert, and in the strain put upon the integration of society. The distribution of good things in general, which is to some extent controlled by the sheer power aspect of the upper-class position, is dysfunctional, in other words, if it begins to undermine the value system and transform "normal" criticism from below into class rancor. In this case, the differential-reward aspect of the class does not fulfill its pattern-maintenance and integrative functions; instead, it creates a "problem" in the areas of pattern maintenance and integration.

3. The aspect of a caste system:

In the case of the caste system, it is only an extreme type, sanctified in religion or ideology. The caste system divides society into many groups such as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. The only caste system is responsible for the suffering of a particular section of the society who are untouchables. They are suppressed and exploited by the high caste groups. Each group is attached to rigid social norms and values, because of which normal interaction among the categories is not possible. So, it is a hindrance to social progress as well as the rules and regulation in the principle of 'Purity and Pollution', one has to conform to the traditional norms and values to maintain the principle.

4. A special aspect of mal-distribution:

In this sense it is implicit in the growing rancor of the bourgeoisie before the French Revolution; the mal-distribution that caused complaint was not so much mal-distribution of material rewards. Nor was there a great danger that the bourgeoisie would through apathy cease to perform its functions for society. The trouble, it appears, was that the bourgeoisie felt that it was not given adequate public recognition for the functions it was in fact performing. Inadequate public recognition was no doubt partly a matter of restricting business activities unnecessarily (as if they were unimportant); it was partly a matter of not permitting members of the bourgeoisie to gain the social distinction of nobility. This feeling of injustice led to, or was involved in, class conflict; when circumstances were ripe the growing strength of the frustrated classes overcame the weakness of the "ruling class," but only at the great cost of revolution.

5. The dysfunctions of social class:

As discussed earlier in the social class system it has been found that the prevention of talent from reaching certain top positions where it would be socially most useful, the hampering of talented persons in the positions they do occupy, and the withholding of social rewards from functionally important people and unduly confining these rewards to people whose contributions to society seem less important.

These dysfunctions are always present to some degree, but they are not always so pronounced as to outweigh the functions as mentioned above. In other words, a certain amount of injustice and inflexibility can exist without creating universal cynicism and destroying the integration of society.

1.6 PRINCIPLE FORMS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Concrete forms of social stratification are different and numerous. However, sociologists have grouped majority of these into four basic systems of stratification: slavery, estates, caste and class. These are sometimes found in conjunction with one another.

i. **Slavery:** The term 'slave' is used to denote "a man whom law and/or custom regards as the property of another". Slaves are in lower condition and have no political rights. The legal conditions of slave ownership have varied considerably between different societies. Slavery is an extreme form of inequality. Its basis is economic. It has existed almost in all agrarian societies where slaves become an asset in production. In the 18th and 19th centuries, slaves were used exclusively as plantation workers and as domestic menials in the United States, South America and the West Indies; in India, this institution existed in the form of 'bonded Labour'.

ii. **Estates**: Estates were categories in feudal systems, especially in Europe during Middle Ages. They were less rigid than castes and allowed some mobility. In an estate system men are assigned to their strata according to their birth, military strength and landholdings. Unlike castes, estates were created politically by manmade laws rather than religious rules. Each estate had its own code of appropriate behavior. The normal divisions were three-fold: (a) the nobility [the first (highest) estate], which was composed of aristocracy and gentry; (b) the clergy (the second estate), which had lower status but possessing various distinctive privileges; and (c) the commoners, which include everyone else from peasants to artisans. In an estate system, the people of various strata were identified by the rights they had and the duties they were expected to perform.

iii. **Caste system:** The Indian caste system provides an example of a peculiar type of social stratification based on ascription. It is a system of inherited inequality as the guiding principle in social relationships. A caste may be defined as an endogamous group whose members follow by tradition a single occupation, or certain cognate occupations and who are held together by definite social rules of behavior, and by common ceremonial or ritual observances. The system of caste is based on the assumption that each person is preordained a place and occupation in society at birth. Contact between persons of different strata (castes) is 'impure' and intermarriage between castes is forbidden. Even the most trivial acts of life, such as sipping water or eating, are governed by rules of each caste. Caste system derives its authority from the Hindu belief in the principles of karma and rebirth. Accordingly, individuals who fail to abide by the rituals and duties (karma) of their caste, it is believed, will be reborn in an inferior position in their next incarnation. The caste system is an illustration of social closure in which access to wealth and prestige is closed to social groups, which are excluded from the performance of purifying rituals. The concept of caste is sometimes used outside the Indian context where two or more ethnic groups are largely segregated from one another, and where notions of racial purity prevail. Modern Weberian, such as John Rex, argue that the apartheid system in South Africa was a form of caste system.

iv. **Social class:** The above three systems of stratification—slavery, estate and caste system are mainly associated with agrarian societies. In the modern industrial societies, where machine energy has replaced human and animal energy as the primary source of economic production, an entirely new set of social stratification has developed, which is known as social classes.

1.7 CAUSES OF STRATIFICATION

Social stratification develops when societies create systems for ranking people and distributing resources unequally.

These rankings are shaped by multiple forces that can reinforce one another across generations.

1. ECONOMIC FACTORS

Economic factors refer to the unequal distribution of wealth, income, and control over resources, which influences life chances and social position.

- **Wealth and Income** – Wealth (net assets) and income (earnings from wages or investments) are the most influential determinants of class position. Their uneven distribution creates stark divisions between social strata.

- **Occupational Structure** – Jobs vary in pay, prestige, and security; higher-paying professions often require costly education or training.

- **Control of Resources** – Ownership of land, capital, or technology concentrates power among a small elite.

2. POLITICAL FACTORS

Political factors involve how laws, policies, and access to decision-making power shape opportunities and maintain social hierarchies.

- **Laws and Policies** – Legislation can either entrench inequality (e.g., apartheid) or reduce it (e.g., civil rights laws).

- **Access to Power** – Groups with political influence can shape policies to protect their status.

- **State Priorities** – Public spending choices affect education, healthcare, and mobility.

3. CULTURAL FACTORS

Cultural factors include the shared beliefs, norms, and values that legitimize and reinforce social hierarchies.

- **Ideology** – Dominant cultural beliefs legitimize inequality. The ruling class promotes ideas that frame existing structures as natural or fair, creating false consciousness among the disadvantaged (e.g., meritocracy narratives).

- **Norms and Traditions** – Cultural expectations about gender roles, family duties, or occupations can restrict mobility.

- **Religion** – Religious teachings can either reinforce hierarchy (e.g., divine right of kings) or inspire equality movements.

- **Cultural Capital** – Pierre Bourdieu's concept describes the non-financial assets (skills, knowledge, connections) that give middle and upper-class individuals an advantage in institutions like education.

4. HISTORICAL FACTORS

Past events lay the groundwork for present inequalities by creating lasting advantages for some groups and disadvantages for others.

- **Colonialism and Conquest** – Established racial, ethnic, and economic hierarchies that often persist.

- **Slavery and Forced Labor** – Removed generations from wealth-building opportunities and political participation.

- **Wars and Revolutions** – Can dismantle old systems or create new ruling elites.

- **Industrialization** – Reshaped class divisions between owners, skilled workers, and unskilled laborers.

5. AGE

Age influences how societies value, reward, and include individuals at different life stages.

- **Cultural Status of Age Groups** – Elders may be respected leaders or marginalized dependents; youth may face barriers due to inexperience.

- **Discrimination** – Ageism affects hiring, promotion, and political participation.

- **Life-Course Opportunities** – Educational, career, and leadership chances often vary with age.

6. GENDER

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles and expectations that often create systematic advantages for men and disadvantages for women and gender minorities.

- **Economic Disparities** – Wage gaps and occupational segregation persist globally.

- **Representation** – Men dominate political and corporate leadership positions in most societies.

- **Cultural Restrictions** – Laws or customs may limit women's access to education, property, or mobility.

- **Patriarchal Norms** – Beliefs about "appropriate" gender roles influence who holds power and resources.

1.8 LET US SUM UP

To conclude, it may be argued that social stratification is a system of differential ranking based on social, economic and political attributes of the people. The make up

of any system of stratification is dependent upon conventionally ascribed meanings and socially defined criteria and prescriptions. The norms and sanctions facilitate the formation and perpetuation of the system of stratification. The latter, due to its deep-rooted linkages with social, cultural, religious, educational, economic and political institutional has various implications - both as affecter and affected.

1.9 GLOSSARY

- **Caste:** There are hundreds of castes. They are not to be confused with the abstract model of Varna of which these are only four.
- **Social Stratification:** Social Stratification is a process through which groups and social categories in societies are ranked as higher or lower to one another is terms of this relative position on the scales of prestige, privilege, wealth and power.
- **Status:** Ranking of groups in a society on basis of their relative position in terms of honor or respect.
- **Class:** An achievement-oriented interest group.
- **Power:** The capacity of a group or persons to influence decisions in their own way in the group or community.
- **Ethnicity:** A shared (real or imagined) racial, linguistic or cultural identity of a social group.
- **Patriarchy:** Male headed family and the descent is reckoned in the male line.
- **Stereotype:** A fixed form, character or image.

1.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1 Give the meaning of Social Stratification.

_____

_____

_____

Q.2. Discuss the various elements of Social Stratification.

Q.3. Write short note on:-

(i) Inequality:

(ii) Differentiation:

1.11 LESSON END EXERCISE

- **Tick the right answer**

1. Social stratification is best defined as:

a) The process of social mobility within a society.

b) The hierarchical arrangement of individuals and groups in a society based on factors like wealth, power, and status.

c) The sum of all social interactions within a community. d) The random distribution of resources among different social classes.

Answer: b

2. Which of the following is NOT a characteristic of social stratification:

a) It is a feature of all societies.

b) It affects people's access to resources and opportunities.

c) It is a temporary and fluid system with no long-term effects. d) It involves the ranking of groups in a hierarchy.

Answer: C

3. The caste system is a form of social stratification based on:

a) Achieved status through merit and effort.

b) Income and occupation.

c) Ascribed status based on factors like family background and birth.

d) Social networks and connections.

Answer: c

4. Which of the following is a principal basis for stratification in many modern societies:

a) Ascribing status based purely on race or gender.

b) A system of rigid, inherited social classes.

c) Class-based stratification, where positions are more fluid and based on wealth and occupation.

d) A lack of any formal social hierarchy.

Answer: C

5. Social stratification refers to:

a) The random distribution of wealth and power in society.

b) The hierarchical arrangement of individuals into different levels of power, wealth, and status.

c) The process of social mobility in an open society.

d) The belief that all members of a society are equal.

Answer: b) The hierarchical arrangement of individuals into different levels of power, wealth, and status.

6. Which of the following is a key characteristic of social stratification?

a) A society with no differences in wealth.

b) The unequal distribution of resources and opportunities.

c) Social mobility for all individuals.

d) Complete social equality for every person.

Answer: b) The unequal distribution of resources and opportunities.

1.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Ghurye (1986), *Caste and Race in Modern India*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.
2. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi. Haralambos, Michael (1989), *Sociology*, Themes and Perspectives, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
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SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION

STRUCTURE

2.0 Learning Objectives

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Society and Organism - a Differentiation Structure

2.1.2 Herbert Spencer on Differentiation

2.1.3 Emile Durkheim on Differentiation

2.2 Characteristics of Differentiation

2.3 Social differentiation and Social Stratification

2.4 Similarities and Differences between Social differentiation and Social Stratification

2.5 Let Us Sum Up

2.6 Glossary

2.7 Self-Assessment Questions

2.8 Lesson End Exercise

2.9 Suggested Readings

2.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- the concept of differentiation
- organism and differentiation
- View of Plato, Durkheim and Spencer in differentiation

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the discussion on social stratification and social inequality, a brief reference was

made to the process of differentiation. It was noted that this process constitutes the basic premises on the basis of which emerges the structure of social inequality and social stratification. However, it also constitutes a concept with a social historical rationale and therefore as a concept it needs some discussion vis-a-vis its meaning, the sociological premises of its rise in the society. Differentiation, in general, implies an act of distinguishing or description of something by referring to its specific attributes called *differentia specific*.

Its maximum usage by social scientists has been made in the context of change of form i.e. change of structure from generalized or homogenous state of existence to specialized and heterogeneous state of being in the society. It precisely implies existence of differences among human being's social groups and various social formations. The changes in the form of social structure generated role variations and diversification in human society.

2.1.1 SOCIETY AND ORGANISM - A DIFFERENTIATED STRUCTURE

Social and political philosophy recognized the emerging differentiation in human society and expressed it in terms of an analogy. Accordingly, it has been conceived as an organism with different parts. Like the parts of the organism, the society is also thought as having various parts and each part having inter-relations with the other parts. These inter-relations between the parts develop on the basis certain degree of division of labour. The latter takes place on the basis of differential and special abilities and capacities of each part in interdependence and each part specialized having different function. Differentiation was considered important from the point of view of progress of the society. Each part contributes to the progress of the society by performing its specialized role.

In view of the specialized tasks performed by individuals in the society, Plato argues that when specialization becomes inevitable its implications are and must lead to social stratification. But this stratification, Plato emphasizes, should be strictly on the basis of specialized function and not birth as "Golden Parent will have Silver Son and Silver Parent a Golden Son".

2.1.2 HERBERT SPENCER VIEWS ON DIFFERENTIATION

Apart from social and political philosophers the tradition of organic conception of human society has been the basic premises to understand and analyses, various social

processes. Herbert Spencer used the concept of differentiation in the context of understanding societal evolution, consequently responsible for emergence of differences among people and increasing complexities of the social structure in terms of role relationships.

According to Spencer the human society because of the process of evolution experiences change from "Incoherent Homogeneity", or indefinite homogeneity to "coherent heterogeneity" or definite heterogeneous relationships between the unequal. The word unequal denotes the differences that people have in their capacities and other natural endowments. Like Plato, Spencer also conceives society as a biological organism. Such a conception is just not to indicate the multiplicity of the cells which an organism has. It rather refers to society's various constituent units. Spencer explains these constituent units in terms of structure and functions. While the former refers to the arrangement of all the constituent units in a systematic manner in the form of a whole structure the, latter explains the role played by each unit and the contribution made by them towards the maintenance as well as sustenance of whole system.

The structure and function of the society are highly significant because of the contribution which these make in society's development from a simple to complex state. The entire process of change can be understood in the context of increasing complexity of structure in which differentiation in functions becomes more apparent. In the words of Spencer "in society, as in living bodies, increase in the mass is habitually accompanied by increase of structure. Along with that integration which is the primary trait of evolution, both exhibit in high degree in the secondary trait i.e. differentiation". The process of differentiation follows a sequence or an order in its emergence.

The sequence can also be called stages. It is apparent from the following aspects of Spencer's theory:

1. Differentiation arises at a stage when people start claiming the right to exercise authority - This is first stage of differentiation;
2. Division between sexes caused by certain specific conditions under which both men and women are forced to divide their functions. In a situation of war or external aggression the men go to war and women perform less skilled functions

in the process of production for sustenance; and

3. When the process of emergence of differentiation in role relationships leads to division of roles in terms of power and authority for administration and control and the role of the chief of society or an organization comes into being there emerges distinct classes of people called chiefs and subjects.

The structure and function to Spencer, are important aspects of society in the process of society's movement or progress. What sort of structure emerges when the third stage of differentiation takes place? It is argued that with multiplicity of statuses society's structure becomes highly complex. With the increasing complexity further differentiation takes place. In the process, there comes into being a structure of various functionaries such as king, local rulers, petty chiefs, initiatory men, priests, slave etc. The process of differentiation therefore is both dynamic and progressive in nature.

2.1.3 EMILE DURKHEIM ON DIFFERENTIATION

It may also be recalled that with reference to the emergence of social stratification, the concept of differentiation by Durkheim was discussed. The main cause of social differentiation, according to Durkheim is "Division of Labour" in the society. The process of differentiation in which Division of Labour is of critical importance is also linked with the physical conditions of human population. In support of his analysis Durkheim puts forward the following argument:

1. Differentiation is a dynamic concept and has implications for progress of the society;
2. Associated with Division of Labour is the process of increasing population, whose needs for existence intensify needs for higher level of production and societal organization;
3. Increasing population also intensifies struggle for existence between the human individuals;
4. The struggle for existence leads to intensive search for the means of subsistence;
5. The quest of meeting the need for means of subsistence leads to the emergence

of different type of occupations, involving different skills and abilities;

6. The result Division of Labour this contributes to social differentiation in the society.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Discuss in brief Herbert Spencer views on social differentiation.

2. Write a short note on Emile Durkheim views on social differentiation.

2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF DIFFERENTIATION

On the basis of brief discussion on the concept of differentiation based on the ideas of Plato, Spencer and Durkheim, following points emerges as the dominant characteristics of social differentiation in human society:

1. The concept of differentiation, as has been used by scholars mentioned above, indicate the changing form of social relationships, social organization and even production system in a given society. For instance,
   (i) Change from simple to industrial society;
   (ii) Incoherent homogeneity to coherent heterogeneity and

(iii) Mechanical to organic solidarity and so on.

2. Change in the form of social structure i.e. differentiation.
3. Occurrence of various positions etc.
4. Demand for specialized roles etc.

2.3 SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

It may also be mentioned that the concept is not discussed in isolation of other processes. It is also related with social stratification. In the context of latter, the concept of differentiation refers to a "process by which social positions are defined and distinguished from each other by assigning each position a distinctive role, a set of rights and responsibilities".

The operational affectivity of this process is closely linked with certain social situations.

(i) Clear definition of tasks;

(ii) Clear distinction of lines of authority and responsibility in the discharging of social roles;

(iii) Effective mechanism of recruiting and training sufficient number of persons to assume different statuses and reforming.

(iv) Adequate sanctions - reward and punishments for the motivation of individuals for conscientious performance and reframing from indifference or deviation.

Since the process is linked with social stratification and is described as dynamic in nature it has various structural implications. It is argued that once the differentiation of roles takes place in a society, the society establishes certain criteria by which it ranks the role in accordance with their utility. The ranking of role itself is a process which is subsequent to differentiation and intensifies the process by which further differentiation takes place. In defining boundaries and linkages between different roles and positions it also legitimizes its basis.

There are three bases of ranking of statuses:

(i) Personal Characteristics: There is certain type of role which need specific type of individuals with certain characteristics such as intelligence, beauty, strength etc.

(ii) Trained Skills and Abilities: In this context, specialized persons with special skills are required. For example, doctors, engineers, workman all require certain skills and abilities.

(iii) Social Functions of the Role: In ranking the special functions or act performed by certain individual form the basis. Doctors save the life of the people, judges ensure justice, and defense personnel protect the country from external aggression and threats.

The ranking is highly important in the process of differentiation to stratification as it tends to:

1. Facilitate the search for the light people for the light positions:

2. Facilitate the levels of skills and talents required for specific type of jobs; and

3. Help in the rational allocation of man power in human society.

2.4 SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

DIFFERENCES

Feature	Social Differentiation	Social Stratification
Nature	A horizontal process of separating groups based on biological, cultural, or social factors.	A vertical process of arranging social groups into a hierarchy of unequal socioeconomic tiers.
Core Concept	Differences or distinctions between individuals and groups.	Institutionalized inequality, where those differences lead to social ranking.
Structure	Divides people into categories that are not necessarily valued more or less than others. Examples include age, gender, occupation, religion, and nationality.	Ranks people into "strata" or layers based on factors like wealth, income, education, race, and power.
Hierarchy	Not inherently hierarchical. For example, a teacher and a student have different roles (differentiation), but this doesn't automatically imply one is of higher social worth.	Inherently hierarchical. It creates a system of "higher" and "lower" social standings.
Result	Creates a division of labor and specialized social roles needed for a complex society to function.	Produces social inequality, which can persist across generations.
Example	The division of tasks between managers, skilled laborers, and unskilled laborers is a form of functional differentiation.	The system that gives more income, power, and prestige to managers than to laborers is a form of stratification.

SIMILARITIES

1. **Cultural constructions.** Both differentiation and stratification are social constructs, not biological necessities. A person's race or gender, for example, is a biological differentiation, but the social significance and ranking attached to it are culturally determined.

2. **Universal phenomena.** All human societies exhibit some form of differentiation and stratification, though the specific criteria and degree of inequality vary.

3. **Dynamic processes.** Both are constantly subject to change. Power structures and ideologies can shift over time, leading to new forms of differentiation and stratification.

4. **Systemic organization.** Both concepts describe ways that societies organize and categorize people into roles and statuses. Differentiation sorts individuals into distinct positions, which can then be ranked by stratification.

2.5 LET US SUM UP

In view of the above brief discussion of the concept of social differentiation, it may be argued that it is an important dimension of human society which not only indicate the differences among the people but also explains its relationship with social progress and

change. This argument holds truth as differentiation is linked with different stages of development of human society, including economy and polity but also it has various implications with regard to ranking, valuation and social stratification.

2.6 GLOSSARY

- **Class:** According to Marx, Classes are groups of people who are distinguished from each other due to their ownership or control over the means of production or lack of the same.
- **Status:** Effectively claim to social esteem, weber tried to show that status cuts across class barriers
- **Value - Consensus:** Agreement by all members of a social system on what is accepted for all.

2.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1. What do you mean by Differentiation.

_____

_____

_____

Q.2. Give the views of Herbert Spencer on Differentiation.

_____

_____

_____

Q.3. How Emile Durkheim is different from Spencer in his conception of Differentiation.

_____

_____

_____

2.8 LESSON END EXERCISE

❖ **Tick the right answer**

1. ……...means the things are not the same in its appearance or characteristics:

A. Differentiation

B. Variation

C. Dissimilarity

D. Discrimination

Answer: A

2. ……means the state of distributing the valued resources, rewards and positions in society:

A. Unequal

B. Peculiar

C. Inequality

D. Inequality

Answer: C

3. ……is the ordering of social unity as higher or lower, superior or inferior:

A. Ranking

B. Pyramid

C. Discrimination

D. Hierarchy

Answer: D

4. What is the dividing of people in a society on the basis of differentiation, inequality and hierarchy:

A. Social classification

B. Social stratification

C. Social differentiation

D. Hierarchy

Answer: B

5. Who are the prominent sociologists mainly analyzed the functionalist perspective of social stratification:

A. Kingsley Davis &Wilbert E Moore

B. Ghurye & Thomas Moore

C. Max Weber& Karl Marx

D. Parson & Coser

Answer: A

2.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Ghurye (1986), Caste and Race in Modern India, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.
2. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), Social Stratification, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
3. Haralambos, Michael (1989), Sociology, Themes and Perspectives, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
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Course Code: SOC-C-204 **Unit–I**
Semester-II **Lesson No. 3**

HIERARCHY

STRUCTURE

3.0 Learning Objectives

3.1 Introduction

3.2 The Concept of Hierarchy

3.3 Historical Perspectives on Hierarchies

3.4 Historical Perspectives on Hierarchies

3.5 Theories Explaining Hierarchies

3.6 Usage of the concept of Hierarchy in terms of Social Stratification

3.7 Importance of Hierarchy in Social Stratification

3.8 Similarities between Social Stratification and Hierarchy

3.9 Let Us Sum Up

3.10 Glossary

3.11 Self-Assessment Questions

3.12 Lesson End Exercise

3.13 Suggested Readings

3.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- **understand the concept of hierarchy;**
- **its emergence;**
- **how it can be seen in different societies.**

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of hierarchy, in general implies an organization of persons or things arranged into higher and lower ranks, classes and grades representing a structure of relationships. It may also be described that it also represents ranking of statuses within an organization according to some criterion of evaluation of the attributes or an individual or the group accepted within the system. The process of evaluation and ranking

Simultaneously operate in opposite directions and create separation between the differentially evaluated individuals and groups and put them in a particular class. Along with separation the process also create unity by bringing the separated into some relationships with each other. It is expressed in terms of relationship between individuals, groups or classes based on a system of ranking. In the context of social stratification hierarchy is an outcome of the system of stratification as well as it expresses certain type of system of relationships between the unequal and differentially placed.

Though the concept of hierarchy as a rank order or system or arrangements of different strata in terms of high and low classes appear to be simple but it is not so simple. Rather, it is very complex to its multidimensionality. It is an established fact, as also mentioned by **M. N. Srinivas,** that hierarchy is entrenched in the social set up and it is quite pervasive in nature and cannot be done, away with easily. The reason being that it is not the ranking alone that creates hierarchy but there are behavioral dimensions that also influence its formation. This implies even the habits, customs, and social practices matter in determining hierarchy. There are various expressions of hierarchy found among the common masses when they address men of higher social status, such as "Mai Baap, Malik, Anna data etc. in the general regional contexts". **Andre Beteille** argues that there exists a "hierarchical mentality" in the society indicating that hierarchy and the social expressions that emerge are institutionalized and legitimized. In other words, hierarchy exists as an accepted fact in the society.

3.2 THE CONCEPT OF HIERARCHY

A hierarchy is an arrangement of individuals or groups in a graded order, often based on attributes such as status, power, or authority. Hierarchies are omnipresent in human societies, from the simplest tribal communities to complex modern states. They help organize social interactions and establish order, enabling societies to function efficiently.

However, hierarchies can also perpetuate inequality and limit social mobility. In sociology, hierarchies are studied to understand how they influence behavior, relationships, and social structures. Hierarchy has been conceptualized in two ways. A conventional usage, as epitomized by Max Weber's analysis of modern bureaucracy, highlights legal-rational authority in a formal organization. This view holds that hierarchy consists of a central authority and a tightly integrated chain of command and control and that authority is gradually transferred downward. The relationship between units at different levels is that of super ordination and subordination, and each unit is accountable to only one superior at the next level.

Hierarchical organization is also characterized by both specialization and formalization of activities. Hierarchy is based on the division of labour: each unit is functionally differentiated and assigned a set of specific tasks. It is formalized in the sense that roles, relationships, and behaviors therein are prescribed in a set of rules, which serves as the cornerstone of rational-legal authority. Yet, hierarchy can also refer to an informal structure of inequality in power, such as class structure in society and hegemony in world politics.

In the social sciences, studies of complex systems have provided a broader notion of hierarchy and demonstrated that it need not be defined in terms of authority relations. Instead, it can be distinguished by nastiness, or an arrangement of units composed of several subunits, each of which is further organized in the same fashion down to the bottom. This structure reduces complexity by making partitions within an organization to divide and conquer, as can be observed in configurations of congressional committees, governmental agencies, and corporate departments.

This instrumental conceptualization of hierarchy is tied with a voluntaristic view of authority. Here, authority is not imposed top-down. Rather, it is based on mutual consent, especially that of subordinates, and is thus delegated upward. This alternative interpretation of hierarchy and authority paved the way for vast literature on organizational

design. Agency theory, for example, focuses on the problems that accrue from the delegation of decision-making authority to an agent by a principal. Also at issue is the span of control—the number of subordinates directly supervised by a superior. A narrower span will render a direct control more effective while creating more levels, and, as a result, the overall management of an organization will likely be less effective.

3.3 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON HIERARCHIES

Hierarchies have existed since the earliest human societies. In ancient times, hierarchies were often based on kinship, age, and gender. As societies grew more complex, hierarchies became institutionalized, with clear distinctions between rulers and subjects, elites and commoners. The development of states and empires further entrenched hierarchical structures, often justified by religious or ideological beliefs. In medieval Europe, for example, the feudal system created rigid social hierarchies based on land ownership and vassalage. Understanding these historical contexts helps sociologists trace the evolution of hierarchies and their enduring impact on contemporary societies.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Discuss briefly any two types of hierarchy.

…….

…….

…….

…….

2. Write in three lines functionalist perspective on hierarchy.

……..

…….

……

…….

3.4 TYPES OF HIERARCHIES

1. SOCIAL HIERARCHIES

Social hierarchies are prevalent in all societies, structuring relationships based on various criteria, such as class, race, gender, and age. Social class hierarchies, for example, categorize individuals based on economic status, occupation, and education. These hierarchies influence access to resources, opportunities, and social capital. Racial hierarchies, often rooted in historical contexts like colonialism and slavery, create disparities in power and privilege among different racial groups. Gender hierarchies, which assign different roles and status to men and women, have long been a focus of feminist sociology. Understanding these different types of social hierarchies is crucial for analyzing inequality and advocating for social justice.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL HIERARCHIES

In organizations, hierarchies are established to ensure efficiency and clarity in roles and responsibilities. These hierarchies are typically structured in a top-down manner, with clear lines of authority and decision-making power. In bureaucratic organizations, such as corporations and government agencies, hierarchies help manage large-scale operations and maintain order. However, rigid organizational hierarchies can stifle creativity and innovation, leading to calls for more egalitarian and flexible structures. Sociologists study organizational hierarchies to understand how they affect workplace dynamics, employee satisfaction, and overall organizational performance.

3. POLITICAL HIERARCHIES

Political hierarchies refer to the distribution of power and authority within a society's political system. These hierarchies can range from autocratic regimes with centralized power to democratic systems with more distributed authority. Political hierarchies shape governance, policy-making, and the relationship between the state and its citizens. Sociologists analyze political hierarchies to understand how power is maintained, challenged, and transformed. They also examine the role of political elites, the impact of political institutions, and the ways in which citizens can influence political processes.

3.5 THEORIES EXPLAINING HIERARCHIES

- **FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE**

The functionalist perspective views hierarchies as necessary for the stability and functioning of society. According to this view, hierarchies create order by assigning different roles and responsibilities to individuals and groups. These roles are based on the needs of society, with more important and complex tasks assigned to those with greater skills and abilities. Functionalists argue that hierarchies ensure that the most capable individuals occupy positions of authority, thereby promoting efficiency and social cohesion. However, critics of this perspective highlight that hierarchies often perpetuate inequality and limit social mobility.

- **CONFLICT THEORY**

Conflict theory offers a critical perspective on hierarchies, emphasizing their role in perpetuating inequality and serving the interests of the dominant group. According to conflict theorists, hierarchies are not natural or inevitable but are constructed and maintained through power struggles. The dominant group uses its power to control resources, shape ideologies, and enforce social norms that justify and reinforce their privileged position. This perspective highlights the ways in which hierarchies contribute to

social conflict and exploitation, advocating for social change to achieve greater equality and justice.

- **SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM**

Symbolic interactionism focuses on the micro-level interactions that create and sustain hierarchies. This perspective emphasizes the role of symbols, language, and communication in shaping social reality. Through everyday interactions, individuals negotiate and reinforce hierarchical relationships. For example, the use of titles, formal language, and body language can signal status and authority. Symbolic interactionists study how these interactions contribute to the construction of social hierarchies and how individuals navigate and challenge these structures in their daily lives.

3.6 USAGE OF THE CONCEPT OF HIERARCHY IN THE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

1. Any system, social or otherwise, is said to be hierarchical or gradational in nature if it consists of different strata or layers one on top of another. The more hierarchical a system is, the greater the number of layers and, generally, the greater the distance between the top and bottom are found. In a system for say Caste system hierarchy help us understand social Inequality and Social distance among Castes.

2. Hierarchy is an important concept because, by making use of the hierarchical principle it is comparatively easier to trace out the relative status or position of an individual or group in a particular society. Thus, for example, it is through the principle of hierarchy, we can say, that in a caste system, the Brahmins as a caste group occupy the top-most position enjoying the privileges associated with it, while the untouchable castes occupy the bottom most position suffering from all the disabilities related with it. A large number caste, often referred to as ‘intermediary castes’ occupy different positions which lie in between these two extreme positions.

3. Similarly, class system, is also hierarchical in which the capitalists and the rich occupy the top position in the hierarchy while the workers and the poor occupy the bottom most position. The position in between these two is occupied by the middle class. Sociologists have also spoken of a six-fold division of class hierarchy.

3.7 IMPORTANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF HIERARCHY IN SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

1. Hierarchy is an important concept because, by making use of the hierarchical principle it is comparatively easier to trace out the relative status or position of an individual or group in a particular society. For example, it is through the principle of hierarchy, we can say, that in a caste system, the Brahmins as a caste group occupy the top-most position enjoying the privileges associated with it, while the untouchable castes occupy the bottom most position suffering from all the disabilities related with it. A large number caste, often referred to as 'intermediary castes' occupy different positions which lie in between these two extreme positions.

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3. The principle of hierarchy is also important in the area of operation of power and authority. Normally, power and authority flow from higher level to lower level as we witness it in all types of bureaucracies. The exercise of power and authority and

the control of people and resource become organized in a hierarchical way. The higher the position of an individual in the hierarchy, the greater the power and control of resources that he has access to and vice versa. This kind of hierarchical principle can be seen in virtually every area of social life, from politics and economics to religion and education.

4. More extensive the hierarchy, higher is the differentiation in the society. Further, according to the functionalists, hierarchy is also a symbol of rising specialization and differentiation in the society. Post modernists argue that western societies, now have a continuum of individualized inequalities and hence, almost infinite strata and numerous hierarchies.

5. Hierarchy can also be interpreted as the opposite of equality. Modern democratic societies provide for equality of opportunity and abhor hierarchy based on status.

6. Hierarchy also results into unequal opportunities and unequal rewards. Unequal rewards further reinforce hierarchy. Marxists perceive this hierarchy as a design of the dominant classes and deem it inimical to classless society.

7. Hierarchy is viewed in value-neutral terms also. In parlance of work organisation, hierarchy is a necessity. In organisations, hierarchy provides direction to the collective efforts and ensures that orders are executed. No organisation in the world is without a formal or informal hierarchy. In some organisations like army, it is very tight, in some organisations like startup tech firms, it is very loose.

3.8 SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND HIERARCHY

SIMILARITIES

1. **Ranked order:** Both concepts involve a ranked or ordered system where different groups have different levels of social standing, power, or prestige.
2. **Social differentiation**: Both are ways of describing how societies differentiate people into different groups or levels.
3. **Basis in social factors:** Both systems are based on social attributes such as wealth, power, and status, not just biological differences.

DIFFERENCES

Feature	Social Stratification	Hierarchy
Definition	The systemic layering of a society into different strata or groups based on factors like wealth, power, and prestige.	The structure of ordering these groups in a vertical or ranked arrangement, often based on authority or superiority.
Focus	Focuses on the existence of the layers or "strata" and the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities.	Focuses on the mechanism of order, the criteria for ranking, and the relationships between the different levels.
Relationship	Hierarchy is the mechanism that structures or organizes a stratification system.	Stratification is the result of the hierarchical ordering of social groups.
Analogy	The levels of a building (e.g., basement, first floor, penthouse) are the stratification.	The steps and stairs that connect each floor are the hierarchy.

3.9 LET US SUM UP

Detailed discussion on the concept of hierarchy and the ideas of various scholars must have lightened you about the hierarchy in society. Every society is stratified on hierarchical order. Hierarchy may be based on one or other accepts depending on the type of society, it may be caste, class or race etc. So, in order to understand social stratification hierarchical division of society is necessarily important.

3.10 GLOSSARY

- **Hierarchy:** A rank order of castes or groups from top to bottom.
- **Functional:** The approach which refers to manifest positive consequences of aspects like economy, polity, religion etc.
- **Pollution:** A state of mind and body which is connected with occupation and caste and regarded as unclean.
- **Purity:** A state of ritual cleanliness associated with caste occupation.

3.11 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1. What do you mean by hierarchy.

_____

_____

_____

Q.2. How Louis Dumont see hierarchy in the society, discuss in brief.

_____

_____

Q.3. How the concept of hierarchy emerged in social science.

3.12 LESSON END EXERCISE

Tick the right answer:

1.Who wrote the book Homo Hierarchicus: The caste system and its Implications'?
A. G S Ghurye
B. Irawati Karve
C. M N Srinivas
D. Louis Dumont
Answer: D

2. When did the book of 'Homo Hierarchicus: The caste system and its Implications'?
A. 1911
B. 1987
C. 1970
D. 1950
Answer: C

3. Who introduced the concept of purity and impurity related with caste system?
A. M N Srinivas
B. Louis Dumont
C. G S Ghurye
D. Ambedkar
Answer: B

4. Who opined that 'caste is a special form of inequality'?
A. Louis Dumont
B. G S Ghurye
C. David Hardiman
D. Herbert Risely
Answer: A

5. Who is the father of Indian sociology?
A. G S Ghurye
B. M N Srinivas
C. August Comte
D. S. C Dube
Answer: A

3.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Ghurye, (1986), Caste and Race in Modern India, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.
2. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
3. Haralambos, Michael (1989), *Sociology*, Themes and Perspectives, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
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Course Code: SOC-C-204 **Unit–I**

Lesson No. 4

SOCIAL INEQUALITY

STRUCTURE

4.0 Learning Objectives

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Social Inequality: Meaning and Characteristics

4.3 The nature of social inequality

4.4 The sources of social inequality

4.5 Over view: Social Inequality

4.6 Basis of Social Inequality

4.7 Major Theoretical perspectives

4.8 Similarities and Differences between Social Stratification and Social Inequality

4.9 Let Us Sum Up

4.10 Glossary

4.11 Self-Assessment Questions

4.12 Lesson End Exercise

4.13 Suggested Reading

4.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to learn about:

- **the concept of Social Inequality;**
- **nature of Social Inequality:**
- **how one can overview inequality in society.**

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of inequality lies at the root of some of the major theoretical formulations in society. It constitutes the basic component of the phenomenon of stratification in society which some of the senior and established sociologists as also younger scholars have studied extensively and on which they have written articles, monographs, and textbooks. In a general sense, inequality refers to imbalance in quantity, size, degree, value, or status. This often implies an imbalance in ability or resources to meet a challenge. Inequality in societies in general is manifest in caste, class, gender, and power relations. In simple societies based on kinship, stratification is evident in status distinctions determined by age, sex, and personal characteristics as among Australian aboriginal communities.

4.2 SOCIAL INEQUALITY: MEANING AND CHARACTERSTICS

Social inequality simply refers, to the existence of socially created inequalities or differences present in society. It refers to a condition in which some groups possess limited amounts of one or more resources in comparison to a dominant group, which blocks the upward mobility of other groups.

The first sociological explanation of the origin of inequality was given by French philosopher J.J. Rousseau. He said that the emergence of individual property ownership leads to the concept of inequality.

- **Definitions of Social Inequality**

Some of the definitions of social inequality are:

(i) According to Schaffer & Lamm, "the term social inequality describe the condition in which members of a society have different amount of wealth, prestige and power".

(ii) According to Davis & Moore, "social inequality is an unconsciously evolved device by which societies ensure that most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons".

(iv) According to Andre Beiteille, "the idea of hierarchy entails that of inequality. But inequality does not necessarily mean hierarchy i.e., rigidity of high and low statuses".

(v) According to Kerbo (2012), defined social inequality refers to "differences in the distribution of resources and opportunities across individuals and groups in society."

(vi) According to Andersen & Taylor (2018) defined, social inequality is "the unequal distribution of social and economic resources, power, and privilege between individuals and groups."

(vii) According to Wilkinson & Pickett (2018), defined social inequality is "the systematic disparities in income, wealth, power, and other resources that exist between individuals, groups, and countries."

- **Characteristics of Social Inequality**

The main features of social inequality are:

There are mainly two types of inequalities namely: -

1. **Biological or Natural Inequality**

2. **Social Inequality**

Many stratification systems are accomplished by the beliefs that social inequalities are biological inequalities. For example, racial stratification system where whites might claim biological superiority over blacks and see this -as the basis of their dominance.

J.J. Rousseau tried to establish a relation between them. He refers to biological based inequalities as natural or physical because it is established by bodily strength and the qualities of the mind or the soul whereas socially created inequalities consists of different privileges which some men enjoy to the prejudice of others, such as that of being more rich, more honored, more powerful or even in a position to exact obedience.

Rousseau believed that biologically based inequalities between people are small and relatively unimportant whereas socially created inequalities provide the major basis for the system of social stratification. However, it could still be argued that biological inequalities no matter how small, provide the foundation upon which structures of social inequalities are built. For example, feudal system of medieval Europe.

Biological differences become biological inequalities when people define them as such. Biological factors assume importance in many stratification systems because of the meaning assigned to them by different cultures. For example, old age has very different meaning in different societies. In traditional Australian societies, it brought high prestige and power since the elders directed the affairs of the tribe but in Western societies, the elders are usually

pensioned off.

Andre Beteille argues that the search for a biological basis for stratification is bound to end in failure since the qualities are not just there. Thus, to say that in nature, they are as human beings have defined them in different societies in different historical epochs.

1. Social stratification is a particular form of social inequality in which individuals are ranked on the basis of statuses.

2. It is possible for social inequality to exist without social strata. For example, some sociologists have argued that it is no longer correct to regard Western industrial society particularly USA as being stratified in terms of a class system. They suggest that social classes have been replaced by continuous hierarchy of unequal positions. Where there were once classes, whose members had a consciousness of kind a common way of life and shared interests, there is now an unbroken continuum of occupational statuses which command varying degrees of prestige and economic rewards.

3. Sociologists are more concerned with systematic differences between aggregates of individuals and not with inter-personal differences. Inequalities, however, are not of very direct interest to Sociologists. Their interest is in the differences in life chances and life styles among people which result from the different positions they occupy in society- as landowners and laborers, Brahmins and Harijans, etc.

4. Inequality is a social fact. Patterns of social inequality vary from one society to another. For example, class structure of American society is different from class structure of Scandinavian countries. Patterns of social inequality change overtime. For example, the class structure of the USA is not the same today as it was at the time of the civil war.

5. One or another aspect of inequality is likely to acquire special prominence in a particular society at a given phase of its historical development.

6. Social inequality manifest itself in different forms in societies of different kinds.

7. Social inequality is universal.

- **Dimensions of Social Inequality**

Social inequality can be categorized into various dimensions:

• Economic: Inequality of income, occupation and education.

• Political: Inequality of power and authority.

• Status Factor: Inequality of statuses.

Ralf Dahrendorf conceptualizes four types of inequalities as discussed below:

i) Natural differences of kinds (Age, Sex, etc.)

ii) Natural differences of position (Caste System)

iii) Social differentiation of position (Esteem/Prestige)

iv) Social differentiation based on reputation and wealth

4.3 THE NATURE OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Social inequality refers to the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and privileges within a society. The nature of social inequality is complex and multifaceted, as it can manifest in various forms, such as economic, educational, gender, racial, and cultural inequalities. In India, social inequality is a diverse and complex society with many forms. Some of the key natures of social inequality in India are:

1. **Caste-based inequality:** Caste is a hereditary system of social hierarchy that has been prevalent in India for centuries. It divides society into four main castes and many sub-castes, with each caste having its own set of privileges and restrictions. Dalits, or "untouchables," who are considered to be at the bottom of the caste hierarchy, face discrimination and social exclusion in many aspects of life, including education, employment, and access to basic services.

2. **Economic inequality:** Despite India's rapid economic growth in recent years, income inequality remains a major issue. There is a wide gap between the rich and the poor, with many people living in poverty and lacking access to basic necessities such as healthcare, education, and housing. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the economic situation for many people, especially those in informal and low-skilled jobs.

3. **Gender inequality:** Women in India face various forms of social inequality, including discrimination, violence, and limited opportunities for education and employment. Patriarchal attitudes and norms continue to prevail in many parts of the country, which hinder women's ability to participate fully in society.

4. **Religious inequality:** India is a religiously diverse country, with the majority of the population being Hindu. However, religious minorities such as Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs face discrimination and violence. Communal tensions and violence have also been recurring problems in some parts of the country.

5. **Regional inequality:** India is a vast country with significant regional variations in terms of economic development, access to resources, and social opportunities. Some regions, particularly in the north and east, are more disadvantaged than others and face challenges such as poverty, low literacy rates, and poor healthcare.

6. **Educational inequality:** Educational opportunities in India are not evenly distributed, with rural areas and disadvantaged communities often lacking access to

quality education. This perpetuates a cycle of poverty and social inequality, as education is a key factor in social mobility and economic opportunity.

7. **Language-based inequality:** India is a multilingual country, with many different languages spoken across different regions. However, knowledge of English is often seen as a key determinant of social mobility and access to high-paying jobs, creating a divide between those who have access to English-language education and those who do not.

8. **Disability-based inequality:** People with disabilities in India often face discrimination and lack of access to basic services such as education, healthcare, and employment. This is compounded by social stigma and a lack of awareness about disabilities.

9. **Urban-rural divide:** The urban-rural divide in India is a significant source of social inequality, with many rural areas lacking access to basic services such as electricity, clean water, and healthcare. Rural communities also tend to have fewer employment opportunities and lower wages than their urban counterparts.

10. **Environmental inequality:** Environmental degradation and climate change disproportionately affect marginalized communities in India, such as farmers and indigenous peoples. This can exacerbate social inequality by exacerbating poverty and limiting access to resources. Indian Society Book

Thus, social inequality in India is a complex and multifaceted issue that affects many different aspects of society. Addressing social inequality requires a sustained effort to promote equity and inclusion, invest in social infrastructure and services, and empower marginalized communities.

4.4 THE SOURCES OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY

There are many sources of social inequality, and these sources can vary depending on the

particular context and historical factors at play. There are several sources of social inequality in India. These include:

1. **Historical factors:** India has a long history of social hierarchy, caste system, and discrimination based on religion, gender, and other factors. These historical factors have contributed to the perpetuation of social inequality in modern times.

2. **Economic factors:** India's economic growth has been uneven, with many regions and communities experiencing limited access to resources, education, and job opportunities. This has contributed to the perpetuation of poverty and social inequality.

3. **Cultural factors:** Cultural beliefs and practices can reinforce social inequality by perpetuating discriminatory attitudes and norms. For example, the caste system and gender roles in many parts of India can limit social mobility and opportunities for disadvantaged communities.

4. **Political factors:** Political factors can play a significant role in perpetuating social inequality in India. Corruption, lack of access to justice, and limited political representation for marginalized communities can contribute to the perpetuation of social inequality.

5. **Globalization:** India's integration into the global economy has had both positive and negative effects on social inequality. While globalization has created opportunities for economic growth and job creation, it has also led to increased inequality and displacement of vulnerable communities.

6. **Environmental factors:** Environmental degradation and climate change can disproportionately affect marginalized communities, exacerbating social inequality in areas such as health, income, and access to resources.

7. **Educational factors:** Educational inequality is a significant source of social

inequality in India, as access to quality education is often limited by factors such as poverty, caste, gender, and location. This perpetuates a cycle of social disadvantage and hinders social mobility.

8. **Health factors:** Health disparities between different communities and regions in India can perpetuate social inequality. Factors such as malnutrition, lack of access to clean water, and inadequate healthcare can create significant disparities in health outcomes.

9. **Urbanization:** Rapid urbanization in India has led to significant disparities between urban and rural areas in terms of access to resources, opportunities, and infrastructure. Urbanization can also lead to displacement and loss of livelihoods for vulnerable communities.

10. Technological factors: While technology has created new opportunities for economic growth and innovation, it has also widened the gap between those who have access to technology and those who do not. This can contribute to social inequality by limiting access to information and opportunities. Indian Society Book

Thus, social inequality in India is influenced by a range of factors, including historical, economic, cultural, political, environmental, educational, health, urbanization, and technological factors. Addressing social inequality requires a multi-faceted approach that tackles these various sources of inequality, promotes inclusive policies and practices, and empowers marginalized communities.

1.3 OVERVIEW: SOCIAL INEQUALITY

According to Andre Beteille there are two very important aspects of social inequality:

(a) Distributive aspect-refers to the ways through which various attributes such as income, occupation, education, power, skills and other important abilities are

distributed among a population.

(b) Relational aspect-refers to the ways the individuals are differentiated in the society. It deals with issues such as how income affects status and how occupation matters in the placement of individuals in the social hierarchy.

Both these aspects characterize each and every society and are presented in different forms- differentiation, social stratification, inequality. Since each system represent inequalities in structured manner i.e., a system of social stratification. The latter is also a particular form of social inequality. Some scholars like C. Heller have used the concept "structured social inequality" which signifies the existence of some type of a structure or a patterned and legitimized set of social relationships. The case of Varna system of Indian society represented' a structure of differentiation along with a specific type or form of social inequality in the Indian society.

1.4 BASIS OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY

There arises another question for serious consideration: what is the basis of social inequality in human society? There are two sets of explanations:

1.4.5 Natural Inequalities existing and observable at individual level.

It has two more aspects

(i) Natural differences of kind among people (e.g. postures, height, physical traits, color)

(ii) Natural difference of rank (e.g. intelligence, dull or no intelligence strong and weak; clever and fool etc.) It may be noted that these natural inequalities exist among all the human beings and in all the societies. Now here human beings including even the twins are found to have complete similarities of natural traits, of kind and rank.

1.4.6 There are social inequalities existing and observable at societal level.

Like the

inequalities at the individual level, inequalities existing at the societal level have two dimensions:

1.4.6.1 Social differentiation: people have different roles to play in the society. Differentiation of role observable in the form of vertical division of labour in which people are differentiated from each other but placed equally in relation to each other's

1.4.6.2 Social stratification or inequality is another form. According to this each role in the social structure has a status. The status is ranked on a hierarchy containing sever statuses each status has privileges, prestige and some amount of authority over others. Sociologically, we identify two bases of social inequality i.e. the natural inequalities and social inequalities.

The most important and highly controversial question is what leads to social inequality in the society? Whether it is the natural inequality among individuals or there are certain specific social forces especially, when we argue that social inequalities are socially created. So, let's first look into the issue of natural vs social inequalities. The supporters of natural inequalities argue that such inequalities come into existence because of natural differences among people. This hypothesis has been explained through the "packing order theory" or "the theory of dominance" the means that people who are by nature dominate take the lead and dominate or rule others. Such an explanation has been developed through the analysis of species and applied to explain the human behaviour. In fact, this type of thinking has been a product of biological sciences and developed under Darwin's influences. The basic problem with this theory is that it does not take into account man's differentia, capacities and capabilities that become the source or social inequalities.

Besides 'packing order' explanation, in certain societies the social inequalities among people have been explained as something created by nature for example, the Rig-

Vedic explanation of Varna system in India. It explains: He, the creator, created Brahmans from his mouth, Kshatriyas from arms, Vaishyas from thighs and Shudra from feet. The explanation not only builds up the basis of differences but also creates an order of the society in which different segments are hierarchically placed. The hierarchy is built up by equating qualities or social characteristics of people and the different functional qualities of various parts of human body.

Accordingly, one also finds further division of the four varans into two categories namely swarnas and avarnas, or twice born and single of born etc. In this scheme, obviously the twice born is superior to single born. Another question that may be raised here is that why one set of people become superior and another inferior? Or what ate the natural characteristics making some people higher in status and others low? This is a considered view that natural inequalities in a society are accepted by the people due to various myths and beliefs popular in a given society. Such beliefs are incorporated into a number of other factors such as biological. For example, whites in United States claim their biological superiority over the coloured people. It is not only in United States but of one can find in a society like India where untouchable castes were degraded, humiliated and suppressed. The point important to remember here is that the natural inequalities are legitimized in such a way that the internalized prejudices the prevailing myths and the beliefs are reinforced with greater are intensity. Thus, the existing social inequalities among people are taken for granted as an outcome, of natural inequalities.

In support of the above view, it is argued biological inequality, no matter small may be provides the basic foundation upon which the structure of social inequalities is constructed. There have been number of studies conducted especially in USA which attempt at justifying such a view. In the United States, the biological or natural inferiority of blacks is made out on the basis of (a) their over representation in menial and small jobs and less in the white-collar position of power and prestige, and (b) on the basis of mean income of blacks against that of whites. For example, calculation of 'family income by colour and then suggesting that blacks are biologically inferior they also tend to have less family income than the whites, the people of superior race. The other reason accounting for such explanations is that the coloured population going to high school is much less than that of whites. All these justifications are put forward to explain the genetic inferiority of blacks or coloured in comparison to white. Similarly, the case of scheduled castes can be explained from the point of view of those who argue that natural

inequalities are reflected through the social accomplishments. For example, at one point of time certain fixed propositions existed about SCs. These were: a) They make poor students; b) They are not capable of accomplishing much; and c) They are less intelligent etc. Can we justify the proposition that Natural inequalities lead to social inequalities? The following description provides the equations that are built up in a society to rationalize the structure

of inequalities:

(i) IQ Score	**White Vs. Coloured**	**IQ depends upon exposure development upon life chances**
(ii) Incomes:	**White Vs. Coloured**	**Incomes ↔ Occupation ↔ Education**
(iii) Education:	**White Vs. Coloured**	**Income ↔ Education**
(iv) Occupations:	**White Vs. Coloured**	**Occupation ↔ Education**

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Discuss the two aspects of social inequality given by Andre Beteille.

   ……

   ……

   ……..

2. Social Inequality is defined as:

   ……

   ……

   ……

4.7 MAJOR THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

There are at least three theoretical perspectives on social stratification. The first is the functionalist perspective which seeks to explain social stratification Concepts of Difference

and Inequality in terms of its contribution to the maintenance of social order and stability in society. Like other functionalists, Parsons believed that order and stability in society are based on values held in common by people in society. Those individuals who conduct themselves in accordance with these values are ranked above others. Thus, a successful business executive would be ranked above others in a society which values individual achievement while individuals who fight battles and wars would be ranked above others in a society which values bravery and gallantry. Functionalists uphold that relationship between social groups in society is one of cooperation and inter-dependence. Parsons explains that in a highly specialized industrial society, some people specialize in organization and planning while others follow their directives. Certain positions are functionally more important in society than others. These are often ranked higher in the social hierarchy and fetch greater rewards than others. This inevitability leads to inequality in distribution of power and prestige.

The second is the Marxist perspective which differs from the functionalist perspective in focusing on divisive rather than integrative aspect of social stratification. Marxists regard social stratification as a means through which the group in the upper rungs exploits those in the lower rungs. Here the system of stratification is based on the relationship of social groups to the forces of production. More clearly stated Marxists identify two major strata in society: one that controls the forces of production hence rules over others, second that works for the ruling class. Form Marxian standpoint, economic power governs political power. The ruling class derives its power form ownership and control over forces of production. The relations of production prevail over major institutions, values and belief systems. Evidently the political and legal system pursues the interests of the ruling class. The ruling class oppresses the serving class. Thus, stratification in society serves to foster exploitation and hostility between the two major strata.

The critical terms in the Marxian framework of social stratification are, (i) class consciousness by which is meant the awareness, the recognition by the people belonging to

a class (e.g., workers) of their place in the production process and of their relation with the owning class. Class consciousness also subsumes the awareness of the extent of exploitation by the owning class in terms of their deprivation of and appropriate share in the 'surplus value' of goods produced by them. Over time, workers realize that the way to relieve themselves of the exploitation and oppression is overthrowing the capitalist owners through unified, collective revolution; (ii) class solidarity by which is meant the extent to which the workers join together in order to achieve their economic and political objectives; and (iii) class conflict by which is meant struggle when class consciousness has not matured or it may be conscious struggle in the form of collective assertions and representations of workers intended to improve their lot.

The third is the Weberian perspective according to which social stratification is based on class situation which corresponds with market situation. Those who share common class situation also share similar life chances. They constitute one stratum. Weber identified four groups in a capitalist society: the propertied upper-class, the property-less, white collar workers; the petty bourgeoisie; and the manual working class. Weber did agree with Marx on the significance of the economic dimension of stratification. He, however, added the aspects of power and prestige to the understanding of social stratification. Weber was convinced that differences in status led to differences in lifestyles.

Tumin explains this more clearly, "As distinguished from the consequences of property differences for life chances, status differences, according to Weber, lead to differences in life styles which form an important element in the social exclusiveness of various status groups. Status groups acquire honour primarily by usurpation. They claim certain rewards and act out their claims in terms of certain manners and styles of behavior and certain socially exclusive activities. And while status groups do not usually rest on any legal basis in modern societies, corresponding legal privileges are not long in developing once the status groups stabilize their positions by securing economic power". In short, much like Marx, Weber agreed that property differences are important in forming of status groups.

Property differences also define the lines of distinction and privileges among them. Unlike Marx, Weber assigned greater importance to status groups than to the development of community feeling and motivation for undertaking concerted action by members of an economic class against the system. Weber also laid stress on party which often represents interests determined through 'class situation and status situation'. According to Weber, the economic aspect is crucial in classes, honour is crucial in status groups, and power is crucial in parties.

Weber's perspective on social stratification derives from three components: class, status, and power. Betellie writes, "In Weber's scheme, class and power appear to be generalised categories: the former arises form unequal life chances in a market situation and the latter form the nature of domination which is present in one form or another in all the societies. Status, on the other hand, seems to be a kind of residual category". Weber clarified that social honour (in capitalist societies of the west too) is not solely determined by possession of wealth or power. He said that social honour is linked with values, not material interests. Evidently, the determinants of status honour are not only economic power and political power but also style of life which includes material components and nonmaterial components (e.g. literacy and /or artistic sensibilities). In case of material component, it is easy to superimpose economic advantages on advantages of status i.e., those who are able to strengthen their economic condition are also to acquire status in industrialized societies (given to mass production of consumer goods, and common media of communication). The spread of uniformed education greatly reduces distinction between nonmaterial components of people's style of life. Béteille (1969) explains that economic advantages are not easily translated into status advantages because of several reasons. In order to acquire an exclusive style of life, an individual has to be a part of a particular social milieu. Often, he/she has to encounter resistance from those who are a part of that social circle. This resistance suggests the importance attached to inequality.

4.8 SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Similarities

- Both concepts deal with differences in social standing, resources, and opportunities.
- Stratification is a system that relies on and reinforces social inequalities.
- Both can lead to disadvantages for certain groups or individuals.

Differences

FEATURE	STRATIFICATION	INEQUALITY
Scope	A system of **structured ranking** of entire groups (strata) in a hierarchy.	A broader concept of the **unequal distribution** of valued goods and opportunities among individuals or groups.
Nature	A **systemic and persistent** structure that is built into society.	A **state or condition** of uneven distribution, which can be a result of stratification or other factors like discrimination.
Focus	Focuses on the **hierarchical structure** and how it affects group life chances.	Focuses on the **outcomes** of that structure or other factors, looking at who has what.
Example	The division of society into distinct classes, like the upper, middle, and lower classes.	The income gap between the richest and poorest individuals in a society.
Persistence	Often a **durable system** where a person's social position is difficult to change.	Can be temporary or permanent; simply represents the current state of unevenness.

4.9 LET US SUM UP

In the light of the above discussion, it is therefore concluded that inequalities in society are social rather than natural. These are of course, product of social, economic and political attributes of the individuals and the groups rather than their natural attributes. There are different characteristics of different members of society but these differentiations take the form of inequality and social stratification only when society attaches values with them.

4.10GLOSSARY

1. **Hierarchy:** This a ladder of command which indicates in itself the status of group the highest status group is other at the top of the hierarchy.
2. **Caste:** An ascriptive grouping with several characterizing including an allegiance to the Varna all India scheme
3. **Social Inequality:** Socially inequality refers to socially created inequalities. The socially created inequalities are not the biological or physical or natural inequalities.

4.11SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1. What do you mean by Social Inequality.

Q.2. Differentiate between Differentiation and Inequality.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q.3. Explain briefly how inequalities in Society are social.

_____

_____

_____

4.12 LESSON END EXERCISE

Tick the right answer:

1.Who authored the book Caste and Race in India?
A. G S Ghurye
B. Irawati Karve
C. S C Dube
D. D P Mukherjee
Answer: A

2. Ghurye opined that the membership in caste is based on……
A. Residence
B. Birth
C. Occupation
D. Colour of Skin
Answer: B

3.Which work of Ghurye analyzes the caste system in India?
A. Homo Hierarchicus: The caste system and its Implications
B. Untouchable
C. Caste and class in India
D. Caste and Race in India
Answer: D

4. ……..is the step-by-step classification of a phenomena
A. Ranking
B. Stratification
C. Hierarchy
D. Differentiation
Answer: C

5. Who wrote the book 'Annihilation of caste'?
A. G S Ghurye
B. Jyothiba Phule
C. Periyar
D. B R Ambedkar
Answer: D

4.13 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Ghurye (1986), *Caste and Race in Modern India*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.
2. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi. Haralambos, Michael (1989), *Sociology*, Themes and Perspectives, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
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CASTE: AS A FORM OF STRATIFICATION

STRUCTURE

5.0 Learning Objectives

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Caste System: Meaning and Definitions

5.3 Characteristics of Caste System in India

5.4 Caste and Caste System: An Overview

5.5 Ideology and perspectives on Caste System

5.6 Caste Taboos: An indicator of social stratification

5.7 Caste and Social Change

5.8 Let Us Sum Up

5.9 Glossary

5.10 Self-Assessment Questions

5.11 Lesson End Exercise

5.12 Suggested Readings

5.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- **Know caste as a form of Social Stratification.**
- **Taboos associated with Caste with reference to Social Stratification.**
- **Ideologies and Perspective on Caste and Social Stratification.**

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Caste is primarily confined to the Indian society, though some scholars have also referred to caste in Japan. To understand caste as a form of social stratification is highly complex as there are variations in its description - Varna, Jati, etc., and regional diversities

- the North and South divide in the practices associated with it. Apart from the given complexities, the phenomenon also has been explained varyingly by scholars. Therefore, an understanding of caste is not possible without relating to the system which creates social stratification. In general, it implies an autonomous system of stratification based on institutionalized inequality, closure of social system in respect of social mobility and having an elementary division of labour legitimized by ritual system. In the cultural context, caste system is described in terms of division of local society into a large number of segregated somewhat autonomous but inter-dependent units. The segregation is not simply in terms of nomenclature but also in terms of status of each of these groups in the social hierarchy. Somewhat autonomous character of segregated units is more in terms of the connubial relationship and less in the economic context. The economic interdependence, especially in the sphere of social production of goods and services, not only bring all the units into interaction with each other but also ensures the continuity of the total system. Very often ritual systems are found to be operating in the decisions of the society to place different groups differently.

5.2 CASTE SYSTEM

The term 'Caste' was derived from the Portuguese word 'casta' meaning lineage or race. Every society has its caste system, which is an integral part of its social system. It is more or less impossible to do away with the system. Caste system is an important characteristic of Indian society. It determines the relationship between the various groups and individuals. It is, therefore, necessary to have some knowledge about caste system in order to understand the structure and functioning of the Indian society. Caste system in India is based upon the birth while in other advanced countries it is based upon the color or the skin and wealth etc.

Meaning of Caste System

1.According to Sir Herbert Risley, "A caste may be defined as a collection of families or group of families bearing a common name which usually denotes or is associated with specific occupation claiming common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine, professing to follow the same professional calling and are regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming single and homogeneous community".

2.Defining the term "caste" is itself harder than thought to be. Sir Herbert Risley defines it as "a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name; claiming a common descent from an ancestor, human or divine; professing to follow the same hereditary features; and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community".

3. It can also be defined as an endogamous and hereditary subdivision of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank of social esteem in comparison with other such subdivisions and having a common name, common traditional occupation, common culture, relatively rigid in matters of mobility, distinctiveness of status and forming a single homogeneous community.

4.Whereas Caste system is defined as the system which comprises of a number of endogamous groups, recruited by birth; with heredity membership, which within the group determines many behaviors, expectations, obligations and evaluation of individuals and determine their access to the valued statuses and activities in the society.

5.Thus, we can say that Caste System entails a ranking of people according to ascribed statuses; it provides rules regulating the inter-relationships between member of different castes and it creates mutual dependence of the castes through the division of Labour, which implies that certain tasks can only be carried out by members of specific castes.

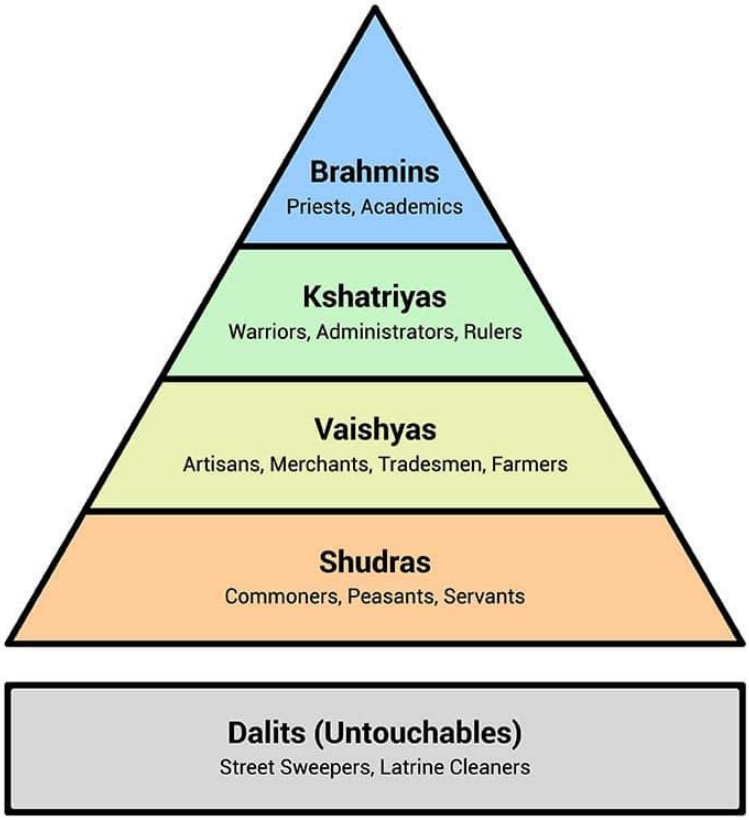
Underlying the caste are the values associated with notions of ritual purity and impurity or regarding ideology and religion, which serves to justify the segregation and division of Labour between the castes. For example, only member of the Brahmin caste is entitled to lead religious rituals.

6.The relative position of Castes within the local ranking system can be seen symbolically acted on ritual occasions when people attend feasts. And the usual occasion for a feast is at the time of a life cycle ceremony, which is like birth, marriage, death or sometimes when a special ceremony is performed within a household.

7.The caste system is logically tied to the Hindu belief in reincarnation, the caste system representing a ladder down which one may slip in the next life if not virtuous in this. Estates have existed from traditional states through to the end of feudalism. In Europe the three estates were the nobility, the clergy and then the commoners. The Third Estate, the common people, was an important element in the French Revolution. Unlike castes, estates are permeable through intermarriage or the granting or purchase of titles.

Below diagram shows the hierarchical structure of Caste System in Indian Society

FOUR - FOLD VARNA SYSTEM



5.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF CASTE SYSTEM IN INDIA

1. Hereditary: Caste status of an individual is determined strictly by his heredity, i.e. the caste into which one is born. No number of personal accomplishments or efforts can alter his caste status.

2. Endogamous: Its endogamous character strictly prohibits inter-caste marriages. Accordingly, a person born in low caste can never hope to marry someone in higher caste. Each individual is supposed to marry within his caste

and sub-caste.

3. Hierarchical: Caste system has a system of superiority and subordination. According to Hindu Caste hierarchy, Brahmin occupies the highest followed by Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra.

5. **Fixed Occupations:** Members of any caste are obligated to adopt the professions of their caste. Having developed from Varna system the occupation in caste system is definite; son of blacksmith peruses the occupation of his father, son of carpenter becomes carpenter and so on. (With development of industries people belong to many castes have lost their occupation and have taken agriculture or some other occupation).

   For example: The Brahmins who occupied the uppermost rank were prescribed the duties of acquiring and teaching sacred knowledge and performing sacrifices, while lower castes, such as Dalits, were historically restricted to jobs such as manual Labour.

5. Restricted Food Habits: Higher castes try maintaining their traditional purity by different food habits. Thus, Brahmins will only take 'Satwil' or 'Pure' food. Kshatriya and Vaishya will take 'Royal' food. A Shudra takes 'Tamsi' food. Each individual caste has its own laws which govern the food habits. There is no restriction against fruit, milk, butter, dry fruit etc. but food can be accepted only from the members of one's own or higher caste.

6. Untouchability: In Indian caste system, Shudra and out castes are considered to be untouchables. In certain times of day even seeing a Shudra is considered to be polluted. Even if shadow of a low caste falls on a Brahmin, the latter is said to have been polluted.

7. Absence of Vertical Mobility: In a caste system, there is no mobility movement of its members, up or down, the social status ladder. A person's status at birth is his life time status.

8. **Reinforcement by Religious Beliefs:** Religious beliefs have played a significant role in making caste system unavoidable. Religion has described Brahmin as sacred and also an element of reverence and awe is attached to him. In absence of religious support such rigid caste system was not possible.

9. **Segmentary division of Society:** Indian society is primarily divided into different castes. Caste membership is determined by birth and not by accomplishments.

10. **The ideology of purity and pollution:** The ideology of purity and pollution regulates the interaction between different castes significantly.

11. **Rules governing caste system:** There is a prescribed set of norms, values, and sanctions that govern social behavior within a caste.

5.4 CASTE AND CASTE SYSTEM: AN OVERVIEW

It may also be mentioned here that caste and caste system are not the same. The difference is very fundamental. The former, according to Victor D'Souza refers to a collection of individuals looking externally homogenous but internally characterized by heterogeneity. Since each caste exercises its own rules, then it also seen as acting as an autonomous unit. The latter denotes a mechanism which on the one hand creates divisions and sub divisions and, on the other, maintains these divisions, establishes linkages by creating conditions conducive to inter-relationships and perpetuates these divisions and consequently

formation of relationship generation after generation.

In a more precise way, Mees in 'Dhanna and Society' described it as number of sub-divisions exclusively endogamous, show a strong tendency to maintain these groups, perpetuates the hereditary character of these castes, and maintain certain cultural standards for the perpetuation of hierarchical divisions. As a system, according to Bougle, it creates repulsion, hierarchy, hereditary specialization and certain specific conditions opposed to principle of rising in status, group mixture, change of occupation, advancement of social status and change of vocation.

It therefore acts as a system of stratification because of three things (a) hierarchical ordering of the society, (b) differential evaluation of individuals and groups, and (c) differential rewards.

There are three implications of the system highlighted by **Berrernan** when, he argues "A caste system occurs where a society is made of birth ascribed status, hierarchically ordered, and culturally distinct." Basically, it is the hierarchy which entails/and specify (i) differentiation, (ii) rewards, and (iii) association. Hierarchy to him constitutes a system of institutionalized inequality. This occurs because the castes are ultimately ranked in terms of differential Intrinsic worth which may be caused by regional variations, degree of purity, the honour, economic worth etc. The last is the dominant factor. But it is the group affiliation rather individual attributes that matter most. Not only Berrerman, others (e.g. M.C. Smith) have also argued that it is the birth ascribed membership and not the individual attributes (economic or otherwise) which are important in the caste system.

The second important dimension is differential rewards which imply differential access to goods, services and valued things. These in physical terms include ability to influence others, the source of one's livelihood, the kind and amount of food, shelter, medical care, education, justice, esteem, pleasure etc. The differentiation access to rewards is caused by caste status and therefore it is determined through the evaluation of all such attributes of the group. The criterion of evaluation is provided by the caste system. The differential rewards also reinforce the caste status in the social hierarchy.

Third dimension is constituted by the patterns of interaction in the caste hierarchy. McKim Marriot described the caste hierarchy, besides being an indicator of legitimized inequality is also "an interactional hierarchy". The rank is expressed and validated in interaction between persons the manifestation of which is visible in the inter-personal behaviour. The interaction between castes is regulated through certain etiquette of inter-

caste relations for example the prescriptions made by caste system on commensal and connubial interaction.

The above brief discussion suggests that the dynamics of caste system define and maintain boundaries between different castes. The system is threatened when boundaries are compromised. Berrerman therefore argues that even when the interaction between castes is maximum and cultural ties are minimal, the ideal of mutual exclusiveness, isolation

and distinctiveness is maintained. When the subversion of the system is rampant or social mobility is on the increase, a myth of stability is maintained among those who benefit from the system. But one important dimension of caste and the caste system according to Berreman is that plural societies are held together by power rather than by consensus. Hypothetically, one can be sure of connections between power economic dominance and the maintenance of status. The economic dominance of one group also implies dependence of another group. He therefore maintains "all caste systems are held together in large measure by considerations of relative power among castes - power expressed physically, economically, politically and socially". To add further, to what Berreman has stated, the relative power within a caste system is socially and culturally legitimized. The cultural legitimacy of a caste is associated with the belief systems- the mythological origin of different castes, of the Hindus.

Another feature of caste system, as highlighted by Berrerman suggests "caste system functions as a result of powerful sanctions in the hands of the dominant groups and is really upset if the balance of power is diluted by those seeking system changes." Since the caste system does show the tendency of exercise of power for the maintenance of status quo, it resembles plural society because the similar tendency is visible in the society called as plural. Coming down again to the question of consensus, it is argued that each caste may have its subjectively defined objectives and may differ widely on issues but all disagreements are discussed by power relations i.e. the power relations dominant in the caste systems. It is therefore argued that a caste system combines the principles of stratification and pluralism.

Caste systems can be further characterized as living environments to those who comprise them. What is implied here that caste is composed of people and especially people interacting in characteristic ways and thinking in characteristic ways. It is therefore suggested that caste "being a structure caste system presents a pattern of human

relationships and it is a state of mind."

At this point we also need to think of two issues that emerge out of Berreman's explanation. On the one hand, he holds the view that caste system is held together by power and on the other, the argument emerges that it is a state of mind. Dumont, an Indologist, also looks at both the power as well as state of mind dimension of caste

system. Dumont argues power is subordinate to status. This is described on the basis of relationship between. varna and caste with special reference to power and hierarchy. Though Dumont finds it difficult to explain how power and hierarchy do not have a relationship, yet he continues to hold his argument by saying "what happens at the extreme ends of the hierarchy is essentially important. What happens in the middle is not significant". The reason given by him is that we are concerned with ideology that accounts for the overall framework of the caste system and not with the individual parts lying in between the extremes. Since power is in the middle zone, it is not a factor of immediate concern. In Dumont's Indological explanation, the extreme ends of social hierarchy are more important.

The caste system is one of the oldest forms of social stratification and even though it may be prohibited by the law, the political divisions continue to exist in the minds of the people leaving many oppressed. Before the caste system, India had four groups or divisions already established: the Negrito, Mongoloid, Australoid and Dravidian. It was during the Aryan invasion around 1500 BCE when the caste system was created. The word caste derives from the Portuguese word casta, meaning breed, race, or kind. In this system, the citizens are divided into categories or castes. Varna, the Sanskrit word for color, refers to large divisions that include various castes; the other terms include castes and subdivisions of castes sometimes called sub castes. Among the Indian terms that are sometimes translated as caste are jati, baradari, and samaj. There are thousands of castes and sub castes in India. It follows a basic precept: All men are created unequal. Each category or Jati has a special role to play in the society as well as a unique function: this structure is a means of creating and organizing an effective society.

The caste system in India is primarily associated with Hinduism but also exists among other Indian religious groups. Castes are ranked and named. Membership is achieved by birth. Castes are also endogamous groups. Marriages and relationships between members of different castes, while not actually prohibited, face strong social disapproval and the threat of ostracism or even violence. To illustrate, in a notorious case in August 2001, a Brahmin boy and a lower-caste girl were publicly hanged by members of their families in Uttar Pradesh, India for refusing to end their inter-caste relationship.

The first of the four basic Vedic books, which are considered the source of Indian wisdom, is the Rig Veda- a collection of over 1,000 hymns containing the basic mythology of the Aryan gods. The Rig Veda contains one of the most famous sections in ancient Indian literature in which the first man created, Purusha, is sacrificed in order to give rise to the four Varna's. The Varna of Brahmans emerged from the mouth. They are the priests and teachers, and look after the intellectual and spiritual needs of the community. They preside over knowledge and education. The Varna of Kshatriyas emerged from the arms. Their responsibility is to rule and to protect members of the community. They are associated with rulers and warriors including property owners. The Varna of Vaishyas emerged from the thighs. They are the merchants and traders and those who look after commerce and agriculture. The Varna of Sudras emerged from the feet. They are the laborers.

Each caste is believed by devout Hindus to have its own dharma, or divinely ordained code of proper conduct. Brahmans are usually expected to be nonviolent and spiritual, according to their traditional roles as vegetarian teetotaler priests. Kshatriyas are supposed to be strong, as fighters and rulers should be, with a taste for aggression, eating meat, and drinking alcohol.

Vaishyas are stereotyped as adept businessmen, in accord with their traditional activities in commerce. Shudras are often described by others as tolerably pleasant.

The existence of rigid ranking is supernaturally validated through the idea of rebirth according to a person's karma, the sum of an individual's deeds in this life and in past lives. After death, a person's life is judged by divine forces, and rebirth is assigned in a high or a low place, depending upon what is deserved. This supernatural sanction can never be neglected, because it brings a person to his or her position in the caste hierarchy, relevant to every transaction involving food or drink, speaking, or touching.

The Rig Veda mentions how the four Varna's were created but it does not mention the concept of untouchability. "The idea of an Untouchable caste â€¦ is not in the Vedas or the law books, which list only four Varna's." It is a part of the system that has been created by society itself. Untouchables are the fifth group. They are considered unworthy that they fall outside of the caste system. In 1950, the term Untouchable was eradicated under India's constitution, and untouchables are now formally referred to as the Scheduled Castes. Gandhi referred to untouchables as Harijan, which means "people of God". Politically active untouchables feel that this term Harijan might evoke pity rather than respect, and prefer the term Dalits, which means, "oppressed".

Dalits are descendants of the ancient Dravidians of India who lost their language and were subjugated due to the linguistic and socio-cultural oppression by the perpetrators of the caste system. While Dalits in Tamil Nadu speak Tamil, their brethren in other parts of India speak different Dravidian or tribal dialects or languages that arose due to mixtures of Tamil, Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic, such as Hindustani.

As an Indian is born into the caste system, they are supposed to stay with that caste until death. What a person in each of these Varna's can and can't do, is prescribed in detail in the laws of Manu, written by Brahman priests at least 2,000 years ago. The laws of Manu are inscribed in Indian culture. Umashankar Tripathy, a Brahman priest, says, "Manu is engraved in every Hindu".

Untouchables or Dalit's obviously live also by a certain set of rules. The occupations of people in caste systems are hereditary and Dalit's perform jobs that cause them to be considered impure and thus "untouchable" and for little or no pay at all. They are restricted to occupations such as landless farm workers and peasants, and forced into washing clothes, beating drums, cutting hair, cleaning latrines and sewers, working as a leatherworker (they work with animal skin which makes them unclean), street cleaners, and manual scavengers. Manual scavenging refers to disposal of human waste by hand, using only the most basic tools, typically a brush, a tin plate and a wicker basket. Scavengers also dispose of dead animals as millions of Dalit's works even as slaves. They mostly have no opportunities for better employment.

Dalit's live in the most congested and cramped slums in villages, towns and urban areas consisting of huts or ghettos which are damp and cramped. They live in the insanitariest conditions with no access to public health and sanitation amongst open sewers and open-air toilets. There are no state sponsored public housing rights or public health rights in India. Most Dalit's are forced to live in isolated areas. Even after death, grave sites are segregated. The best housing is reserved for the upper castes; the government provides separate amenities for each neighborhood, which are segregated on caste lines. Dalits are usually left with the worse of the amenities or none at all. Over 85% of Indian Dalit's own no land and are dependent on landlords for work or land to rent; those that do

own land may find it difficult or impossible to enforce their rights; workers rarely receive the statutory minimum wage.

Furthermore, in past decades, Dalits in certain areas (especially in parts of the south) had to display extreme deference to high-status people, physically keeping their distance–lest their touch or even their shadow pollute others–wearing neither shoes nor any upper body covering (even for women) in the presence of the upper castes. In northern India for example, untouchables had to use drums to let others know of their arrival. Even their shadows were considered polluted. In the south, some Brahmins ordered Untouchables to keep at least 65 feet away from them.

Untouchables are shunned, insulted, banned from temples and higher caste homes, made to eat and drink from separate utensils in public places. The higher-caste people do not accept food or water from the untouchable because it would transmit the pollution permanent and inherent in the person of the untouchable. Thus, untouchables are not allowed to drink from the same wells, wear shoes in the presence of an upper caste, or drink from the same cups in tea stalls. They are not allowed to touch people from the four Varna's or caste groups. They are not allowed to enter houses of the higher Varna's especially in which the *chula* (the small earthen stove) is located. In public occasions, they were compelled to sit at a distance from the four Varna's. They are also denied education, freedom of expression, and many other rights the higher classes have.

Dalit children do not have access to education due to the lack of mandatory and universal primary and secondary education in India. Even in rural areas where there may be schools, Dalit children are ostracized, oppressed and stigmatized from attending school. Thus, few Dalits children progress beyond

primary education and they are often made to sit at the back of the class. Nearly 90 percent of all the poor Indians and 95 percent of all the illiterate Indians are Dalits, according to the International Dalit Conference. Dalit Children are also subjected to atrocities such as sexual abuse in rural areas, physical abuse and murder just as adult Dalits are. They have a high level of malnutrition and ill health. Some are ordained into temple prostitution as a part of religious rituals for exploitation by non-Dalit men of the village or town.

Dalit women do all the back breaking work society expects Dalits to do, such as manual scavenging, farm labour, stone breaking, etc., and in addition they have to bear domestic responsibilities as mothers and wives. Dalit women suffer double discrimination as Dalits and as women. They are exposed to sexual abuse at the hands of the so called "caste" Hindu men and also men who work or state authorities such as the police. They are frequently raped, gang-raped, beaten and tortured or forced to walk through the streets naked as punishment as an act of reprisal against male relatives who have committed some act worthy of upper-caste vengeance. Atrocities such as rape of Dalit women in police custody, bonded labour and physical abuse are common in India.

The chastity of women is strongly related to caste status. Generally, the higher ranking the caste, the more sexual control its women are expected to exhibit. Brahman brides should be virginal, faithful to one husband and celibate in widowhood. By contrast, a sweeper bride may or may not be a virgin, extramarital affair may be tolerated, and, if widowed or divorced, the woman is encouraged to remarry. For the higher castes, such control of female sexuality helps ensure purity of lineage–of crucial importance to maintenance of high status. Among Muslims, too, high status is strongly correlated with female chastity.

Many thousands of Dalit girls are forced into "marriage" to temples or local deities in south India, often before puberty, sometimes in payment of a debt. They are "married" to temples under the guise of the religious practice Devadasis, meaning "female servant of god." They are then unable to marry and become unwilling prostitutes for upper-caste men, many eventually being sold into brothels. The Badi Jat is regarded as a prostitution sub caste. Women and girls are routinely trafficked into brothels. Perversely, and hypocritically, untouchability does not seem to apply to prostitution and customers are mainly men from the upper castes.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) Name two factors which influenced the caste system in the modern period.

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2) Discuss any three characteristics of the caste system in India.

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3) In the Varna system, who among the following is at the top of the ladder:

1)Shudras 2) Kshatriyas

3) Brahmins 4) Vaishyas

Answer: 3. Brahmins

5.5 IDEOLOGY & PERSPECTIVES ON CASTE SYSTEM

The hierarchy is the significant dimension but this is based on an ideology. The ideology not only divides the Hindu society into a large number of hereditary groups but also makes Indian society a superior civilization and popular culture. The division of the society into large social segments is based on the ideological structure. There are two binary or opposite categories used to explain the two ends of the structure. One refers to the ritually pure and the second *ritually* impure. Both are opposed to each other and are located at the extreme end of the social hierarchy. It is argued that both the pure and the impure must be kept separate from each other. In the society, the proposed principle of separation is further extended to the area of division of labour in the area of production of social and economic life. Accordingly, the occupations are divided into the pure and impure categories in which the pure and the impure must be kept separate. The other argument put up by Dumont states caste is a state of mind in which political and economic aspects are secondary.

His argument is based on the rationale that caste is purely a religious phenomenon. The dichotomy between the two opposites is not a hygienic concept used to justify the ideas about impurity. What in fact, says Dumont, important in the context of caste is that the ideology also produces a structure in which pure is opposed to impure. Pure being superior, occupies a higher social status and the impure is given a low social status in the society. In the entire process of placement of social groups high and low, the structure that emerges produces a social hierarchy. The hierarchy is very important due to two reasons.

First, it becomes a conscious form of reference of the parts to the whole in the system. Second, it ranks the elements of the whole in relation to each other. Since the caste is considered to be a religious phenomenon the ranking done is also religious in nature.

Yogendra Singh describes the phenomenon of caste system by looking at it two distinct levels. **First,** caste as a structural particularistic dominant feature of stratification in India. **Second,** caste as structural universalistic phenomenon that can be seen existing elsewhere. On the basis of which Yogendra Singh refers to five features of caste as these are quite visible.

1.First, caste as an institutionalized system of interaction among hierarchically arranged hereditary groups.

2.Second, economic basis of division of labour.

3.Third, caste inequalities constitute the emerging pattern of social inequalities.

4.Fourth as structural unit components the caste and sub-caste are used in ranking of the human individuals.

5.Finally, caste dominance and caste conflict are significant features. The last feature may give us an impression that we are talking from Marxist point of view. Notwithstanding that kind of understanding we must have in mind that even structural functional point of view sees the possibility of some conflict.

There have also been attempts to look at caste from secular and sacred dimension. The sacred dimension though formed part of the Indological perspective based on the Textual analysis; the other component of it has been identified on the basis of empirical studies. According to sacred dimension the caste is based on the ritual status of the group in the social hierarchy. But it is further observed that ritual aspect of one's caste is not the sole determinant but along with-it non-ritual or nonreligious factors also determine the social status of the group. The latter includes the economic and the

political dimensions. The combination of ritual and non-ritual factors at first instance takes into consideration the purity-pollution dimension and in view of which the structural features of the system are evolved.

McKim Marriot points out multiple references in the caste system that operates at different levels. These he divides into three zones. The first one is the zone of village community and the internal divisions evolved for the attainment of the goals of the village community. The second zone is of the recognized cultural and linguistic entities. The third one refers to the scheme of gradation and ranking operative at the level of the larger

society. The first one comprises castes and sub-castes, second ne involves the ethnic and the third one is based on the economic and political considerations that matter in the ranking process.

M.N. Srinivas in fact makes the sacred and the secular aspects clearer when he says that in a village exists a dominant caste. The re dominant caste concept is best understood when it is applied to the economic and political organization of the village. But at the same time, he says any local caste whose ritual status is not low can be dominant on the basis of its numbers and the economic and political power. Srinivas makes ritual dimension as the pre-condition for any caste's position in the social hierarchy. The fact that one needs to remember is that caste, according to the sacred and secular dimension, commands certain status due its ritual as well as non-ritual aspects.

Unlike the foregoing perspectives discussed above, caste is considered in an out-come of economic and power inequalities that have been prevalent in the Indian society since long. According to this approach the role of political power and the ownership of means of production playa highly crucial role in determining the nature and type of social relationship. Although the reference to economic and political dimension has been made in the sacred and secular dimension but in the present case the role of ritual factors is not recognized. The ritual status is considered subordinate to economic and political status. This approach is based on the historical and empirical evidence. It is argued that the line of demarcation between the upper three Varnas and the Shudra Varna holistically stemmed from property holdings. These differences in, the property holdings came into being in the historical development of the society.

D.D. Kosambi, a noted historian observed that the differences sharpened as the castes that reached the advanced stage of property holdings entered into trade ex- change at a large scale. It is suggested that preeminent status attained by Brahmin and the debasement of the untouchables could not be taken as the product of Hindu state of mind, rather an outcome of long historical process. The production system, after the pastoral mode and the settlement of Aryans was predominately agricultural. In this system, caste or the social formation that owned land and the other productive re- sources held higher social status in relation to those who did not have any ownership over means of production.

The caste system, as is understandable from various explanations and viewpoints, besides being based on social, cultural, religious and other dimensions operates as a powerful mechanism of strictures and sanctions regulating the behaviour of different caste groups. It is already explained that as a system it creates a hierarchy representing institutionalized inequality in terms of different status, rewards and association i.e. inter-action patterns. It derives legitimacy not through consensus of values alone but in societies marked by pluralism it rests on power-social, economic and political (e.g. Max Weber, Andre Beteille, Berreman and others). Both the power and myths become important in the operation sanctions and structures to regulate the behaviour of members of caste groups at two levels: First, in the intra- caste, and second, inter-caste context.

5.6 CASTE TABOOS: AN INDICATOR OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

The rule of caste endogamy imposes restrictions on caste members in the matters of marriages (of course allows exogamous unions and that too hypergamy type.) The violation of which, though laxity is visible now-a-days, used to be conceived as cognizable offence therefore the violator was often punished either by his excommunication or physical punishment sometimes. The phenomenon of caste strictures and sanctions is not uniform and simple but marked by heterogeneity and various complexities. Caste endogamy is a general rule. Exogamous and hypergamous marriages also take place in many parts of India. While some castes approve hypergamy in one region the same caste may allow hypogamous marriages in some other region. Yet in certain parts males may be allowed to keep concubines.

The areas where these restrictions are extended are the reflected in the way these taboos operate. We notice (Hutton argues) that taboos on food and water as between castes are subject to many gradations and variations. This implies that if we want to examine whether a high caste man, say for example Brahman can accept, drinking water at the hands of a Sudra, then we have to be region specific. Because in northern India there are a number of Sudra castes from which men of high caste can accept water whereas in South or Western India a high caste Brahman will accept water only from a caste equal to its status or higher to it.

Again, one may notice variation with regard to which water is acceptable and which is not. The taboos are observed in the case of ordinary water but there is no such

taboo

when it comes to Ganges water to Its acceptance is legitimized on the basis of the sacredness of Ganges. (Whatever may be the degree of pollution, never mind). Again, if water is accepted by a high caste from the low caste even then the touch is avoided. This touch pertains to the vessel from which water is being poured. There is very interesting theory which approves this practice. The belief is that air purifies water. Once the water leaves the vessel of the low caste and reaches the hands of the high caste, in between the water is supposed to have undergone purification, then its acceptance is not a taboo. This implies that direct touch is avoided for the fear of pollution. But it must be kept in mind that the low Shudra castes from who water are acceptable the castes of clean Shudras and not that of the unclean Shudra. This distinction again is very significant in the northern India where some laxity is observable but not in south or western India. In the south in specific the people who used to sell water at the railway stations they are always Brahmans.

The restrictions imposed upon eating practices are more severe than on the drinking. In the case of food, it does not matter who supplies it but who cooks it certainly matters. Thurston in his work omens and superstitions observed that cooking is very crucial and a stranger's shadow on that or of a low caste falling on the cooking vassal may result in throwing away the total contents. But this restriction does not apply to members of the exogamous unit of the same caste. The said relaxation Bhat observed could be possible due to inter-marriage. Until such marriage occurred the two groups could not take each other's food.

A part from the said, the restrictions are further imposed on the material of which eating and drinking vassals are manufactured e.g. earthen ware are tabooed by all the higher castes. The reason for the restrictions extended to this aspect is that earthen ware cannot be cleaned properly i.e. certain type of food sticks to it or gets into the pores. Since contamination was caused by touch etc., the caste Hindus saw to it that women will not touch any food article or any vassal in which food is to be cooked during certain period such as tabooed period after child birth or periods associated with biological processes.

Similarly, a male who lit fire to a pyre will not touch anyone until he takes bath and gets himself purified. Besides this touch with a low caste often polluted the high caste. The pollution could be easily done away with by taking bath with the water mixed with

some drops of Gangajal etc. or a Brahman could come and perform penance then rendering a man pure.' But the case of south India represents a different kind of pollution i.e., distance pollution. This was basically pertaining to the distance which the men of low caste were supposed to keep from the high castes. It was the duty of the low caste to indicate by some gesture that he is passing by and the high caste men may therefore keep away.

Since caste strictures are subject to many variations the caste sanctions, we assume logically be discriminatory in nature.

Since caste strictures were subject to many variations the caste sanctions are also discriminatory in nature, The basic ideology behind, incorporation of caste sanctions in the Hindu law books is to provide sort of protection to the order of the caste system. It proves to a greater extent that caste sanctions act as guardian of caste rules. It does so by discipline the members, maintaining set of penalties for the violators, the authority to expel and admit any member etc. The religious authority to impose sanctions rests with Brahman but with some limitations. He can exercise authority (i) which is necessary, and (ii) which has scriptural approval. Ketkar argues that if an individual makes an appeal to a Brahma against his expulsion from the community, the Brahman can only administer a suitable penance. As far as readmission to community is concerned cannot do much.

The strictures and sanctions perform two functions. First, reinforcement of various rules and regulations, which help various caste groups in maintaining their solidarity. Second, while solidarity is fostered in the case of various caste groups, these help the dominant groups to protect their power and privileges by way of segmenting the whole society.

5.7 CASTE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Though caste is considered a static system, it has undergone changes because of the forces of modernisation, as discussed below. Caste and Industrialisation The process of industrialization has affected traditional Indian society in a number of ways. It has particularly affected the caste system. The most significant change has been the gradual shift from caste categories to class categories, particularly in the urban areas. The traditional form of exchange of goods in Indian society was by the jajmani

system. The Jajmani system was based o I client-patron relations in which the lower castes provided services to the upper caste members in exchange for annual payment in form of goods. Industrial development has increased the use of inanimate sources of energy and increased the size of the market. The growth of industries increased the employed workers who exchanged their labour for wages. The site of production of goods changed from houses of the manufacturer to that of the factories which were owned by the capitalists. As industrialization spread, the movement of workers from the prim & and household sector to the secondary and formal sectors increased. Industrial development changed the social and economic relations between the Social Stratification various castes. The services castes often found employment which changed their status and their incomes. Industries also brought individuals from different castes together at the site of work and social distance between castes was not maintained here. Further workers in the industry were selected and promoted on the basis of skill and hard work, and not based on ascriptive factors like caste etc. Gradually employment in industries changed the relationship between caste, education and occupations. in spite of these changes, caste networks continue to affect the recruitment into industries and other modem organizations. As a result, the modem economic system is not totally free from the effects of caste.

CASTE SYSTEM AND URBANISATION

Closely related to industrialization is the social phenomenon of Urbanisation which is the movement of people from rural areas to urban areas. Urban living promoted anonymity and formal relations between individuals. Major occupations in urban areas are related to the secondary and tertiary sectors. Employment opportunities in these sectors are based on the skills, hard work, education and training of the person and not on his/ her caste. Social life in urban areas is also different from that in rural areas. Ritual purity and social distance cannot be maintained. For example, no one can ask the person sitting next to her or him in the bus what her caste in. Similarly, no one knows the cook's caste in a hotel and therefore rules regarding cooking could not be followed. The residence of a person depends on the amount the person pays for rent are not his caste. All these factors have weakened the caste system in urban areas.

CASTE AND THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Indian Constitution is based on liberal values such as equality, liberty and fraternity, secularism and citizenship. The basic unit for political participation is the individual. Caste system is based on values totally antithetical to these values. Inequality, segmentation, restricted choice of occupation are the values of the caste system. The Indian Constitution gives every individual the right to vote; right to I participate in elections. Some of the important articles that deal with equality and prevention of discrimination are Articles 14, 15, 16, and 17. All jobs are open to all members of society provided they are qualified and compete with others on an equal basis. These factors had a large impact on the caste system and traditional roles and leaders. For some years after independence, the elite men mainly belonging to the upper caste dominated politics, but by 1980s backward castes and Dalits made their presence felt in the political arena. Democracy is a representative form of government and therefore increasing inclusion of these groups in the power structure has made Indian democracy stronger and at the same time democracy has weakened the caste system in its traditional form.

CASTE AND IDEOLOGY

The Western enlightened ideas based on rationality and reason reached India during colonial period. Liberalism, Socialism, Marxism and Nationalism were the more prominent of these ideologies. During colonial era the British managed the education system. Most Indian intellectual elite were educated by this system and internalized these values. Many of them, through a variety of ways, tried to modernize the traditional Indian society.

CASTE AND MODERN EDUCATION

Traditional education was ascriptive based while modem education is achievement oriented. Various castes provided training to the younger members mainly by making them apprentices to master craftsmen of the same caste. Modem education. on the other hand, gives universal and scientific education so that they can have access to diverse occupational opportunities. The modem education system inculcates values of equality, fraternity, liberty and social justice in the students. Further, students come together in modem schools for studying and interact freely

with each other. The values imparted by the education system and their experience of interaction with students from different castes have weakened the hold of caste values on the. minds of the students. In modem times education has become open but expensive. High quality education is not available to all, particularly the, poorer sections of the society, including most of the SCI ST population. Since they are educationally deprived, they are not empowered by education. There is a need for the provision of quality education for all so that. These sections are empowered.

CASTE SYSTEM AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Social reformers like Raja-Ram Mohan Roy, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Dr. Ambedkar, Periyar, Narayana Guru and others have led a number of social movements to remove the oppressive caste system. There are reformist and revolutionary types of social movements Mahatma Gandhi, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Narayana Guru belonged to the first category who believed that the caste system can be changed sldwly and from within the system. The reformist suggests that for reform in the caste system a change of heart among the high castes and provision of educational facilities for the lower castes is necessary. On the other hand, radicals like Ambedkar, Phule and Periyar believed that the caste system had to be abolished completely and its continuation in any form will lead to exploitation and oppression. They suggested the organization of social movements, agitation and use of law to fight oppression of the caste system. These two types of movements influence the approach of many voluntary organizations even now when they have to decide how to deal with problems related to the caste system.

5.8 LET US SUM UP

To sum up, the reference to different viewpoints explaining caste, caste system, caste strictures and sanctions indicate some the characteristics indicating caste as a system of stratification. The important one being the hierarchy underlying inequalities between different hereditary groups. Despite the changes that have taken place from time to tin there has emerged a new form of social relationships, based on class well as caste. The emerging scenario reflects not simply the abolition the caste system but the caste

system making certain structural adjustments in terms of needs. It means that caste is becoming more of an instrument of mobilization that is reflected through increasing casteism and caste centric approach, casteisation of politics or politicization of caste and so on. The caste and its structure continue to exist and gets reinforced from time to time and characterizes the Indian society.

3.9 GLOSSARY

1. **Demography:** Concerned with various facts of a population such as gender ratios, distribution of a trait, gross number etc.
2. **Hierarchy:** A rank order of castes or groups from top to bottom.
3. **Caste:** An ascriptive grouping which is community based.
4. **Class:** An achievement-oriented interest group.
5. **Status:** Ranking of groups in society on basis of their relative position in terms of honor or respect.

5.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1. Describe Caste as a form of Social Stratification in brief.

_____

_____

_____

Q.2. Every caste has its own rules of everyday life? Comment with reference to social stratification.

_____

_____

_____

Q.3. Differentiate between Class & Caste System.

_____

_____

_____

5.11LESSON END EXERCISE

- **Tick the right answer:**

1.. ……...is mobilizing caste for political purpose

A. Politicization of Caste
B. Casteicisation of politics
C. Political caste
D. Exploitation
Answer: A

2. The singular form of strata

A. One strata
B. Stratas
C. Statue
D. Stratum
Answer: D

3. Which is the measure taken by Government to protect downtrodden to discriminate from other communities

A. Reservation Policy
B. Financial help
C. Protective discrimination
D. Isolation
Answer: C

4. Which Article related with the abolition of untouchability

A. Article 16
B. Article 11
C. Article 17
D. Article 18
Answer: A

5.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Ghurye (1986), *Caste and Race in Modern India*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.
2. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi. Haralambos, Michael (1989), *Sociology*, Themes and Perspectives, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
3. Horton, P. B. and Hunt, C., B. (1987), *Sociology*, McGraw-Hill, Singapore.

CLASS: AS A FORM OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

STRUCTURE

6.0 Learning Objectives

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Meaning and Definitions of Class

6.3 Determinants of Class

6.4 Class as a form of stratification

6.5 Conceptual Emergence of Class

6.6 Marx conception of class and class relations

6.7 Weber views on class and stratification

6.8 Warner's classification on class

6.9 Difference between caste and class as a form of stratification

6.10 Let Us Sum Up

6.11 Glossary

6.12 Self-Assessment Questions

6.13 Lesson End Exercise

6.14 Suggested Readings

6.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- **concept Emergence of class**
- **Marx is conception of class and Class relations**
- **Weber's views on class and stratification**

6.1 INTRODUCTION

It has been noted in the previous lessons that inequalities have been and continue to

exist in all the known societies all over the universe Even in the societies where wealth, property, or other material means were absent, the inequalities existed in terms of sex, age etc. With the growth and development of human society the inequalities have all been increasing and their basis has been undergoing transformation also. Whatever may have been the basis of inequality, the structuring and legitimization of these have resulted in the emergence of system stratification corresponding with particular form of system of inequalities. Social stratification has been defined by Anthony Giddens as "Structure inequalities between different groupings of people. These groupings exist in the forms of strata in a hierarchy. The systems of stratification identified all over the world are slavery, caste, estates and class. While the caste formed a distinct stratification system in the traditional Indian sod and even today continues to have influences on the social 'structure social class forms a system of stratification in the modern industrial societies.

6.2 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF CLASS

Class as a form of social stratification has been analyzed by various thinkers. Some of the definitions of class are:

(i) **Horton and Hunt say,** "a social class is defined as stratum of people of similar position in the social status continuum".

(ii) **According to Ogburn and Nimkoff,** "a social class is the aggregate of persons having essentially the same social status in a given, society".

(iii) **MacIver and Page say,** "a social class is any portion of the community marked off from the rest by social status".

(iv) **Max Weber** defines class as a group of individuals who share a similar position in market economy and by virtue of that fact receive similar economic rewards. Thus, in Weber's terminology, a person's class situation is basically his market situation. Those who share a similar class situation also share similar life chances.

(v) **According to Marx,** "a class is a group of people who stand in a common relationship to the means of production".

- **KEY FEATURES OF CLASS STRATIFICATION INCLUDE:**

1. **Economic Basis:** Classes are largely determined by wealth, property, and income.
2. **Achieved Status:** Individuals can improve their class position through education, occupation, or entrepreneurship.
3. **Fluid Boundaries:** There are no strict prohibitions on intermarriage or interaction between classes.
4. **Relative Identity:** Classes are defined in relation to others, such as upper, middle, and lower classes.
5. **Global Phenomenon:** Class divisions are found in almost all modern societies, regardless of culture.

6.3 DETERMINANTS OF CLASS

Social class of an individual can be described on the basis of various indicators. There are various determinants of social class that are discussed as below:

• **Wealth and Income:** Possession of substantial amounts of wealth is the main characteristic distinguishing the upper class from other class groups in society. Persons having more wealth and income generally have higher social position and respect in society. Wealth and income (money), though necessary for upper-class position, yet one's class position is not directly proportional to his income. A criminal has less social status than a professor though may be income is far greater than the professor. In spite of all its weaknesses, wealth and income are an important determinant of social class because of the way of life it.

• **Occupation:** Occupation is an exceedingly important aspect of social class and as such it is another determinant of class status. It is a well-known fact that some kinds of work are more honorable than others like doctors, engineers, administrators, professors and lawyers hold a higher position than a

car mechanic or manual worker. The high-prestige occupations generally receive the higher incomes, yet there are many exceptions. Occupation is also one of the best clues to one's way of life and therefore to one's social class membership. It affects many other facets of life (values, beliefs, marital relations) other than determining the social class.

• **Education:** There is a close reciprocal relationship between social class and education. To get a higher education, one needs money plus motivation. Upper-class children already have money for the finest schools and colleges. They also have family tradition and social encouragement. One's amount and kind of education affect the class rank he will secure. Thus, education is one of the main levers of a man's social class.

• Prestige: It refers to the respect and admiration with which an occupation is regarded by society. Prestige is independent of the particular person who occupies a Job. Sociologists have tried to assign prestige rankings to various occupations. Besides wealth, occupation and education, there are certain other criteria which help a person to attain higher social status in the society. These are family background, kinship relations, location of residence, etc. but education, occupation and expanded income are the most visible clues of social class.

6.4 CLASS AS A FORM OF STRATIFICATION

Class system characterizes all modern industrial and urban societies. Like caste system, it also reveals a welt-defined hierarchical order between different classes. It is a system of stratification in which individual status depends on his achievements. Thus, a class is an open basis of social stratification. Class based stratification of society has following characteristics:

• **Mode of Feeling:** Three kinds of feelings are found among the members of various classes.

- There is feeling of equality in relation to members of one's own class.
- There is feeling of inferiority in relation to higher class.
- There is feeling of superiority in relation to those classes which have a lower status.

Such a feeling gives rise to class consciousness among the members of a particular class and leads to class solidarity.

1. **Achieved Status:** Class has an achieved status. Each class earns its status. Class system provides scope for improving one's status. The class of an individual is based on his accomplishments. In other words, the amount of award that an individual gets for his social labour determines his class.

2. **It is Universal:** Class system is almost a universal phenomenon. It appears in all modern societies of the world.

3. **Element of Prestige:** Class system is associated with prestige. Status is associated with prestige. The status of the ruling class or rich class or a higher status class in every society is superior. The prestige which a class enjoys depends upon evaluations of the people of the society.

4. **Open Group:** A class is an open group. Mobility from one class to another or up or down circulation or mobility is possible. There is little or no restriction on social mobility and change of status and class. This feature makes the class very different from caste. In the class system, there is no restriction on marriage outside one's own class.

5. **Class Consciousness:** This is the basic feature of a class. It is the sentiment that makes the realization of solidarity with other members of the same class.

6.5 CONCEPTUAL EMERGENCE OF CLASS

The origin of concept of class is traced back from the eighteen centuries. This is what even the history of the concept of class suggest Kolakowski makes mention of the existence of this word in the third book of ethics-proposition XLVI. In this, it is said “If someone affects pleasurably or painfully, the fellow will develop love or hatred not towards the stranger who causes pleasure or pains but even to class or

nation to which he belongs." In contrary to this, the term estate and order have also been used to describe 'social structure'. In the encyclopedia, estate refers to those groups which have legal existence - or groups which are organized in some way and have some sort of political representation. It is also argued that estates also represented classes. In Sweden, for example, there were four estates represented by nobility, priesthood, burghers, and peasants. All the four could also be identified with social Classes particularly in terms of Weber's analysis of life styles.

At this juncture it is also significant to refer to the differential usage of the term in the pre and post French revolutionary period. At the beginning of French revolution, the conflict in France Was viewed as "struggle between the estates." Baben, however, viewed French society, especially after the restoration as divided on the basis of "class antagonism." Such a shift in the understanding of conflict and social structure of French society is indicative of the fact that though estates and classes could be used

interchangeably yet both the terms conveyed different basis of their formation. In the case of former, it was legal and for the latter it was economic base. In 1776, Adam Smith in his work, 'Wealth of Nations' looked at social structure in terms of three different orders of people divided not on legal basis but on economic basis. The basis of distinction between the three is very crucial as this is the one that demarcates one system from another. The economic base of three orders has been depicted as those who live by rents, those who live by wages, and those who live by profits. These three distinct but basic orders are the expressions of society's division into classes. These social orders constituting important dimension of the society in transition also tend to indicate how the transformation of the very foundation of society's organization takes place. The changing conceptions i.e. estate to class similarly suggested one very important development of the human society. The very foundation of the social structure undergoes transformation from a legal base to an economic base. This transformation is also reflected by the changes taking place in the social structure of the French society. After Adam Smith, the term class has come to be used for basic groups in the society. For example, Madison in his work on "class structure in social consciousness" uses class as a scheme of gradation of social groups.

Ossowski points out that the use of the term class by Adam Smith,' Madison and others was made in an unspecified manner. The rationale of such a class is a possible synonym of group or estate available in colloquial speech (i.e. in day-to-day general conversation). How far this charge against Smith etc. is correct, it is very difficult to say. Whatever may be the charge against the usage of the term, it certainly reflects on the times prior to the development of capitalism. At the same time, it also exhibits another important dimension i.e. the usage of the term class reflected on the existence of a social order which was a legal rather than economic order.

The historical development of societies in general and the development which took place in the usage of the concept of class i.e. estate to social class, obviously suggest not only the changing nomenclature but also the changing order or social relationships in a society. The transformation in social relationships took place with the transformation in the basic criteria of determination of social position i.e. legal to economic. The change also suggests that the existing social formations and relationship between them may not have been purely class relationships yet one thing is certain that the kind of order which existed was not essentially a class based social order.

A question however arises if the estates were not classes, then what can be the point of departure from where the process of class formation began. In response to the question, it is suggested that in the estate system (feudal) the work allocation was authoritarian i.e. a particular vocation followed was not in accordance with individual's will but as per allocation. However, with decline in the medieval order the feudal authority also declined resulting in relative freedom of the individuals. In the wake of emerging capitalism, the individuals became relatively freer. The legally differentiated estates resulted in the division the society (estate system) into competitive labour market and leading to development of market linkages at various levels. For instance, from local consumable item production to production for expanded and extended market. The changes also followed in different spheres of social and economic spheres of life. The ties of fealty or bondage, with personalized kind of relationships changed into impersonalized relationships guided by market forces. The transformation came in the fused economic and political power by way of emergence of separate commerce and industry on the one hand and state on the other. The structure of economy changed from complete agrarian to urban economy.

Anthony Giddens therefore suggests two things: First, existence of social classes in the pre-class society. Second, the class has also been dynamic in nature with the class system exhibiting changes during the three major periods of time and space, namely Pre-class, class and classless society. This is quite evident from the conception of classes by the leading social philosophers and social scientists.

6.6 MARX CONCEPTION OF CLASS AND CLASS RELATIONS

Karl Marx viewed social classes as the historical entities which have been there in all the hitherto existing societies. A social class in Marxist terms is not defined in terms of work functions, income or consumption patterns but by the relations it bears with the mode of production. He, therefore, argued that in all stratified societies there have always been two major groups one owning the means of production and as a matter of their ownership control and rule the society. This constituted the bourgeoisie or the "Haves". The other class comprised of those who do not own the means of production but engage themselves in some economic activity i.e. working on the means of production owned by others for the fulfillment of their basic needs. Such a group

constituted the proletariat called “Have Not’s”.

Marx in fact found the class system a dynamic process. Therefore, he developed two models of social classes. The first, two class's model as outlined in his early writings and has been popularly discussed as the model of social stratification and the second, multiple class models which he developed later and appeared in the third volume of Das capital. The first model, a theoretical position was based in Marx's early speculative philosophical understanding of social' development Although theoretical and speculative philosophy, it is argued by many scholars that the analysis of social class especially with reference to capitalism cannot be adequate without referring to Karl Marx. Lipset argued "If we were to award the title of father of the study of society class to any individual, it would have to be Marx". It is further asserted by Anderson "Marxism is a potent theoretical framework for the understanding of social class and for the entire field of political economy". There is considerable amount of social reality as Anderson made this argument while analyzing the socio-historical and economic foundation of Marx's concept. Another important dimension of Marxist theory of social stratification is that it does not restrict itself to just two classes of bourgeoisie and proletariat. The social classes and the structure of stratification also to operate on the principle of negation i. e. subjected to change.

Marx's view on social classes as suggested by many was not monolithic but dialectical in nature. On ruling class, he wrote "ruling class is never a homogenous group but consists of contradictory element the representatives of heavy industry, light industry, finance capital etc. Their unity remains as long as their interests are held together similarly the issue of class-consciousness is vulnerable to causing splits between different groups. Certain workers groups may reflect ruling class ideas and thereby protect the interest of ruling class rather than that of the proletariat.

It is therefore suggested that the development of class-consciousness is dialectical and contradictory in structure. Marx himself states that working class consciousness is not a given datum but is created in struggle, struggle can take many forms, from trade union and strike activity to direct political confrontation between the (a) Ruling, and (b) Oppressed Class. There is ongoing struggle between these two classes that determines the relationship between men. In the initial stages, the classes act in cooperation with each other. However, with the beginning of struggle, the process of unification of class

begins which transform the character of the class.

Subsequently there is emergence of two distinctive categories of classes: i) Class in itself, (ii) Class for itself. What is meant by these two categories? A class in itself is one in which (a) various strata, although engaged in dissimilar work activities, (b) are united by their broad social and economic ties, (c) being united objectively form a class against capital, (d) but remains in non-conscious of the antagonistic relation with an oppressing class.

A class for itself means, a class in which the members have become (a) profoundly aware of their objective, conflictive connection with another class thus, (b) develop the appropriate consciousness and (c) action necessary to defend its interests. (It may be noticed that it is not only proletariat but also bourgeoisie which becomes class for itself).

These two distinctive forms of classes arise in the process of continuous engagement of the collectivity in the given mode of production. To Marx man's position in the production process provided the crucial life experience which eventually determines the beliefs and actions of the collectivity. 'An aggregate' (here means group). The experience is gained necessarily in the process of making living with special relation to economic conflict.

It is associated with changing material conditions of life. What facilitates transformation of class in itself to class for itself. According to Marx, there are a number of variables which facilitate the process in which class transforms from class in itself to class for itself. (i) Conflicts over the distribution of economic reward between the classes. (ii) Easy communication between the individuals in the same class position - helps in the dissemination of ideas and action programmes. (iii) Growth of class consciousness - members of the class have sense of solidarity understanding of their historic role in the production of material constitutions of life. (iv) Dissatisfaction of the lower class over its mobility to control the economic structure - which itself builds but gets exploited and becomes a victim of that i.e. the growing miseries. (v) Organization of class into a political party because of the economic structure, historical situation and maturation of class consciousness. In this context, Marx writes in the Poverty of Philosophy that an oppressed class is vital condition for every society founded on the antagonism of classes.

The two-class model advocated by Marx in his earlier writings should not be takes

as final because Marx himself, in his later more scientific and historical work repudiates this too simplistic class model. In the historical study, "The eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Marx makes distinctions between the numbers of groups. (i) financial bourgeoisie, (ii) industrial bourgeoisie, (iii) petit bourgeoisie, (iv) proletariat, (v) landlords and (vi) free farmers. In other studies of France and Germany, he notes classes like: (i) Bourgeoisie (ii) petit bourgeoisie (iii) farmers (iv) peasants (v) serfs (vi) agriculture workers (vii) Lumpen proletariat and (viii) feudal lords.

6.7 WEBER VIEWS ON CLASS AND STRATIFICATION

Max Weber argues that having property and lack of property are very significant in explaining class and social stratification as these two are basic basis and character of all class situations. Associated with the property unambiguously is economic interest. These two factors are important in the emergence of class stratification in society. Weber further makes distinction between: (i) property classes (ii) the working class whose labour is directly exploited by the capitalist (iii) those who offer services and (iv) acquisition classes - which expand due to the tendencies within capitalism. This class is composed of merchants, bankers, financiers: entrepreneurs, professionals etc.

According to Weber, there are three bases of identification of class as well as constitution of a class. First, when a group consisting of a number of individuals has in common specific casual component of their life i.e. "life chances,' it implies that there is one common factor which determines the life chances for all the members of a group. The common factor is economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income under the condition of commodity and labour market. The latter means class situation in which individuals are placed in terms of the chances they have in relation to the supply of goods, external living conditions and personal life experiences. The chances are determined by the amount of power possessed by one to dispose of goods or skills in the economic order. Weber, therefore, explains class as "a group of people that is found in same class situation in the market situation."

The point Weber emphasizes is that classes develop in market economies in which individuals complete for economic gains. Sharing a similar class situation also implies that by virtue of being placed in similar class position the individuals are able to gain similar rewards. The logic of Weber's concept of class in the form of a logical equation is: Similar class situation = Similar chances in market situation, hence similar life chances.

A class which means a group of individuals also means that they occupy same class status i.e. a given state of one's being in relation to (i) provision or goods (ii) external conditions of life, and (iii) subjective frustration or satisfaction.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Define class in two lines.

   …….

   …….

2. Discuss in four lines Weber views on class a system of stratification.

   ……..

   ……..

   …….

   …….

6.8 WARNER'S CLASSIFICATION ON CLASS

The description of social class by Max Weber in fact acquired significant popularity and his concepts-status group, status honour, reputation and prestige were used for the empirical analysis of class stratification. W. Uyod Warner, an American sociologist developed an index of various characteristics such as education, residence, income, family background etc. in the study of class stratification. The assumption of Warner is that in each there is ultimate structure which controls and dominates the thinking and actions of people, i.e. economic and the value system which is ultimately linked with an economic order. He therefore, argued that though the economic order was fundamental yet there was something else which determined one's ranking as high and low in the society" Following Max Weber's conception, Warner also

accords economic dimension, a secondary place in the status determination. He argued that in the empirical situation the requirements of ranking of individuals are education, occupation,' wealth, income, family background, speech mannerism, general outward behaviour etc. The status occupied by an individual was summation of all said measures that vouched the evaluations made by the respondents. A status of an individual further depended upon the reputation in his own community and the judgments made by him by others. Similarly,' social classes constitute two or more orders of people who are believed to be and accordingly ranked by the members of community in socially superior and inferior positions. Therefore, the class of an individual is identified on the basis of same criteria as is done in the case of status. In the process of locating individual in the class hierarchy, Warner found that geographic space or the order of ecological settlement was very important.

The class structure developed by Warner indicated that there is minimum six classes in a society. These are: upper-middle, upper-lower, middle-upper, middle-lower, lower-upper and lower-middle. There to him were real social categories and not simply a result of his own fabrication. This was the result of his empirical findings. According to him the class structure of a society exists in a pyramid form. The top positions occupied by a small minority and the level of class comes down the number expends and ultimately results in a pyramid type structure.

In the Indian society most of the studies on social class conducted from non-Marxian perspective have been following Max Weber's approach and in the empirical context Lloyd Warner's-empirical criteria of studying social stratification. Generally, the distribution of social classes is made in three distinct categories, namely Upper, Middle and the Lower.

6.9 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CASTE AND CLASS AS A FORM OF STRATIFICATION

Caste and class are two dominant systems of social stratification. Caste is found in Indian society whereas class-based stratification is found in almost all societies. The fundamental points of difference between class and caste are following:

1. **Open vs Closed System of Stratification:**

Class is more open than caste. Hitter says, "a class system is an open system of rating levels. If a hierarchy becomes closed against vertical mobility, it ceases to be a class system and becomes a caste system". Since class is open and elastic, social mobility becomes easier. A man can by his enterprise and initiative changes his class and thereby rises in social status. If a man is born in a labour class, it is not necessary for him to live in the class for life and die in it. He can strive for money and success in life and with wealth he can change his social status implied in the class distinction.

In case of caste system, it is impossible to change one's caste status. Once a man is born in a caste, he remains in it for his life-time and makes his children suffer the same fate. A caste is thus a closed class. The individual's status is determined by the caste status of his parents, so that what an individual does has little bearing upon his status. On the other hand, the membership of a class does not depend upon hereditary basis rather depends on the worldly achievements of an individual. Thus, class system is an open and flexible system white caste system is a closed and rigid system.

2. **Divine vs Secular:** Caste system is believed to have been divinely ordained.

Maclver writes, "the rigid demarcation of caste could scarcely be maintained were it not for strong religious persuasions. The hold of religious belief, with its supernatural explanations of caste itself is essential to the continuance of the system". The Hindu caste structure may have arisen out of the subjection or enslavement incidental to conquest and perhaps also out of the subordination of one endogamous community to another. But the power, prestige and pride of race engendered could rise to a caste system, with its social separation of groups that are not in fact set apart by any clear social signs, only as the resulting situation was rationalized and made "eternal by religious myths". It is everybody's religious duty to fulfill his caste duties in accordance with his 'dharma'.

In the Bhagavat Gita, the Creator is said to have apportioned the duties and functions of the four castes. An individual must do the duty proper to his caste. Failure to act according to one's caste duties meant birth in a lower caste and finally spiritual annihilation. Men of the lower castes are reborn in higher castes if they have fulfilled their duties." Caste system in India would not have survived for so many centuries if the religious system had not made it sacred and inviolable. On the contrary, there is nothing sacred or of divine origin in the class stratification of society. Classes are secular in origin. They are not founded on religious dogmas.

3. **Marriage Rules**: The choice of mates in caste system is generally endogamous. Members have to marry within their own castes. A member marrying outside his caste is treated as outcaste. No such restrictions exist in class system. A wealthy man may marry a poor girt without being outcasts. An educated girl may marry an uneducated partner without being thrown out from the class of teachers.

4. **Class Consciousness:** The feeling of class consciousness is necessary to constitute a class but there is no need for any subjective consciousness in the members of caste.

5. **Prestige:** The relative prestige of the different castes is well established but in class system there is no rigidly fixed order of prestige. Recently, the Hon’ble Supreme Court while adjudging the constitutionality of job reservation for the

backward classes (OBCs) as provided under Article 16 (4) of the Indian Constitution has by a majority opinion upheld the criterion of caste as the determinant of a backward class. In its judgment, it has excluded all members of the so called forward classes howsoever economically and educationally backward from the definition of backward classes. It has, thus, equated class with caste.

6.10 LET US SUM UP

To sum up the class system as a form of social stratification is both a social and historical phenomenon having its traces in the historical and space. The emergence of social classes has been conditioned by development of society. In this process, the role of economic force had been very crucial. Apart from economic forces have the social and political aspects of the society have also been suggested as the factors in the rise of social classes. The typologies of social classes indicate not one but multiple class models depending upon the criteria used by a specific scholar.

6.11 GLOSSARY

1. **Domination:** To exploit and be superordinate used in Marxian Theory to describe the class which owns the means of production.
2. **Dichotomous:** Refers as stratification literature to the two-class model of Marx.
3. **Property Relations:** The relations which arise out of one class owning means of production and the other one being employed as wage workers by the class which owns the means of production.

6.12 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1. Class is universal but Caste is not, comment.

Q.2. How Marx is different from Weber in Conceptualizing Class.

Q.3. Trace the emergence of Class in Society.

Q.4. How class is a form of Social Stratifications.

6.13 LESSON END EXERCISE

- **Tick the right answer**

1……...is a collection of individuals who occupy comparable economic positions

A. A. Caste

B. Class

C. Estate

D. Group

Answer: B

2.. ……is made up of individuals who are awarded a similar amount of social honour

A. Class

B. Economic group

C. Status group

D. Party

Answer: C

3. ……...is a kind of organization which is set up specifically to compete for power and which organizes primarily in pursuit of power.

A. Class

B. Country

C. Parliament

D. Party

Answer: D

4. ……contribute to the formation of strata in society

A. Inequality, division & classification

B. Economic, social & political factors

C. Class, power structure & authority

D. Psychological factors, inequality & development

Answer: B

5. Class symbolizes……

A. Social factors

B. Political factors

C. Psychological factors

D. Economic factors

Answer: D

6.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), Social Stratification, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
2. Haralambos, Michael (1989), Sociology, Themes and Perspectives, Oxford

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Course Code: SOC-C-204 **Unit–II**

Lesson No. 7

ESTATE: AS A FORM OF STRATIFICATION

STRUCTURE

7.0 Learning Objectives

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Meaning and Nature of Estates

7.1.2 Characteristics of Estates

7.2 Relationship between the Caste system and the Estates system

7.3 Characteristics of estate system

7.4 Impact of estate system on society

7.5 Estate system of Stratifications

7.6 Sociological usage of the term.

7.7 Let Us Sum Up

7.8 Glossary

7.9 Self-Assessment Questions

7.10 Lesson End Exercise

7.11 Suggested Readings

7.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- **Meaning and Nature of Estates**
- **Characteristics of Estates**
- **The caste system and Estates System**

- **Sociological usage of the term**
- **Estate as a form of social Stratification**

7.1 INTRODUCTION

A social stratum to which are attached specific rights and duties sustained by the force of legal sanction. The most obvious examples are the peasants, serfs, burghers, clergy and nobility of the post feudal states of continental Europe. For example, early - Modern France distinguished the nobles, clergy, and the "Third Estate" until the late eighteenth century. The term is often (through controversially) applied to the system of stratification in feudal, Europe. Since feudal strata were characterized more by personal bonds of vassalage, rather than shared political rights and obligations. It should be noted, for example, that the distinguished historian of feudalism marc block refers to the strata of the feudal order as classes.

7.1.1 MEANING AND NATURE OF ESTATES

The term 'Estates' represents a type of stratification that existed in Europe during the Middle Ages. Estates system has a long history. The system emerged in the ancient Roman Empire, and existed in Europe until very recent time. The estates system consisted of three main divisions - the clergy, the nobility, and the commoners. In England and France, for example, these three divisions were found. In some parts of Europe for example, Sweden, almost up 1866 these were four estate divisions, Nobles, clergy, citizens and Peasants.

"The estate system refers to a social structure where society is divided into different classes or estates based on their occupation or social status. In this system, individuals are born into a specific estate, and their position and privileges are determined by their birthright. This system was prevalent in feudal societies, where the estates were generally categorized as clergy, nobility and commoners."

These historical estates were akin to social classes in at least two aspects:

(i) Each estate was to some extent characterized by a distinctive style of life.

(ii) The three estates could be thought of as reprinting a hierarchy.

In this hierarchy the clergy were at the top and the commoner at the bottom. The intermediary position was occupied by the nobles. It should be noted that the clergy was called the first Estate only in consonance with the medieval idea that the church is supreme and the state is subordinated to it.

7.1.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF ESTATES

T.B. Bottomore has mentioned about three important characteristics of the feudal estates of medieval Europe they are of follows:

1. Legal Basis of Estate:

Estates were legally defined. Each estate had a 'status' of its own. More precisely in a legal sense the status was associated with rights and duties, privileges and obligations. As it has been said, "to know a person's real position" it was first of all necessary to know" the law by which he lived". In comparison with the first two estates the clergy and nobility - the third estate consisting of the serfs or commoners suffered from many legal disabilities. For examples the serfs had the inability to appeal to the king for justice. They had no rights over their chattels or properties and holdings. They had the liability of paying the fines of 'marched' and 'heriot'. Even different penalties were imposed on them for similar offences.

2. Estates Representing Division of labour

The estates represented a broad division of labour. They had some definite functions. According to the law of the day, the nobility was to fight and defend all, the clergy were to pray or provide food for all.

3. Estates as political Groups:

The feudal estates were political groups. An assembly of estates possessed political power. From this point of view the serfs did not constitute an estate until the 12th century A.D. The decline of education after the 12 century is associated with the rise of a third estate. The third estate behaved for a long period within the feudal system as a distinctive group before they overthrew.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) Who among the following is at the top in the estate system.

a) Clergy b) Serfs

c) Shudras d) Brahmins

Answer: 1) Clergy

Q2. Briefly discuss the sociological relevance of the term estate as a form of stratification.

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7.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CASTE SYSTEM AND THE ESTATE SYSTEM

The Caste system of India and The Estates of Medieval Europe are not one and the same. The differences and the similarities between the two systems may be noted here

i. A pure caste system is rooted in the religious order whereas the estates system is rooted an interpretation of the laws of religious ritual, the divisions of estates system

are defined by the laws of man. Hence it is not necessary in the estates system to know a man's place in a ritual order. But it is significant to know the man - made law by which he lives.

ii. Unlike the caste system the estates system has no 'out-castes'. Because, at least in theory, all the estates of the system enjoyed their own rights, duties and obligations. All could establish some claim on the established social order. Here in the caste system, the outcasts suffered from all kinds of social, political, religions, legal and other disabilities.

iii. Difference between these two systems could be observed with regard to the nature of social mobility. Both, of course, had institutionalized barriers for social mobility. The barriers in the caste system are based on ritual impurity whereas the barriers of the estates system are legal. Since these legal barriers are man- made, they can be modified in particular circumstance.

For example, in the religious sphere, anyone belonging to any section of the community was recruited into the church. At least in theory, anyone could attain any high place in it. Promotion within the church indicated some kind of social mobility. The caste system, on the other hand, suffers from irreparable inequality created by divinity as it is believed. Hence, no caste member could or improve upon his position in the caste system even as an exceptional case.

The caste and estate systems are both hierarchical structures that define a person's social standing, but differ in their basis and rigidity. Both systems grant different rights and privileges to each social stratum and have historically justified inequality through ideologies like purity or tradition. The caste system is a closed system based on birth and occupation, with virtually no social mobility, while the estate system is a more open system with some limited opportunities for movement, though social mobility is still very restricted.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN CASTE SYSTEM AND ESTATE SYSTEM

1. **Hierarchical structure:** Both systems divide society into different strata, with the

upper strata holding the most power and privilege.

2. **Limited social mobility**: Movement between strata is difficult in both systems. While some mobility was possible in the estate system, it was rare.
3. **Ascribed status:** Social standing is largely determined by birth, not individual achievement or wealth.
4. **Ideological justification:** Both systems use religious or spiritual beliefs to legitimize and maintain social inequality.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CASTE SYSTEM AND ESTATE SYSTEM

1. A pure caste system is rooted in the religious order whereas the estates system is rooted in the legal order. Divisions within the caste system are an interpretation of the laws of religious ritual; the divisions of estates system are defined by the laws of man.

Hence it is not necessary in the estates system to know a man's place in a ritual order. But it is significant to know the man-made law by which he lives. These laws were somewhat complicated. Still their universal characteristic was that they defined not only the rights but also the duties and obligations of the members of estates. These could be enforced either in the courts or by military strength.

2. Unlike the caste system the estates system has no "out-castes". Because, at least in theory, all the estates of the system enjoyed their own rights, duties and obligations. All could establish some claim on the established social order. Here in the caste system the outcastes suffered from all kinds of social, political, religious, legal and other disabilities.

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particular circumstances.

For example, in the religious sphere, anyone belonging to any section of the community was recruited into the church. At least in theory, anyone could attain any high place in it. Promotion within the Church indicated some kind of social mobility.

In the secular sphere, however, the king could provide a distinguished servant a noble position. In both these circumstances, changes of social position were essentially inherited.

The caste system, on the other hand, suffers from irreparable inequality created by divinity as it is believed. Hence, no caste member could rise or improve upon his position in the caste system even as an exceptional case.

7.3 CHARACTERSTICS OF ESTATE SYSTEM

Some characteristics of the estate system include: -

1.Inherited Status: The estate system is based on the principle of inheritance, where an individual's social position and privileges are determined by their birthright. This means that one's social status is fixed and cannot be easily changed.

2. Limited Mobility: Mobility between estates is generally restricted, making it difficult for individuals to move up or down the social ladder. The opportunities for social mobility are limited, and individuals are largely confined to their inherited estate.

3.Unequal Distribution of Power and Resources: The estate system often results in an unequal distribution of power, wealth, and resources among the different estates. The clergy and nobility estates typically hold more power and enjoy more privileges compared to the commoners.

4. Role-Based Occupations: Each estate has its own set of role-based occupations. For example, the clergy estate is associated with religious roles and responsibilities, the nobility estate with political and military leadership, and the commoners with

agricultural or labor-intensive work.

4.Hierarchical Structure: The estate system follows a hierarchical structure, with the clergy and nobility occupying the higher positions and commoners at the bottom. This hierarchy determines social interactions, privileges, and responsibilities within society.

7.4 IMPACT OF ESTATE SYSTEM ON SOCIETY

The estate system had a significant impact on society in several ways: - Social Inequality: The estate system resulted in a stark divide between the privileged and the disadvantaged. The clergy and nobility enjoyed more rights, resources, and opportunities compared to the commoners. This led to social stratification and reinforced inequalities within society. –

1.Limited Social Mobility: The estate system restricted social mobility, making it challenging for individuals to improve their social status. The inherited nature of the system meant that individuals were largely confined to their estate, limiting their opportunities for upward mobility.

2. Lack of Meritocracy: The estate system placed importance on birthright rather than individual merit. This meant that individuals were not necessarily rewarded or recognized based on their abilities or achievements. This could lead to inefficiencies and the exclusion of talented individuals from certain positions.

3. Economic Implications: The estate system had economic implications as well. The nobility estate often controlled land and resources, leading to economic disparities. The commoners, who were primarily engaged in labor-intensive work, had limited access to resources and faced economic hardships.

4. Political Dominance: The nobility estate held significant political power

and influence in many feudal societies. This concentration of power could lead to authoritarianism and an imbalance of power within the political system.

7.5 ESTATE AS A SYSTEM OF STRATIFICATION

Estate systems of stratification are rigid in their prescription of economic duties, political rights, and social convention, although typically they are not closed to social mobility, unlike in caste systems, the estate does not necessarily renew itself from within: the clergy in pre-revolutionary France, for example, was an 'open estate'.

7.6 SOCIOLOGICAL USAGE OF THE TERM

Sociological usage of the term dates back to Ferdinand Tonnies distinction between estates and classes. In **"Economy and Society" (1922)** Max weber cities the estates of Medieval Europe as paradigmatic examples of status groups. In the

same vein, T.H. Marshall defined on estate as 'a group of people having the same status, in the sense in which that word is used by lawyers. A status in this sense is a position to which is attached a bundle or rights and duties, privileges and obligations, legal capacities or incapacities, which are publicly recognized and which can be defined and enforced by public authority and in many cases by courts of law'.

However, like most of other main sociological concepts for studying systems of stratification, that of estate is a matter of some dispute.

7.7 LET US SUM UP

Thus, the three estates - Clergy, nobility and the commoners functioned like three political groups as for as participation in government was concerned the clergy used to stand by the nobility. In France, the political position was more rigid. This system of three estates remained there until 1789, that is, till the outbreak of the Revolution. In the French Parliament called "States- General", these estates used to sit separately and not together. That differentiation within the estates prevailed for a long time. The political movement of the French revolution brought about some radical changes in France.

7.8 GLOSSARY

1. **Merchet and heriot:** A fine paid to a lord for the marriage of a daughter, and a fine paid to the lord on the death of a tenant.
2. **Status:** Effectively claim to social esteem. Weber tried to show that status cuts across class barriers.
3. **Class:** According to Marx, Classes are groups of people who are distinguished from each other due to their ownership or control over the means of production or lack of the same.
4. **Estate:** The term "Estate" represents a type of stratification that existed in

Europe during the Middle Ages.

7.9 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1. Write a short note on the Estate System.

Q.2. Explain important characteristics of Estate System.

Q.3. Distinguish the difference and the similarities between the caste system and the Estates system.

7.10LESSON END EXERCISE

Q1 Discuss the characteristics of estate in brief.

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Q2. What is the impact of estate system on society.

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7.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Ghurye (1986), *Caste and Race in Modern India*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.
2. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
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Course Code: SOC-C-204 **Unit–II**

Lesson No. 8

GENDER: AS A FORM OF SOCIAL STRATIFICAITON

STRUCTURE

8.0 Learning Objectives

8.1 Introduction

8.2 The Gender Relations

8.3 The Psychological Difference

8.4 The Gender difference

8.5 Inequalities with regard to access to education

8.6 Income Inequalities

8.7 The Role of women in the agriculture production

8.8 Inequality the political sphere

8.9 The Marxist perspective

8.10 Let Us Sum Up

8.11 Glossary

8.12 Self-Assessment Questions

8.13 Lesson End Exercise

8.14 Suggested Readings

8.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- **The Gender Relationship**

- **Inequalities with regard to access to education.**
- **The role of women in the agricultural production**
- **The Marxist Perspective**

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This is a known fact that for decade's social stratification did not consider women in the context of distribution of power, wealth and prestige. The stratification studies, according to Anthony Giddens, remained gender, blind; it is indeed surprising that the gender itself being a cause as well reflection of stratification in a society remained untouched. The exclusion of women from the study of stratification therefore also implied incomplete analysis of social stratification. There are two underlying assumptions. First, the gender constitutes both men and women in the society and the society all through history has been divided into two distinct identities based on sex differences. Second aspect refers to the inter-linkages between women and society i.e. in what way the women have impact on social stratification and the' stratification on women.

This is also a fact that both men and women, as distinct as well as integral part of each other live in the society. A society, according to Talcott Parsons, is "sum total complex of human relationships. But these relationships must 'grow out of the action". This implies three things: first, action is always in relation to others that when the action is performed it must be in relation to others and must have an orientation. Second, it must therefore involve interaction between two or more individuals. Third, the action is the part of the ongoing larger action and interaction in the society. It is therefore observed in the society that action, interaction and relation to others imply there is some degree of unity between various constituent units. This unity, though involves unequal, is called by relationship of inter-dependence between the constituent units and the common needs for the fulfillment- of which they come together. The fulfillment of common needs becomes possible through a system, The process of common need fulfillment leads to differential social formations within and between the groups, including gender and perpetuates the relationships so formed. In other words, the society constitutes a system of social-relationship

which is essential for the survival of the society. Such an argument is described as structural functional in nature.

8.2 THE GENDER RELATIONSHIP

The most fundamental relationship in the society is based' on the gender relationships i.e. the relationship between the male and the female. These relationships i.e. the relationship between the, male and the female is functional in nature. Functional means the type of functions required for the survival of the society and the continuity of the human race. The functional relationship is based on the elementary form of division of labour based on sex. Talcott Parsons argues that there are three types of functions performed by the human beings in the society: First men perform particular type of functions, mainly in the field of economic production and other functions which make them remain away from home for longer period of times. Second, women perform other type of functions, for example bearing and weaning the children, looking after the children, their socialization and so on. Third types of functions are performed by men and women together in the society. These functions may even include, those performed by men and women differently for example cooking of meals, looking after the children and so on. A process of gender relations, gender differentiation, inequality and stratification therefore start emerging with the collective and organized living of the human beings,

This is argued by Giddens that the use of terms like male and female constitute gender categories and are conditioned by psychological, social and cultural differences, the differences between the two basically arise due to gender socialization that goes on through the parents, found to give different treatment to boys and girls, sons and daughters.

The material objects such as toys, cosmetics, clothes, etc. given to male and female children differently. In this way gender conditioning and differences are built into the psychological makeup of the child. Even television and radio programs are tutored to make the distinctions between male and female as the former is shown more aggressive and the later docile and timid. The school and peer group influences segregate the boys and girls with gender specific orientations. Since all societies being dominated by the patriarchy the distinctions between males and females are deliberately taught.

8.3 THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE

The psychological differences are basically the result of personality development which

is guided by the process of socialization in a society. The process inculcates different values in the personality of male and female that makes them behave differently. The social differences are brought about by the roles played by males and females in the society. The cultural differences are the values that the males and females carry along in the society which also shape the psychological-and social differences between the males and females. For example, gender usages: Feminine vs. Masculine.

The social, psychological and the cultural differences built into the gender categories condition the functions performed by the women are those related with household, agriculture, horticulture, bearing children, giving them birth, bringing them up. Along with their function pertains to socialization of children and the adults. Through socialization the women not only teach children about the values and norms of the society but also keep the culture and traditions of the society alive. Therefore, the women them-selves become the carrier of the built-in inequality in the society. This is the reason that the dominance of men over women prevails as a universal phenomenon. There is no part of the world where the men do not dominate the women. Women often have lower position at the work place. Only few women enjoy high prestige and status. There are inequalities at work place. Most often the women carry on inferior work in comparison to men. Low pay and female poverty are very common. They always carry the burden of home, work, children and others.

In dealing with the question of inequalities and differences, we are looking at women not as a sexual category but as a gender category. It means how women as a gender role are ranked, evaluated and treated in the society. Before going into the inequalities and differences it is essential to argue here once again that every society attaches different value or values for men and women differently. It means that the role, of men and women are looked at differently. Since the society is dominated by the values of patriarchy, generally the males are ranked higher than the females. Accordingly, the men are given high social status and women are given low social status in relation to men.

Why such a ranking or valuation does is carried out when men and women are doing equal works rather when women are doing more work? In order to understand the reasons, there is need to understand it on the basis of classical theoretical frameworks and traditions propounded to explain the inequalities and stratification.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Write a short note on Gender Relationship.

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Q2. Discuss the Marxian perspective on gender as form of inequality in three lines.

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Q3. What is meant by gender difference.

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8.4 THE GENDER DIFFERENCES

i) Sigmund Freud, a psychologist, tried to explain the gender differences on the basis of biological differences, i.e. masculine and feminine characteristics. According to him, the emergency of gender identity starts with oedipal phase i.e. during the socialization and life cycle, the son starts imitating the role of the father. In fact, Freud argues that the child feels the father is a rival as the male child cannot have the closeness to mother which he wishes to have. In the similar way, the female child learns to behave more like a female. Since the father dominates the house and the son in tile house follows the same way, the girl child feels dominated and tends to accept herself as low in status to the

males. This is how she is socialized and how she also accepts her low social position in the male dominated atmosphere of the family.

Freud also argues that during the oedipal phase the child has a natural leaning towards the opposite sex parent i.e., the son more attached to mother and the daughter to father. This is up to the age of 5 years. However, the changes start appearing after the age of five. These changes are more pronounced between 5 to 13 years age. During this period the peer groups' influence is fund to be more. What Freud tends to argue is that the psychological processes make the male and female different which becomes the cause of later age difference and inequalities?

i) **Nancy Chodrow** does not agree with what Freud says. She argues that learning to feel male or female is a very early experience, deriving from the infant's attachment to its parents. She places much more emphasis on the importance of mother, rather than the father. The children tend to become emotionally involved with the mother than the father. The reason being most of their needs are met through mother and they receive more dominant influence of the mother in their early life. But this attachment breaks at some point. The girl remains attached but the boys start detaching. The boys gradually break away. One of the reasons is that the boys being grown up do not remain physically close to the mother but the girls continue to enjoy the same closeness because of their similar role in the flintily. The male identity is formed through separation from the mother rather than by remaining close. In this way, the differences start appealing in the male role and female role. These differences become the basis of inequality also.

iii) **Carol Gilligan** argues that it is not how we define a male or a female. The difference

between the two appear on the basis of how the adult women and adult male imagine themselves. Women define their image in terms of their personal relationships. They judge their achievements on the basis of their ability to care for other. Women's place in the traditional society is defined as that of caretaker and helpmate. In other words, the women see their success in relation to the others. On the other hand, the men look at themselves as individuals. They see their achievement as personal. The women's caring for others is described as their weakness, dependence, etc. Gilligan carried out a study of 200 American women and men of different ages and social, and economic back-ground. She asked them certain questions. The responses given by them differed. While women persistently talked in terms of helping others, the men often said about the ideals of duty, justice and individual freedom etc. The women often tended to avoid harming others. It is in this way that Gilligan argues that the differences appearing the personality makeup of the male and female.

The issue of inequalities however is not psychological and natural but social also. This is elaborated in the lesson social inequality and social stratification at length. But there are two reasons to go into such a question. First, it tends to bring out the differences in the status of men and women in the society by pointing out the areas in which the inequalities exist. Second, the inequalities are not important just for the sake of importance but because these inequalities have various implications in the life of women. In view of the two reasons given above, it is important to discuss the spheres in which the inequalities exist in human society.

8.5 INEQUALITIES WITH REGARD TO ACCESS TO EDUCATION

There are inequalities with regard to access to education. This is a historical fact that the women have been late started in the sphere of education in comparison to men in almost all the countries and among all the races and people. For example, in the year 1980, have the white people 2.7 males who had attended elementary school whereas for females the figure was 2.5. Similarly, among the blacks while 11.5 males attended elementary school the number of females was only 7.4 Among other races also the number of females attending school was less than that of the male. In the light of the existing data and information it can be argued that more males than the females attend the school.

This is maybe further mentioned that the ratio of male and female attending school is also different in different countries. It is important to mention that in the developed societies the difference between male and female studying in schools is smaller in comparison to developing and underdeveloped, countries. In the developing countries, the 'difference tends to be very large. This can be understood from the male-female literacy in different states in, India.

It is also important to mention that in the socially developed states the inequalities are relatively less in comparison to the socially less developed states. The general literacy for males in Himachal is 86.02 whereas for females it is 68.08 only. In Jammu and Kashmir, it is much low. The question that arises is why these, differences are observed almost everywhere in the world?

One of the reasons accountings for this is the historical neglect of female education. Therefore, the women could not acquire education like the men. The other reason was that at certain stages of history, especially when the invasions and attacks by the foreign people increased, the women were confined to home due to the fear of exploitation, abduction etc. Third, since the women were expected to get married and go away less attention was given to their education in the society.

8.6 INCOME INEQUALITIES

Income distribution and women also reveals that the differences in education not only place women at a disadvantage in relation to men in the society but also has implications with regard to the income earned by them. The empirical studies conducted on the income distribution and number of years spent by men and women in the schools indicate differences. The males normally spend more time in educational institutions than the females. Consequently, males have more chances to find jobs in the market. The life time earnings of females are found to be much smaller than the males in the United States, Canada and even in India." In other words, the lack of educational opportunities is reflected in the occupational inequalities between men and women.

The women also have income inequalities and relatively less work participation. There is enough evidence to suggest vast differences in the work participation and status change among women themselves. One of the common observations is whatever the opportunities exist in the job market for the women, maximum of them is exploited by the highly educated and by those women who come from socio-economically better off background and in many cases have strong political

connections.

The statistics on women employment reveals only16.43 per cent of the total women in India in employment. This means that 83.57 per cent women do not have work or employment. There are also differences of working in the organized and unorganized sector. Of the total employed women, 14.1 per cent are in the organized sector and only about 1 per cent of the total occupy' high social status. The remaining almost $6 per cent of the total working women are in the unorganized sector and mostly in the low prestige occupations. The evidence further suggests that the women workers in the unorganized sector undergo not only economic exploitation by way of payment of low wages but also in certain cases suffer from sexual abuse.

The data also indicate that with the increasing employment and movement of women the problems of abuse have also multiplied. The other reason for the increasing number of women in unorganized sector is the profit considerations of the employers. Since, the women are often paid less they are most concentrated i the stereotyped traditional occupations such as office secretary, nursing, domestic maids, textiles bidi factories, electronics industry, construction, agriculture etc.

8.7 THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

In the agricultural production the role of women is not uniform but varies with their land-owning status. It ranges between managing the lands to working as land-less laborers. The majority of women are working as landless laborers. It is also observed that role of women in agriculture is very important. The total contribution of women to the farm production is estimated at 55 to 60 per cent of the total labour. But they receive a share of only 25.7 per cent of the total, earned income. It is interesting in the Himalayan region that a pain bullocks work 1064 hours, a man for 1212 hours and a woman works 3485 hours a year on a one hectare of farm. "After working almost three times more than the men what a woman gets in return for the work is the wage less than that of man. Such disparities exist not only in the agricultural sector but also in the entire unorganized sector of employment.

This is no exaggeration of the fact that the women in the developing countries not only have less economic opportunities than men but also earn less and work for longer hours. Some of the studies with reference to the larger segment of women in employment reveal that the nature of their work is of supplementary nature. Such jobs are taken up by most women through which they contribute substantially to the

economic betterment of their

family. The significant change that has come about through work pacification in the life of women is confined only to 1 per cent of the women in the organized sector in general and those in the executive positions in particular. The most women working in the unorganized sector continue to toil through the day and receive wages much less than that of men. This is not true of India alone but the situation in the West is also not too rosy. The reason for limited change is that the low prestige jobs do not accord women economic autonomy, social status and power.

8.8 INEQUALITIES POLITICAL SPHERE

The women also suffer from inequalities in the Political Sphere. It is a fact that not many women find a place in politics. In Panchayats, the women are given representation but it is found that they do whatever is asked by their husband or the party to do. They are not allowed to have independent political life in which they can do what they like. The comparison of number of women in parliament, state legislative assemblies, provincial governments in the foreign countries indicate a jail very small number of women in comparison to men.

8.9 THE MARXIST PERSPECTIVE

A question that arises here is to the psychological, social, and the cultural factors account for such a state of affairs. The Marxist consideration of this issue indicates that the above discussed basis of gender inequalities refers to the super-structural aspects and fail to point the real cause of gender stratification and inequalities. Marx' basic assumption about social relationship in the society, particularly among the opposites have been integral but based not on consensus but conflict. Therefore, in the Marxist scheme the social understanding of the position of women in the society besides being functional has also been conditioned by conflict over resources and property.

The conflict perspective is basically based on the idea that capitalist Society is negative in nature and it gives rise to large number of problems. It is oppressive in nature. In general, conflict in the human Society has always been there. Thomas Hobbes believed that prior to the establishment of social contract the human society lived in groups. Each group was at war against each other. He argued that the war between the groups stopped when the social contract was formed. It was the result of the efforts of the human beings. The conflict theorists especially

Marx and his followers argued that the human nature was basically

good. But it was the capitalist society which was negative. It is coercive in nature. Coercive means that it forces people to enter into some type of social set up or in some mode of production. The meaning of mode of production in general would be that human beings in order to live their life have to produce something. In this process, they become part of the production organization and occupy a particular position. These who are in the subordinate position they often suffer from various problems or in order words those who have are placed in a better and advantageous position and those who do not have are in the disadvantaged position.

The question of gender was not a primary concern in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' scheme of analysis. However, they did look at two things with serious concern. First, the understanding of the oppression of women could be possible buy viewing it as part of the human civilization. Second the position of women needs to be emancipated and how this could be possible.

They observed "The humiliation of female sex is an essential feature of civilization as barbarism. Nobody is punished for keeping woman a slave than man himself."

Although Marx always had the readymade answer to the problem the communist society, he and Engels therefore believed that the gender equality is possible in the communist society. But they also believed that the question of man woman equality was located in the family. According to' Marx and Engels, the first form of oppression of women by men emerged in the family. Engels in the book, "The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State" tried to provide materialist

The materialist explanation basically means that every relationship explanation of gender relations revolves around property. This is something which develops throughout the history of human society. According to him, the human beings in the process of living their life keep on producing and reproducing for their life. It is argued that in the initial life the union between men and women was casual and unregulated. In such situations it was difficult to establish the paternity (fatherhood). In the first form of family was based on the natural relationship between the mother and the child. In other words, the original biological link

between mother and the child formed the family. This link gave women high status.

How could women have high status? The simple reason was that the development of the descent was through female line and became the material foundation of the family. In the early stages of development, it was matriarchy which became predominant or the family was founded around the female rule. Later the pattern of stable relationship between men and women through marriages developed. In fact, to stabilize these relationship women played an important role as the unregulated unions put them into lot of problems and degraded them as lose or characterless women. The push for monogamous form of marriage and family by the women therefore resulted in the strictness for women chastity, virginity and other such values.

In this way, monogamy became a basis for the establishment of patrilineal or the tracing of the family through the female line. This form of family consolidated further with the economic or material production activities. The consolidation of production activity implied accumulation of surplus. This means that whatever the additional wealth was produced that wealth could be passed on from one generation to another. The women were excluded as they after marriage started living with the family of the husband. The surplus was controlled by men. This was also the result of the natural division of Labour that came into being due to strict following of the monogamy.

8.10 LET US SUM UP

To sum up, the gender question in the context of stratification, as discussed above, constitutes the most basic issue of human society. The reason being that no society can carry on analysis without referring to women who constitute almost half of the total population of the universe. The justice to gender and stratification can only be possible if viewed in totality i.e. by taking into consideration the social, psychological, cultural and the politico-economic dimensions.

8.11 GLOSSARY

1. **Gender:** Sex refers to the biological attributes of man and women, while gender is understood to be a social contract incorporating the full range of personality trails, attitudes, feelings, values, behavior and activities that society differentially ascribes to men and women.
2. **Gender Identity:** The knowledge of being biologically male or female, it is usually achieved by age two.

3. **Gender Socialization:** The adoption of gender roles through societal and Parental expectations and the modeling of others in these roles.
4. **Social Control:** A term used very widely to refer to all types forces and Constraints which induce conformity to norms and customs in human society.
5. **Socialization:** The process of internalizing society's value in order to adapt to one's culture, influences how people behave as males and females in society.

8.12 Self-Assessment Questions

Q.1. Discuss the concept of gender briefly.

Q.2. What is the Role of women in the agricultural production.

Q.3. Gender is biological term? Comment on it.

8.13 LESSON END EXERCISE

1. Gender is.....

a. Personal and social characteristics of masculinity and femininity

b. A social construct

c. Biologically determined traits

d. Only male and female

Answer: b

2.Social constructs are _____ but the effects on how we interact are _____

a. false, imagined

b. made up by the society, real

c. real, inconsequential

d. gender, sexual

Answer: b

3. Gender stratification refers to

a. unequal distribution of power and privilege in terms of race

b. unequal distribution of power and privilege in terms of gender

c. unequal distribution of power and privilege in terms of age

d. unequal distribution of power and privilege in terms of class

Answer: b

4. Matriarchal societies are.....

a. a form of social organization in which men have more power than other genders

b. a form of social organization in which women have more power than other genders

c. a form of social organization in which Alphas have more power than other human groups

d. a form of social organization in which the Inner Party Members have more power than other Social Class

Answer: b

5. Gender expectations are reinforced through.....

a. Parental socialization

b. Media messages

c. Representation of genders in leadership positions

d. Harassment of people who do not follow gender norms

e. People choosing more "feminine" or "masculine" jobs

Answer: a

8.14 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Ghurye (1986), *Caste and Race in Modern India*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.
2. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
3. Haralambos, Michael (1989), *Sociology, Themes and Perspectives,* Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

ETHNICITY - AS A FORM OF STRATIFICATION

STRUCTURE

9.0 Learning Objectives

9.1 Introduction

9.2 Meaning and Definition of Ethnicity

9.3 Ethnicity a Global Phenomena

9.4 Explanation of Recent Ethnic upsurge

9.5 Let Us Sum Up

9.6 Glossary

9.7 Self-Assessment Questions

9.8 Lesson End Exercise

9.9 Suggested Readings

9.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- **Ethnicity a global phenomenon**
- **Explanation of recent ethnic upsurge**

- **Ethnicity as a form of Stratification**

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The term ethnic denotes race. But when we speak of ethnic community the emphasis is on the distinct cultural identity of the group. "Race tends to refer to the biological aspect of group difference, ethnic to a combination of the cultural aspect plus putative biological element because of the assumption of common descent. According to

J.M. Yinger, the members of an ethnic group, who constitute a segment of the larger, society, are assumed by themselves or by others to have a culture which they share exclusively among themselves. Membership of the group is believed to be passed on from generation to generation-Leo from parent to child - so that biological continuity is an element in the definition of an ethnic group. These members, preserve activities in which their shared origin and culture, play a significant role, such as 'visiting their own people' and celebrating occasions special to them.

Yinger's definition brings out the following characteristic elements of ethnicity : (i) That the ethnic group is seen by others as distinct and separate from all those around them in terms of, say religion, race, language, country of origin, etc. (ii) That the members of the ethnic group themselves see them as distinct or separate in terms of some cultural aspects from all others around them (iii) That the members of the ethnic coup, apart from participating in common activities with others, also engage exclusively in activities which they consider to be their very own in order to retain their cultural distinctions.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Define Ethnic upsurge.

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2. How ethnicity become a global phenomenon.

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9.2 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF ETHNICITY

The term 'ethnic' is derived from the Greek word 'ethno' meaning 'nation'. It was originally used to denote primitive tribes or societies that formed a nation on the basis of their simplistic forms of government and economy. Ethnicity pertains to the word ethnic which is distinction of mankind based on race. Thus, the term ethnic denotes race. Ethnicity is the sense of ethnic diversity which takes about the belongingness of a particular group.

Ethnicity has been defined by various thinkers in their own way. Some **important definitions of Ethnicity are as under:**

(i) According to J.M. Yinger, the members of an ethnic group assumed to have a culture which they share exclusively among themselves. Membership of group is believed to be passed on from generation to generation so that biological continuity is an element in the definition of ethnic group.

Yinger's definition brings out the following characteristics of ethnicity:

• That the ethnic group is seen by others as distinct and separate from all those around them in terms of their religion, race, language, country of origin, etc.

• That the members of the ethnic group themselves see them as distinct or separate in terms of some cultural aspects from all others around them.

• That the members of the ethnic groups, participate in common activities which they consider to be their very own in order to retain their cultural distinctions.

(ii) According to Fredrick Barth, "it is a subjective process of status

identification". Thus, ethnicity also involves in addition to subjective self-consciousness, a claim to status and recognition either as a superior group or as a group that at least equal to other groups.**"**

(iii) **According to Anthony Giddens,** "ethnicity refers to cultural practices and outlook that distinguish a given community of people. Members of ethnic groups are themselves as culturally distinct from other groups in a society and are seen by those others to be so".

(iv) **According to Paul Bross,** "any group of people Afferent from other people in terms of objective cultural criteria (language, dialect, distinctive, dress or diet or customs, religion or race) and containing within its membership, either in principle or in practice, the elements of complete division of labor forms an ethnic category".

(v) **K.S. Singh** feels that ethnicity is being increasingly used to denote people with a distinctive set of bio-cultural and bio-social characteristics. Ethnic difference is recognition of contrast between us and them.

9.3 ETHNICITY - A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

From the nineteenth century onwards till the close of the twentieth century, the idea gradually gained ground that nation was the consummation of human communal living. Even four or five decades ago the U.S.A. and the then Soviet Union presented the picture of melting' pot of diverse cultures. India both before and after partition exhibited a unity in the midst of diversities. It was thought trial through the processes of accommodation and assimilation immigrant groups completely merged themselves with others, leaving very little trace of their separate identity.

Things have, however, completely changed during the last few decades cot only in India but all over the world. It will not be an exaggeration to say that ethnicity is an emerging phenomenon in today's world. The societies which were considered to be stable till the other day are showing increasing signs of instability and disturbance. No society or political system is immune from its pressures. Ethnic groups claim for secession from the age-old political ties. The demand for such secession derives

strength and intensity when the question of preserving ethnic or religious identity becomes predominant. One recent survey of regionalism in Western Europe lists

50 active regional movements while another account refers to no less than 187 ethnic activist associations in France alone.' Even in the oldest the hitherto the most stable nation state, the United Kingdom, devolution of powers to different regions has become a popular movement. Both the Scottish and Welsh national i parties press for Commonwealth status similar to that now enjoyed by Canada, Australia and New Zealand in Commonwealth Games England. Wales and Scotland send separate teams to compete in the games. After the break-up of a highly centralized system of the USSR some of its autonomous republics, based on ethnic, religious and linguistic differences, are asserting their right and are reluctant to remain even within a very loose federal framework like Commonwealth of Independent States. Canada often finds Quebec an intractable problem with its various demands having separatist over-tones.

In India ethnic movements have assumed the form of regionalism in some form or other. Because of die large number and variety of its manifestations in present-day India, it is not easy to grasp and categorize regionalism in its entirety. We may, however, identify some of its manifestations as follows: (i) North-South divide. No discerning observer of the Indian political scene will fail to notice its division. It is not articulated explicitly. One may recall that the DMK demanded secession from the Indian Union at one time in the past on the ground of the Tamils having a distinct cultural identity (ii) Demand of the people of certain areas for separate statehood for instance, the Bodo movement, the Uttarakhand movement and the Jharkhand movement. As a matter of fact, the demand for separate statehood has been a significant feature of the tribal politics in Assam, (iii) Demand of the people of certain areas for secession from the Indian Union. Thus, the Akalis and ULFA activists had been demanding secession on the ground of their distinct cultural identity and deprivation under the present political-set-up. At the core of each regional outburst or movement in India, there is a deep sense of identity, a quest for self-image, as well as a profound sense of deprivation.

9.4 EXPLANATION OF RECENT ETHNIC UPSURGE

In the light of these developments in India and abroad, it will be instructive to consider some of the explanations which have been offered for this emerging ethnic phenomenon.

The recent ethnic outburst is explained by two different schools of thought, viz. the primordialists and circumstantialists.

According to the Primordialists, ethnic feeling - and pride have their roots deep in the past. The remnant of the old does not generally lose its identity. Eastern Europe is full of such communities surviving from the waves of Teutonic and Slavic migration in the early centuries of the Christian era. Many of the present states of Central Europe, such as the Hapsburg and Romanov empires "have grown out of the efforts to preserve a culture which was evolved in mediaeval isolation.' Throughout Europe the isolation of economic lift and the distinct political organization of each community created conditions for the survival of self-contained diverse communities. The beginning of nationalist sentiment, however, changed the entire scenario. Minority groups could preserve their distinct identity by asserting their rights against the demands of dominant majority groups. A minority group may be defined as a group of people who because of their racial or cultural characteristics, regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination. "These communities survived as potential stales mainly through the conscious effort of their leaden to prevent loss of identity and in response to the repressive efforts of the dominant group". Distinctive speech, dress, religious practices and rituals have been utilized and called into play in order to re-enforce a distinct cultural identity. "The Ukrainians, for instance, although adherents of the Roman Catholic Church have con- ducted their ritual in an archaic form of the Ukrainian speech test by adopting the Latin form they become indistinct from their more powerful neighbours". After the Russian revolution, the Government of the Soviet Union encouraged the different ethnic groups "to develop their group consciousness and their cultural institutions upon their inherited soil or in newly created communities on land set part for them by the government." They were only required, to conform to communist ideology and communist economic system, after seventy years of revolution as soon as winds of freedom started blowing the old traditions going back hundreds of years have been revived and utilized to strengthen the resolve of ethnic groups to have a separate political existence of their own.

In India the situation is not very different. After the colonial rule of the British ended and conditions were created for the assertion of democratic rights, various ethnic groups gradually became conscious of their identity. They made language a symbol of their distinct identity as well as the vehicle of tradition. For instance, the Gurumukhi script was emphasized by the Akalis, preservation of Nepalese language and literature became the battle cry of Gorkha movement, the Santhals insisted upon their 'alchiki' script. In

course

of time language tends to become a symbol of nationality followed by a demand for separate political existence.

The Circumstantialists, on the other hand, hold the view that instead of going to the origin of ethnic identity, it is more worthwhile to take into account the circumstances which are primarily responsible for the ethnic upsurge in recent years in India arid abroad.

One such explanation is as follows: "In the modem world there is a loss of traditional identities because of the trends of modernization, urbanization, new occupations, mass education, and mass media. Since there remains in mass society a need in the individual for some kind of identity - smaller than the state, larger than the family - new ethnic identities are constructed."

A second explanation focuses attention on the fact that ethnic identity is used as an instrument for strengthening the demands of ethnic groups. For instance, some linguistic agitations in India were basically movements for furthering employment opportunities or for fulfilling some economic demands. The language agitation in the erstwhile East Pakistan was an expression of the deep-seated desire of the people of East Bengal to free themselves from the economic exploitation of West Pakistanis. The movement centering around Bengali language gave the struggle against. West Pakistanis altogether a new dimension in the sense that the people were made to believe that their identity was threatened. In Northern Ireland the dispute originated as a religious movement. But today behind the facade of religious agitation other non-religious factors, such as the capture of political power or expansion of opportunities for employment and other economic benefits, became the real issues. Appeal to religion serves to strengthen a movement which is basically a political one. The movement along class or occupational lines fails in most cases to stir the emotion of the people. On the other hand, "the appeal to ethnic identity draws upon more emotional layers of the human and social personality than does the appeal to class identity. It touches on such primal things as one's language' and religion, one's earliest family experiences, one's physical self-image."

Yet another explanation of the ethnic upsurge runs on the line that disillusionment with the political system drives people to seek support, strength, and security in ethnic groupings. "Trust, confidence and belief in the political state is at an all-time low in the United States and in other countries

as well. It is not this or that candidate, fills or that government, that

is at the heart of the matter. It is the image of the political community whose credibility has been vastly lessened during the past half century the ethnic bond, grounded in history, is proving to be stronger than the often-artificial bond."

Whatever be the reason for the recent upsurge of ethnicity, the fact remains that ethnic upsurge prepares the ground for the dismemberment of what was once considered to be stable political communities. The traditional federal framework cannot accommodate ethnic groups which are deeply stirred and bent upon an independent political life of their own. Political pluralism arising out of such ethnic divisions is likely to overtake many other states in the future. There is probably no choice in this matter. The reality of ethnic upsurge has to be faced. We have to devise ways and means of meeting the separatist aspect of this new phenomenon.

We should bear in mind in this connection a very important fact, pointed out by Wiener, that objective distinctions among ethnic groups do not necessarily lead to or aggravate conflict. But when such objective distinctions are perceived subjectively as obstacles to the attainment of certain goals like economic, political or educational - ethnic movements tend to develop a separatist character. Therefore, one of the ways to contain ethnic upsurge within limits is to ensure that people of a particular ethnic group do not suffer from a sense of deprivation or injustice on ethnic grounds.

9.5 LET US SUM UP

Societies differ great in plasticity. Some may be too rigid to meet the changing conditions. Some may expand to a size which threatens the inner cohesion. Some may adopt principles of social and political organization which may sap the vitality of the members of particular groups. Some may fail to make the corrections in the political structure as a whole, necessitated by changes in the parts. A flexible approach seems to hold the key to the solution of such intractable problems, Flexibility rather than rigidity, catholicity rather than sectarianism, and tolerance rather than outright rejection of opposing ideologies constitute the key to a meaningful and peaceful existence in a pluralist society.

9.6 GLOSSARY

1. **Ethnicity:** Comprises cultural layers of habits, traits and origin which bind into solidarity the entire community which is of a particular ethnic stock.

2. **Cultural Ethnicity:** The anthropological way of defining ethnicity in terms of Shared cultural values and practices.

3. **Ethnic Stratification:** The unequal distribution of financial, power and cultural Resources on ethnic lines in a society.

4. **Ethnicity Group:** A collectivity which is perceived by others in society as being different in terms of language, religion, race, ancestral home, cultural etc. whose members also perceive themselves as different from others and who participate in shared activities built around a real or imaginary shared descent and culture.

9.7 LESSON END EXERCISE

Q1: Define the terms:

a.EthnicStratification……
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b.CulturalEthnicity……
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c.EthnicGroup……
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9.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1. What do you mean by the term Ethnicity.

Q.2. Give the meaning of Ethnic Group.

_____

_____

_____

Q.3. What is Ethnic Stratification.

_____

_____

_____

9.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
2. Haralambos, Michael (1989), *Sociology, Themes and Perspectives*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

Course Code: SOC-C-204 **Unit–II**

Lesson No. 10

RACE- AS A FORM OF STRATIFICATION

STRUCTURE

10.0 Learning Objectives

10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 Meaning and definition of race

10.1.2 Explanation

10.1.3 Major Races in the world

10.2 Determinants of Race

10.3 Race in India

10.4 Race in social science

10.5 Ethnicity and Race

10.6 Let Us Sum Up

10.7 Glossary

10.8 Self-Assessment Questions

10.9 Lesson End Exercise

10.10 Suggested Readings

10.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- **Know Race as a form of Social Stratification**
- **Know determinants of Race**
- **Know Races in India**

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The placing of the term ‘race in inverted comes is now seen by some sociologists as a useful way of indicating that this manner of categorizing individuals and population groups in not based on any biologically valid distinctions between the genetic make-up of differently identified ‘races’ Racial categorization is frequently (through not always) based on phenotypical differences; that is, difference of facial characteristics, skin color, and so forth. But these do not correlate with genotypical difference (difference in genetic make-up). Nor, reputable scientific opinion now agrees, is there innate difference of personality, intelligence, and so forth, between populations categorized on either of these bases. The sociology of race is largely concerned with examining the causes and consequences of the socially constructed division of social groups according to their so-called race, regards of whether this is legitimated by reference to any of the above factors or none of them (as, for example, in the case of anti-Semitism).

10.1.1 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF RACE

Racial minority is one of the two types of minority groups most common in the social world. A race is a group identified by a society because of certain biologically inherited physical characteristics. However, in practice, it is impossible to accurately identify racial types. Most attempts at racial classifications have been based on combinations of appearance, such as skin color and shade, stature, facial features, hair color and texture, head form, nose shape, eye color and shape, height, and blood or gene type. Race, in simple words, is a group or category of persons connected by common origin. Primarily, it was used to refer to common features present because of shared descent.

Pointing out the characteristics of a race in 'What is Race' published by UNESCO, J.S.B. Haldane wrote, "Race is a group which shares in common a certain set of innate physical character and a geographical origin within a certain area". In this way, a race lives in a define

geographical area and has some definite innate characteristics.

Some of the following definitions wilt also serve to shed some light on the nature of race.

1. **A.W. Green says,** "a race is a large, biological, human grouping with a number of distinctive, inherited characteristics which vary within a certain range".

2. **J. Biesanz and M. Biesanz argues,** "a race is a large group of people distinguished by inherited physical differences".

3. **Horton and Hunt define race,** "as a group of people somewhat different from other groups in a combination of inherited physical characteristics but race is also substantially determined by popular social definition".

4. **According to L.C. Dunn,** "a race in short, a group of related inter-marrying individuals, that is, a population which differ from other population in the relative commonness of certain hereditary traits".

5. **Sutherland and Woodword says, "**race is a broad association of persons of similar biological heritage, who are united in settlement by common cultural traditions and who in time of conflict seek to claim rights to a better social position on the basis of an inherited quality."

10.1.2 EXPLANATION

'Race' is scientifically defined as a group of people possessing the same biological inheritance, identified on the basis of external physical characteristics. Thus, shape of head, color of the hair, eyes, skin etc. are some of the physical characteristics, which are taken into account in determining race.

Race is a biological concept. But in course of time, the members of a particular race develop a kind of consciousness. This race consciousness becomes a sociological

phenomenon and it has an impact on social relations.

In early 19th century ‘race’ was equated with ‘type’ a category of persons of permanently distinctive character. Darwin’s demonstration that there was no permanent form in nature and each species was adapted to its environment by natural selection destroyed the early 19th century conception of race. Race has always a classificatory term.

The earliest classification of race was suggested by Huxley in 1870 who gave four principal types of classifications: (i) Negroid (ii) Australoid (iii) Xanthochroid and (iv) Melanochroid.

Attempts to classify mankind in a specific number of well-defined races in variably fall. No one can draw boundaries, within which all whites; all Negroes or all Mongoloids fall. Some people have mixed racial ancestry, and in modern times isolated pure races are very few. Lastly from the biological point of view, all races of men originate from the same trunk. These views have been upheld by the UNESCO committee of experts on Race problems. J.B.S. Haldane in his report said, "Race is a group which shares in common a certain set of innate physical characteristics and a geographical origin within a certain area."

Races may seem to be easily distinguishable, but the concept of 'race an employed by anthropologists suffers from confusion and lack of clarity. Ralph Linton, an American anthropologist, made a three-fold classification in the study of Man. According to him the subdivision of Homo sapiens are breeds, races and stocks. Today breeds are encountered rather infrequently in some small primitive tribes or in some isolated mountains, though variants exist even in such a group. A race consists of a number of breeds, which share certain physical characteristics of the individuals than those making up a breed. A stock includes a number of races, and of course its members will share even fewer characteristics.

10.1.3 RACES IN A GLOBAL WORLD

The word 'race' carries with it many meanings that are usually associated with racism e.g. racial profiling, racial inequality, racial discrimination, etc. Many of these terms are connected with the idea of biologically distinct human grouping. However, centuries ago, race originally was used to describe the human race in general as a homogeneous group not as distinct

groups.

Since 1700s some scientist tried to develop a racial classification system to categorise people according to their race through a process called racialization.

For instance, De Gobineau (1816-82) system was based on physical characteristics of people and categories races as:

• Caucasian (White) thought to be more intelligent, superior and moral

• Negroid (Black) thought to be immoral, emotional and

• Mongoloid (Yellow) thought to be immoral, emotional.

In his classification, De Gobineau even questioned the belief that the black and yellow races belong to the same human family as the white race and share a common ancestor. He considered people from Southern Europe, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa as racially mixed. Race science during that time emphasized the racial superiority of the white race. These ideas developed further in Germany under the Nazis. There are similar ideas adopted by Klu Klux Klan in USA, and in the Apartheid system in South Africa. The theory of white supremacy was used as a Justification for social exclusion and murder of others (non-Caucasian). These ideas are clearly not acceptable in our modern society.

10.2 DETERMINANTS OF RACE

Physical traits are examined to determine the race but sometimes it becomes difficult to tell whether the differences of traits are hereditary or environmental. Attributes such as weight, color, of skin etc. can be definite as well as indefinite.

Definate: - (i) Stature, (ii) Structure of head, (iii) Structure of nose (iv) blood group (v) Length of hands and feet, (vi) perimeter of chest.

Indefinate: - (i) Colour of skin, (ii) texture and colour of the hair, (iii) structure and colour of the eyes.

However, there is no one trait which can be regarded as fundamental. It can also be noted that within the same race, there may be variations of physical traits, or the people of two different races may possess similar physical traits.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is meant by the term 'Race'.

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2. Give two differences between culture and race.

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10.3 RACE IN INDIA

In case of India, Risley distinguished seven different 'physical types' in the Indian population in the following way:

(i) The Dravidian Type: The stature of these people is short or below medium. The complexion is dark, approaching to black. The hair is similarly dark and plentiful with an occasional tendency to curl. The eye colour is also dark. The head is long and the nose is very broad,

sometimes depressed at the root. The people of Dravidian type are distributed in the region from Ceylon to the valley of the Ganges covering the southern part of India, which especially includes the Western Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad), Central India and Choto Nagpur. Risley believed these people as original inhabitants of India who are found to be modified at present by the infiltration of the Aryans, the Scythians and the Mongoloids.

(ii) **The Indo-Aryan Type:** This type is the closest to the traditional Aryans who colonized India. The people are tall statured with fair complexion, dark eyes and plentiful hair on face and body. They also possess predominant longhead, narrow and long nose. The type is confined to Punjab, Rajasthan and Kashmir where the members are known as the Kashmiri Brahmins, Rajputs, Jats and the Khatri's.

(iii) **The Mongoloid Type:** The most important characteristic features of this type are broad-head, dark complexion with yellowish tinge and scanty hair on face and body. The stature is usually short or below medium. The nose shows a wide range of variation, from fine to broad. The people of this type are found along the Himalayan region, especially in the regions namely North East Frontier, Nepal and Burma. The best examples are the Kanets of Lahul and Kulu Valleys, Lepchas of Darjeeling and Sikkim, the Limbus, the Murmis and the Gurungs of Nepal and the Bodo of Assam.

(iv) **The Aryo-Dravidian Type:** This type is known as the Hindustani type. Generally, the heads of the people are long with a tendency towards medium. The complexion varies from light brown to black. The nose is usually medium, although the broad nose is not uncommon. But in this case, the broad nose is always broader than the nose of Indo-Aryans.

Thus, the Aryo- Dravidians is differentiated from the Indo-Aryans. The type is considered as an intermixture of the Aryans and the Dravidians in varying proportions. The people of this type are found in Uttar Pradesh, in some parts of Rajasthan and in Bihar.

(v) The Mongolo-Dravidian Type: This type is known as the Bengali type. The members of this type are characterized by broad and round heads with a tendency towards medium dark complexion and plentiful hair on face. The nose is usually medium with a tendency towards flatness. The stature is also medium but sometimes short. Such people are found in Bengal and Orissa. The notable representatives of this type are the Bengali Brahmins and Bengali Kayasthas. According to Risley, this type is not only an admixture of the Mongolians and the Dravidians, some blood strains of Indo-Aryan type are also mixed with it.

(vi) The Scytho-Dravidian Type: The people of this type possess medium to broad head, low to medium stature, fair complexion, and a moderately fine nose, which is not conspicuously long. The hair is scanty on face and body. It is held that the type has been evolved by the intermixture of two distinct racial strains namely the Scythians and the Dravidians. Typical example of this type is found in Western India comprising the Maratha Brahmins, the Kunbis and the Coorgs, who are distributed in the tracts of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra-Gujrat border region up to the Coorg.

(vii) The Turko-lranian Type: This type is characterized by broad heads and tine to medium nose, which is long and prominent. The stature is fairly tall although the eyes are dark in colour, grey eyes are not uncommon. Complexion of the people is generally fair; plentiful hair is found on face and body. The type includes the inhabitants of Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Northwest Frontier Provinces (now in Pakistan) who are represented

by the Balochis, Brahai, Afghans and some other people of NWFP.

10.4 RACE IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

Race in Social Science Social scientists agree that there is no biological basis to support the idea of race. Especially that race is often used as an ideological base for political inequality. However, many social scientists still disagree on how to deal with the concept of race.

There are generally two general views on this regard:

• The concept of race should be dropped all together because its 'ideologically loaded'.

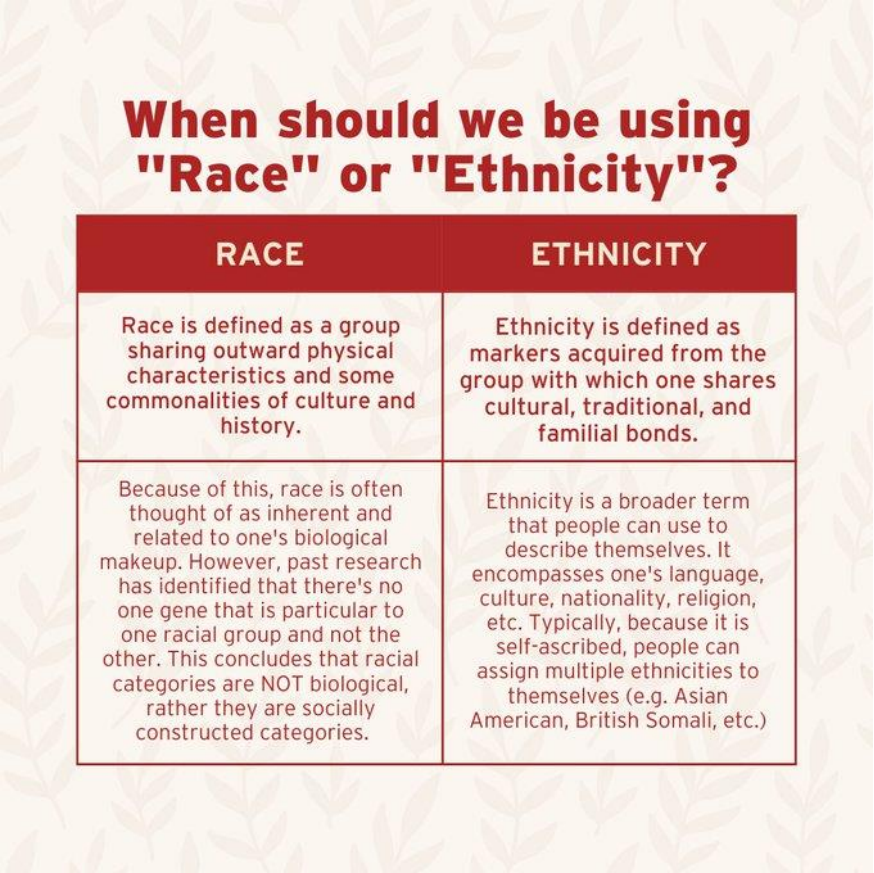
• Race still exists in the belief of people in everyday life and this affects how social life is shaped e.g. the social problem of racisms. Therefore, it's important to study race to understand it in more depth.

Historically, determining differences between groups was important in everyday life (e.g. assign identity to people based on tribal or kinship relations and physical characteristics). However, the idea of racialization came to classify groups of people for the purpose of political separation or domination e.g. non-European were racialized as non-white people while African groups in slave trade, Africans in South Africa and Roma groups were socially excluded in Europe based on their race. Racialization is the process by which race becomes meaningful in a particular context. The process of racialization can affect person's life on all levels like education, employment, personal relations, health care, etc.

10.5 ETHNICITY AND RACE

Since the dawning of racism, human beings have passed judgment on each other based on race and ethnicity. The views of people based on their skin color, place of origin, or their cultural background have caused a stratification of men and women. We have majority and minority groups/hate groups, ethnic enclaves, segregation, income differences, and have even experienced mass genocide in our world. All of these are direct effects of a person's race or ethnicity. These all provide humans with a struggle between each other for various resources. Race is one of the primary lines along which our society is stratified. Race is not biological and that the difference we perceive among people in our society is a social construct. When sociologists use this term, they mean that race is an invention of our society. But, it has very real social consequences.

Racial minorities have much less access to many important resources in our society. One area where we see inequality is wealth and income. Racial minorities have much less wealth than their white counterparts. Racial minorities also tend to earn less income than their white counterparts. Education is another key area of stratification. Blacks are less likely to obtain a high school diploma than- their white counterparts.



Race and ethnicity are different. Ethnicity refers to shared membership in a cultural group. Like race, it is also socially constructed. But, like race, ethnicity also has major consequences for people's life chances. We tend to think of ethnic minorities as inferior, which is what result in a system of ethnic stratification. When we speak of ethnic community the emphasis is on the distinct cultural identity of the group. The social definitions of ethnicity like that of class, affect people's place and status in society's stratification system.

Ethnicity includes religion, language, kinship, tribe, race and even caste, which all forms the basis for stratification in society. In many societies ethnicity acts as a basis for unequal distribution of resources. Some groupings, because of their special identity and ethnicity, command a larger share of socially valued group and services than the other correspondingly, others groups because of their different ethnic identities are deprived of many opportunities of life. Ethnic groups, thus because strata or layers in the system of unequal distribution of

prestige, property and power in society i.e. social stratification in the social system.

An ethnic group may be considered as stratum in a given system or social stratification. It is possible because ethnicity accompanied with class and power. Ethnicity also considered as an extension of kinship sentiments and hence the synthesis 'of the primordial and the instrumentalists view on ethnicity opines that ethnicity may have a structural basis in several primordial ties like caste, kinship, religion, sect, language, tribe and race and as a social formation of ethnicity played a very important role in the social formation of society. Ethnicity includes religion, sect, language, kinship, tribe, race, caste and on the basis of these factors people are stratified into different layers in the society.

Ethnic consciousness is an indispensable feature of ethnicity. Self-identification is realized by the ethnic consciousness and it is this self-identification which gave rise to the formation of separate stratum for this self-consciousness class in the society and thus leads social stratification in the society. Ethnicity also involves caste as on the basis of caste, different association participate in political arena as distinct ethnic entities i.e., stratification on the basis of ethnicity in different spheres of life like the political sphere e. g. caste clusters like **AJGAR (Ahirs, Jat's, Gujjars and Rajput's)** forwards, backward, Dalits, minorities, etc. have emerged as bigger ethnic blocks in today's politics. Distinction between Hindu-Muslims, native people-outsiders, cultural identities like the Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Gorkhas have also been articulated in ethnic terms i.e., differentiation which is one of the elements of social stratification is done on the basis of ethnic identities. Even the regional identities like Oriya, Tamil, Telugu, Assamese, Marathi and Gujarati are expressed in the ethnic idiom.

Religion, language or caste & may form a sufficient but not necessary reason for ethnic grouping. The contingent economic, political or even cultural interests may be necessary factors for along with the primordial lies as a sufficient base for ethnicization of social relations.

Ethnicization has necessarily accentuated by wide range of economic, social and political changes in Indian society Ethnic division of labor implies that some people work in the subordinate or peripheral sections or position whereas

members of some other ethnic groups control assets to the core sections of economy. As Marwaris and the Panjabis in Bihar have practically monopolized the core section of industry, trade and commerce at the exclusion of the both Biharis and the tribals and other locals. Such a situation besides generating ethnic conflicts also produces an ethnically stratified society commensurate with class stratification. Jaganath Pathy pleads for the development of the tribes of India because they constitute ethnic minorities like any other religious and linguistic minorities.

S.L. Joshi believes that ethnicity imparts continuity and identity to the tribal people. Thus, ethnicity helps them in building their separate class in the society. There is always an interplay between ethnicity and class and also there are multiple identities of some ethnic group. A given ethnic group may have many class identities and within the group class-based antagonisms may be expressed frequently. Ethnic identity is based as an instrument for strengthening the demands of ethnic groups and when there is clash between these demands, problems of ethnic identity come into existence between different strata of society.

10.6 LET US SUM UP

Sometime rather separated from these theoretical debates (though also generated by and contributing to them) there are a wide range of empirically grounded sociological inquiries - by for the best of which are by American Sociologists. These include of racial discrimination and disadvantage; the politics of 'race' and the impact of state policies on racialized minorities, and the distribution, concentration, and segregation of minority populations - especially in housing and Labour markets. Examples here might include Lee Rain water's excellent (through controversial) study of Black families in a federal housing project (Behind Ghetto walls, 1970); Howard Schuman's survey of Racial Attitudes in America (1985); and Black Men, White Cities (1973); Ira Katznelson's comparative study of the political responses to Black migration to the Northern cities of the United States and in the United Kingdom. The best summary of the evidence for Britain is David Mason's Race and Ethnicity in Modern Britain (1995).

So, Race is a troublesome concept, far it has no generally agreed upon

meaning. In popular image race may mean all of humanity (The human race"), a nationality (the "German race") or even a group which is mixed in nearly all respects but socially designated as different (the "Jewish race"). Almost any kind of category of people may be called a race.

10.7 GLOSSARY

1. **Discrimination**: Prejudiced action against a group of people.
2. **Ethnicity**: Shared culture, which may include heritage, language, religion and more.
3. **Racialization:** Social process by which certain social groups are marked for unequal treatment based on perceived physiological differences.
4. **Racism:** Belief that one racial category is innately superior or inferior to another.
5. **Stereotypes:** Oversimplified ideas about groups of people.
6. **Amalgamation:** Biological interbreeding
7. **Assimilation:** The fusion of two or more cultures so that they become one.
8. **Discrimination:** A practice that treats equal people unequally; limiting opportunity or reward according to race, religion or ethnic group.
9. **Ethnic Group:** A number of people with a common racial and cultural heritage which sets them apart from others.

10. **Genocide:** A deliberate effort to eliminate an ethnic group by slaughter, expulsion or destruction of the group's cultural heritage.
11. **Hominids:** One of the species consisting of early humans and / or their ancestors.
12. **Integration:** Condition where all racial and ethnic groups can equally share economic and cultural life a society.
13. **Neanderthal:** Race of prehistoric people who lives between 60,000 and 30,000 years ago.
14. **Race:** A group of people somewhat different from other people in a combination of inherited physical characteristics, but the meaning of the term is also substantially determined by popular social definition.

10.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1. Describe Race as a form of social stratification.

_____
_____
_____

Q.2. What is the difference between culture and race.

_____
_____
_____

Q.3. What are the determinants of Race.

_____
_____
_____

10.9 LESSON END EXERCISE

Q1: What is meant by the term race.

……
……
……

Q2: Define the terms:

1. **Genocide……**
   ……
   ……
2. **Racialisation……**
   ……
   ……
3. **Hominids……**
   ……
   ……...
4. **Racism……**
   ……
   ……

10.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
2. Haralambos, Michael (1989), *Sociology, Themes and Perspectives*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
3. Horton, P. B. and Hunt, C., B. (1987), *Sociology*, McGraw-Hill, Singapore.

WEBER'S THEORY OF STRATIFICATION

STRUCTURE

11.0 Learning Objectives

11.1 Introduction

11.2 Max Weber theory of Social Stratification

11.2.1 Class and Life Chances

11.2.2 Status

11.2.3 Power

11.3 Similarities and Differences between Marx and Weber

11.4 Let Us Sum Up

11.5 Glossary

11.6 Self-Assessment Questions

11.7 Lesson End Exercise

11.8 Suggested Readings

11.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- **Weber theoretical explanation about the stratification**
- **Various factors responsible for the stratification in society**

11.1INTRODUCTION

With reference to Weber's theory of social stratification there are certain basic

and important questions that often arise and need to be discussed. These pertain to the source of Max Weber's theory of social stratification, his use of the concepts like class, status, power and party and the difference it has with other alternative approach (e.g. Marxist). In fact, the latter is important in order to understand Max Weber's approach.

11.2 MAX WEBER THEORY OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Weber is regarded as one of the founding fathers of Sociology. He is also the originator of the most powerful alternative to the Marxist theory of society. We shall discuss his views on class and other forms of social stratification in this lesson. Like Marx, Weber also believed that class was a basic form of stratification in society. He defined the term 'class' according to the Marxist criterion, namely, in relation to ownership of property. Property and lack of property, according to him, were the basic categories of all class situations. He went on the distinguish Weberian Theory between two types of property-ownership and non-ownership of goods and services. Those who owned property offered goods while those not owning had only their labour power or skills to offer. Thus, a factory owner can offer goods which were produced in the factory. His workers, on the other hand, can offer only their labour power in exchange of wages.

11.2.1 CLASS AND LIFE CHANCES

Another aspect of class that Weber stressed on was 'life-chances'. This term related to the opportunities an individual got during the various stages of his or her life. An individual born in a worker's family receives a particular type of education, which in turn equips him or her for specific jobs. The education will not be as expensive or as intense as the education of a child in an upper-class family. The employment opportunities for both are different. Their different family backgrounds also make them part of different classes. The same pattern can be seen in social interaction and marriage. A person from a working-class background will interact mostly with other members of his or her class whereas a person from the upper-middle class will have acquaintances mainly from his class. Thus, Weber

found that life-chances was an important aspect of class formation. The son of an industrialist may become a worker because of his abilities or other circumstances. But these, Weber pointed out, were exceptions and not the rule. He pointed out that what was more important was the fact that the life-chances or members of a class were similar. This is what gave permanence to that class as the next generation too joined the same class. Therefore, the definition of life chances, according to Weber, is sharing of economic and cultural goods which are available differently for different groups. The life-chances of an individual were largely determined by the market situation. The son of a worker became a worker because this was the best occupation available to him given his background. The market situation becomes more important for the propertyless as they have to depend mainly on the production of services as they possess only their skills. They cannot market anything else for their existence.

The property owners on the other hand can depend on the income they get from their productive property. Hence for Weber class had two basic aspects.

1.Firstly, it was an objective category. It was determined by the control or lack of control over productive property of the members.

2.Secondly, all members of a particular had similar life-chances, which in turn distinguished these members from others. The life-chances of individuals depended on their market situation in the case of those not owning productive property and on the ownership of productivity for those owning these. Based on his definition, Weber identified four classes in capitalist society. These were:

(a) Upper class that comprised those owning or controlling productive private property. This class was similar to the bourgeoisie (capitalist class) in Marx's analysis,

(b) White-collar workers. This class included all those who were engaged in mental labour -managers, administrators, professionals, etc.

c) Petty bourgeoisie. These were the self-employed and they included shopkeepers,

doctor's lawyers, etc.

(d) Manual workers. These people sold their physical labour in exchange for wages. The working class was included in this class. Weber thus divided society into four classes as opposed to Marx's two-class model. Hence though Weber found the basis of class formation was similar to that of Marx he differed with Marx on the types of classes in society.

11.2.2 STATUS

Like Marx, Weber also distinguished between class and class-consciousness. For Marx, class-conscious was an important aspect of class. A class could articulate its interests if it was conscious of its existence as a special group. Weber too talked of class-consciousness but he did not think it as necessary for the existence of a class. Instead, he looked for an alternative to class-consciousness and he found it in status. Weber noted that whereas an individual's class situation need not lead to his becoming class conscious, he was always conscious of his status.

According to Weber, classes were formed on the basis of economic relations. Status groups, he noted, were normally communities. He defined status a position in society determined by social estimation of 'honour'. There were links between class mid status but in many cases, they were in opposition to each other. Class was associated with production of goods and services or in acquisition of the same. Status was determined by consumption. Thus, status was associated with a life style where there were restrictions on social intercourse. Weber noted that the most rigid and well-defined status boundaries could be found in India's caste system. A Brahman may belong to the working class because it was the means of his livelihood, however he would always consider himself superior to a person from a lower caste even though the class situation of both may be the same. At the same time that Brahman worker may have greater interaction with other Brahmans belonging to classes higher than his. In our society we can see that inter-caste marriage is not tolerated even when both families are from the same class but they occupy different

statuses in the caste hierarchy. There in a stratified society, Weber found that property differences generated classes whereas prestige differences generated status grouping. There were the two main bases of social stratification.

11.2.3 POWER

The third organizing principle of social stratification is power, unlike status and wealth which can be clearly linked with group characteristics of ranking hi societies, the principle of power is a relatively diffused attribute because it is not exclusive in character. It is always possible that a group with higher status in society or that which enjoys greater wealth, also exercises more power in society. Nevertheless, one could make a distinction between say, principle of privileges whereas the latter tends to be based on the group's ability to use coercive means for other group's conformity with actions, values and beliefs determined by it. The concept of power as Max Weber has discussed in his treatment of social stratification rests on the fact that it endows the persons or groups which have power to impose their will on other groups by legitimate use of coercive method. In this sense, state offers us a good example of an institution which has maximum power. It has sovereign authority to impose its will on citizens of the society. When legitimacy of exercise of power, is widely accepted by groups, in other words, when it is institutionalized in society, power becomes authority. Authority as a concept could be defined as legitimate power. Power as a principle also enters into the notion of social stratification when its functions or its social ramifications begin to be influenced by the political processes in society, and when state begins to take more active or direct role in influencing the principles of social stratification. A relevant example of this could be found in the policy of positive discrimination or reservation of jobs, political offices and entry into educational institutions in our country by the state in favor of castes and tribes.

11.3 SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MARX AND WEBER

From the above discussions we can see that there are some similarities between the two thinkers on stratification. There are major differences as well. For Marx the basis of

stratification was class. The formation of class was objective in the sense that a class was not formed because a group of people got together and decided that they form a class. Its formation was because of the production relations that existed in a society. Therefore, a person's position in the class structure was based on his position in the production relations. If he happened to own or control capital and he employed others, he was a capitalist. Those who did not own or control property belonged to the opposing class of worker. Opposition of classes was an important aspect of Marx's analysis. It was through this opposition that social and economic change took place. The capitalists invent new ways to counteract workers. This could be new technology resulting in better production techniques or new laws preventing workers from becoming more powerful. The workers too in their struggle become more united. They tend to drop their internal differences when they realize that their main opponent is another class. This leads to greater unity among them.

Thus, for Marx, class and class-consciousness do not mean mere categories in society. They are fundamental for social development. At one level, Weber accepts Marx's view on class. However, he does so not to support Marx but to show how his analysis has weaknesses. He stresses that society cannot be divided into only two main classes. There are more classes that emerge due to the market situation and the type of work done. He therefore finds that there are four main classes in society. This in effect confuses the class relations. Thus, Weber feels that neither class nor class-consciousness can explain stratification completely. He thus lays greater stress on status, whereas Marx lays stress on class-consciousness. Weber tries to show that class-consciousness in not an important aspect of social stratification. For him status groups are the basis. He finds that classes are static whereas status stretches across classes. While comparing the two we must keep in mind that Weber was an opponent on Marx's views. He tried to provide alternatives to Marx. In this sense the two cannot be compared because Weber's work was not complimentary to that of Marx. It was primarily developed to oppose Marx. Thus, despite some similarities, their works are basically different.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. According to Weber, the three determinants of stratification are:

   a) …… b) …… c) …….

2. According to Weber class situation is equivalent to:

   a) Gender situation b) Monetary situation

   b) Market economy c) Market situation

Answer: 1. a) Class (economic position) b) Status (social prestige or honor)

c) Party (power or influence)

Answer: 2. Market situation

11.4 LET US SUM UP

In view of the above discussion, it may be suggested that Weber's theory of stratification is based on the assumption that class, status and party as exclusive categories stratification in human society a part from exclusiveness of the three. Therefore, their inclusiveness in determining social stratification cannot be ruled out.

11.5 GLOSSARY

1. **Class:** According to Marx, Classes are groups of people, who are distinguished from each other due to their ownership or control over the means of production or lack of the same,

2. **Class Consciousness:** A class that is conscious of its distinguished position in the social esteem. Weber tried to show that status cuts across class barriers.

11.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1. Define Class.

_____

_____

_____

Q.2 How class is differing from caste.

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_____

_____

Q.3.Describe weber's views on classes and life chances.

_____

_____

_____

Q.4. Outline some of the similarities and differences between weber and Marx so far as their views on social stratification is concerned.

_____

_____

_____

11.7 LESSON END EXERCISE

- **Tick the right answer**

1.Max Weber was a……. sociologist
A. American
B. British
C. England
D. German
Answer: D

2. What is Weber's conceptualization about the base of stratification?
A. Power, mobility & Community
B. Power, status group, class & Party
C. Power, Political party, group & Class
D. Status group, community & Class
Answer: B

3. Which are the three dimensions of social stratification as referred by Weber?
A. Class, caste & estate
B. Occupation. Hierarchy & income level
C. Power, Prestige & Property
D. Class, ethnicity & gender
Answer: C

4. In opinion of Weber stratification is an organized manifestation of …… in society
A. Power
B. Inequality

C. Prestige
D. Caste
Answer: A

5. ……...is a collection of individuals who occupy comparable economic positions
A. Caste
B. Class
C. Estate
D. Group
Answer: B

11.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Ghurye (1986), *Caste and Race in Modern India*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.
2. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
3. Haralambos, Michael (1989), *Sociology, Themes and Perspectives*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

FUNCTIONAL THEORY OF STRATIFICATION - TALCOTT PARSONS

STRUCTURE

12.0 Learning Objectives

12.1 Introduction

12.2 Core Principles of the Functionalist theory of Stratification

12.3 Critiques of the Functionalist Approach

12.4 Talcott Parson's theory of Stratification

12.5 Stratification as a system of Value Consensus

12.6 Criticism of the Parson's theory of stratification

12.7 Let Us Sum Up

12.8 Glossary

12.9 Self-Assessment Questions

12.10 Lesson End Exercise

12.11 Suggested Readings

12.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- **What this theory states.**
- **The importance of the theory in understanding society.**
- **Factors accounting for differential valuation.**

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Talcott Parsons, an American sociologist, developed a structural functional perspective for the understanding social stratification through" an essay entitled, "An Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification". This theory was primarily concerned with various determinants or constituents of social stratification. According to him, social stratification meant: differential ranking of human individuals who compose a given social system and their treatment as superior and inferior relative to one another in certain socially important respects. In his explanation" Parsons conceives ranking as

fundamental in the formulation of a theory" He argues that ranking is one of many possible according to which individuals may be differentiated. The latter is significant as it involved some type of relationship of superiority and inferiority and indicating the relevance of ranking in social ordering. The differentiation in a society arises due to the differential evaluation in the moral sense of individuals as units. For instance, moral superiority is an object of a certain empirically specific attitude, quality of respect. Its antithesis will amount to indignation. Thus, moral evaluation becomes central criterion of ranking.

12.2 CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE FUNCTIONALIST THEORY OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

The functionalist theory of stratification, influenced by thinkers such as Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, and later developed by Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore, seeks to explain the existence and purpose of social stratification within societies. It emphasizes the role of stratification in maintaining societal stability and ensuring effective organization. Following are the core principles of functional theory of social stratification:

1. Universality and Necessity of Stratification: Functionalists argue that stratification is a universal phenomenon found in all societies, as it serves critical functions necessary for societal survival. It is not seen as a random occurrence of inequality but as a system designed to ensure that essential tasks are performed, and vital roles are filled to maintain order and continuity within society.

2. Functional Importance of Roles: According to this perspective, not all roles in society are equal in importance. Some positions, such as those in leadership, science, medicine, or education, are considered more critical for societal stability and progress. Stratification ensures that these key roles are filled by individuals who have the requisite skills, training, and dedication to perform them effectively.

3. Motivation Through Unequal Rewards: Functionalists believe that inequality in rewards is essential to motivate individuals to invest time and effort into acquiring the skills and knowledge needed for specialized roles. Positions that

require extensive training, responsibility, or expertise are often associated with higher rewards in terms of income, prestige, or authority. These incentives ensure that individuals strive to achieve roles that are vital to society.

4. Merit-Based Role Allocation: A fundamental principle of this theory is that stratification operates as a meritocratic system, where individuals are assigned, roles based on their talents, efforts, and achievements. It assumes that those with the necessary abilities and work ethic will rise to positions of higher status, creating a system where roles are distributed fairly according to merit.

5. Legitimization Through Shared Values: Talcott Parsons emphasized the role of shared cultural values in legitimizing stratification. Societies tend to rank roles and individuals based on commonly agreed-upon values, such as education, skill, or contribution to the collective good. This shared agreement reinforces the legitimacy of unequal rewards and promotes social cohesion by aligning individual roles with societal priorities.

6. Contribution to Social Stability: Stratification is viewed as an integrative mechanism that promotes interdependence among individuals and groups. By assigning people to specific roles within a hierarchical structure, society ensures cooperation and coordination, which are essential for maintaining order and stability. Each stratum plays a role in the larger system, contributing to its overall functionality.

12.3 CRITIQUES OF THE FUNCTIONALIST APPROACH

While the functionalist perspective offers an explanation for the existence of stratification, it has faced criticism for overlooking structural inequalities, inherited privilege, and systemic barriers. Critics argue that the theory assumes equal opportunities for all, which may not exist in reality. Additionally, it tends to justify existing inequalities without addressing their negative consequences for marginalized groups.

In conclusion, the functionalist theory presents stratification as a purposeful and necessary system that aligns individual roles with societal needs, motivating people

to fulfil essential tasks. Despite its limitations, the theory underscores the importance of stratification in ensuring the efficient functioning and stability of society.

12.4 TALCOTT PARSON'S THEORY OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Talcott Parsons, a leading figure in mid-20th century sociology, made significant contributions to the functionalist perspective, particularly with his theory of social stratification. His ideas are embedded within the broader framework of functionalism, which views society as a complex network of interconnected components that work together to ensure stability and maintain social order. According to Parsons, social stratification is an essential aspect of societal functioning, playing a crucial role in maintaining the system's stability.

In Parsons' view, inequality is not inherently negative but rather a functional necessity. He argued that different social roles require varying levels of skills, training and responsibility, and as a result, individuals are rewarded in accordance with the importance and complexity of the roles they occupy. For instance, more complex and vital roles within society, which require specialized knowledge or responsibility, offer greater rewards such as prestige, wealth and power. These rewards motivate individuals to perform these roles, ensuring that society operates efficiently.

Parsons contended that stratification is a mean to ensure that the most qualified individuals are positioned in roles that are essential for the functioning of society. This merit-based system, helps maintain social order by aligning individuals with roles that match their talents and abilities. Furthermore, he believed that social mobility, though present, occurs gradually, with individuals rising or falling based on their contributions to society.

Talcott Parsons' functionalist perspective on social stratification is grounded in the idea that

society functions as a complex system, where various components work together to maintain balance. In this view, social stratification is not seen as inherently harmful but rather as a necessary feature of societal organization. Parsons argued that societies organize roles in a hierarchical structure, with each role playing a part in ensuring the system functions smoothly. More demanding and specialized roles, such as those in leadership, politics or high-skilled professions, require extensive training and carry greater responsibility. The stratification system, therefore, serves to reward those who occupy these critical roles, ensuring that society has the expertise needed to maintain its stability and order.

Parsons emphasized that the unequal distribution of rewards, such as wealth, power and prestige, reflects the varying complexities and responsibilities of different roles. Individuals in higher positions are motivated by the promise of greater rewards, which encourages people to aim for these important roles. This structure ensures that the most qualified individuals are placed in roles where their skills and contributions are most needed, enhancing the efficiency and functionality of society. While social mobility exists, Parsons believed it is a gradual process where individuals move up or down the social ladder based on their abilities, contributions and achievements.

12.5 STRATIFICATION AS A SYSTEM OF VALUE CONSENSUS

Talcott Parsons believed that social stratification is deeply connected to the cultural values upheld by members of society. He argued that it is not a random or unjust system, but rather a reflection of a shared understanding of which roles, skills and attributes are essential for the functioning and stability of the social structure. According to Parsons, this collective agreement or value consensus, plays a crucial role in how stratification is organized and maintained within society.

1. Shared Values as the Basis of Stratification: Talcott Parsons argued that social

stratification is closely tied to the collective cultural values of a society. These values serve as the basis for assessing the significance of different roles, skills and behaviours, ultimately shaping the way individuals and groups are ranked. According to Parsons, each society prioritizes certain attributes or contributions that are essential for maintaining its stability and continuity. For instance, depending on its cultural and historical context, a society may place high importance on qualities such as intelligence, creativity, leadership or ethical conduct. These shared values help establish a framework for determining the relative importance of roles, influencing how rewards like power, wealth and status are allocated.

2. Hierarchy as a Reflection of Values: In Talcott Parsons' functionalist perspective, social hierarchies emerge as a product of the cultural values that a society upholds. Each society has its own set of values that determine what is considered essential for its well-being and functioning. These values, in turn, influence the ranking of roles, responsibilities and individuals within the social structure. For example, roles that contribute significantly to the broader goals of society (such as leadership, knowledge creation, or vital life-preserving functions) are typically assigned higher status, respect and rewards. This ranking system is not arbitrary but arises from a collective understanding of which functions are most critical to the smooth functioning of society. Parsons highlighted that this ranking process is guided by societal norms, which provide a framework that justifies inequalities. This value-based system of stratification, according to Parsons, creates a normative justification for inequality. People are more likely to accept and internalize these rankings as legitimate because they align with shared cultural beliefs about what is valuable and necessary in society.

3. The Role of Normative Consensus: Talcott Parsons highlighted that a functional system of stratification can only operate effectively if there is widespread agreement within society on the values and principles that justify the social hierarchy which is known as Normative Consensus. This shared understanding provides legitimacy to inequality and contributes to

social stability. For instance, in a society that places a high value on education and expertise, roles like doctors or scientists are highly regarded and rewarded, as these positions are seen as vital to the well-being of society. This collective recognition of the hierarchy as fair helps to reduce conflict and tension. Normative consensus also plays an important role in motivating individuals to seek out roles that are in line with societal priorities. This ultimately benefits society by ensuring that essential roles are filled by competent and driven individuals.

12.6 ROLE DIFFERENTIATION AND FUNCTIONAL NECESSITY

Talcott Parsons highlighted the crucial role of role differentiation in the proper functioning of society. He suggested that as societies grow more complex, they require a variety of specialized roles to keep the system running smoothly. While every role contributes to maintaining social stability, not all roles hold the same level of significance. This differentiation in roles is what underpins the structure of social stratification.

1. Complexity of Society: As societies grow and evolve, they tend to become more complex, leading to an increased differentiation of roles. In simpler, traditional societies, the division of labour is limited and individuals often take on a variety of tasks. The roles people fulfil are broad and general, with minimal specialization, as the tasks necessary for daily life are relatively simple and the community size is smaller. However, as societies progress and become more industrialized and urbanized, their complexity grows. The increasing demands for goods, services and expertise prompt a more distinct division of labour, where individuals start to specialize in specific areas. These specialized roles require specific skills, education and training. With the rise in societal complexity, it becomes impossible for any single person to perform all the tasks needed to keep society functioning. Instead, various groups of people are assigned roles based on their skills and experience. In such a society, stratification naturally develops because not all roles are regarded as equally significant or requiring the same level of expertise. Roles that demand higher education, greater specialization and more

responsibility are generally valued more highly and receive higher social status and compensation.

2. Functional Necessity of Differentiation: Parsons suggested that the differentiation of roles within society is essential for maintaining stability and order. As societies grow more complex and specialized, the division of labour becomes crucial for ensuring that each vital function is carried out effectively. In simpler societies, where there are fewer distinct roles, individuals often take on multiple overlapping responsibilities. For example, one person might fulfil the roles of farmer, caregiver and community leader. However, in modern industrial societies, such overlapping tasks are no longer practical and the need for specialization increases. In these societies, roles must be clearly defined to meet specific needs, such as healthcare, education, governance and engineering. This role differentiation allows society to function more efficiently by matching individuals to roles suited to their skills, training, or expertise.

3. Motivation Through Rewards: Talcott Parsons argued that social stratification plays a key role in motivating individuals to pursue specialized, high-status roles necessary for the functioning of society. He believed that in order for crucial positions to be filled by capable and well-qualified individuals, society must offer sufficient rewards to encourage people to aim for these positions. These rewards, which can include higher salaries, prestige and access to power, serve as incentives for people to invest time, effort and resources into acquiring the education and training required for these demanding roles. For instance, becoming a surgeon or an engineer necessitates years of rigorous study and considerable personal sacrifice. Without adequate rewards, fewer individuals might be willing to commit to these professions.

4. Functional Allocation of Roles: In Talcott Parsons' perspective, the functional allocation

of roles plays a crucial role in maintaining social stability and efficiency. Parsons argued that one of the key functions of social stratification is to match individuals to roles that align with their skills, abilities and contributions to society. This allocation ensures that each function in society is performed by the most qualified individuals, which contributes to the overall order and effective operation of the system.

In conclusion, the functional allocation of roles is integral to Parsons' theory of stratification. It ties the distribution of rewards to the needs of society, ensuring that individuals are assigned to roles that match their abilities and motivations. This system of role allocation is essential for maintaining social order, promoting efficiency and facilitating the smooth operation of society as a whole.

12.7 CRITICISMS OF PARSONS' THEORY OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Talcott Parsons' functionalist theory of stratification has received considerable criticism from various schools of thought in sociology. These criticisms primarily focus on its assumptions, methodology and the implications of accepting inequality as natural or beneficial for society. Following are the key criticisms against Parsons' functionalist view on stratification:

1.Neglect of Power and Exploitation: One of the major criticisms of Talcott Parsons' theory of stratification is its failure to adequately consider the role of power and exploitation in shaping and sustaining social inequality. While Parsons highlights the functional necessity of stratification and emphasizes social consensus and stability, critics, particularly from conflict theory perspectives, argue that stratification is neither neutral nor natural. Instead, they contend that it primarily serves the interests of powerful groups while marginalizing less privileged ones.

2.Overemphasis on Consensus and Social Order: A significant criticism of Talcott

Parsons' functionalist theory is his assumption of a stable social consensus across society, which forms the foundation of his justification for inequality. Parsons suggests that inequality is legitimate because society collectively agrees on the value of different roles. However, critics point out that this assumption is overly simplistic for several reasons.

2.1 First, societal consensus is often fragmented rather than universal. In reality, societies are often characterized by conflict, particularly in the areas of resource distribution and power. Social groups, defined by class, race, gender and other factors, frequently hold conflicting interests and experiences. This fragmentation challenges the idea that all members of society share a unified understanding of what is fair or valuable.

2.2 Second, inequality tends to promotes social conflict rather than harmony, contrary to Parsons' view. Conflict theorists such as; C. Wright Mills and Ralf Dahrendorf argue that stratification breeds tension, with different groups or classes vying for limited resources. This competition for power and wealth, they contend, results in social struggles rather than contributing to societal stability as Parsons proposes.

2.3 Finally, Parsons' theory overlooks the reality of cultural diversity in pluralistic societies. Different cultural groups often hold varying values and norms, leading to diverse perspectives on the legitimacy of social inequality. Parsons' framework does not adequately address the way these cultural differences can influence people's perceptions of stratification and its fairness. This gap in his theory highlights the limitations of assuming a uniform agreement about social roles and rewards across diverse societal groups.

3. Justification of Inequality: One major critique of Parsons' functionalist theory of stratification is that it appears to justify and normalize social inequalities. By portraying stratification as both necessary and beneficial, the theory risks legitimizing systemic

disparities, such as those based on class, race or gender. Critics argue that inequality is not inherently functional or beneficial. In many societies, structural barriers prevent marginalized groups from accessing essential resources like education, healthcare and employment opportunities. Rather than optimizing the allocation of roles, such inequality perpetuates the advantages of privileged groups while limiting the potential contributions of disadvantaged individuals to society.

4. Lack of Empirical Evidence: Parsons' theory of stratification, while influential, has been criticized for its abstract nature and lack of concrete empirical evidence to substantiate its claims. One major critique is its tendency to overgeneralize by presenting stratification as a universal and functional system that applies across all societies. In reality, the forms and consequences of social stratification vary greatly depending on cultural, historical and political factors. For example, in societies with rigid caste systems or deeply ingrained institutional racism, stratification may perpetuate inequality and oppression rather than serving the functional purposes Parsons describes.

On the basis of above description, it can be stated that Talcott Parsons' theory of social stratification emphasizes its importance in fostering social stability and cohesion. He argued that stratification is rooted in shared cultural values and ensures the efficient allocation of roles within society. However, his focus on harmony and functionality has been criticized for failing to address the structural inequalities and power dynamics that often sustain social hierarchies. This is relevant to understand the process of social stratification in modern and post-modern society.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Discuss briefly any three factors led to the stratification according to Talcott parsons:

   a) ……. b) …….. c) …….

2. Who has given the concept of "differential evaluation".

a) Max Weber b) Talcott Parsons c) Karl Marx d) Emile Durkheim

Answer: 1. a) Possession (material assets like wealth and property)

b) Qualities (inherent or perceived traits like intelligence or loyalty)

c) Performance (how well tasks are executed and evaluated by social norms)

Answer: 2. Talcott Parsons

12.8 Let US Sum UP

To sum up Parsons Theory the following points are important to remember:

1. In the most elementary sense, the basic concern of the functional theorist's vis a vis social stratification in a society is the functions of social stratification in terms of its contribution to maintenance and well-being of society.
2. Parsons like other theoreticians on the subject also regards that order, stability and cooperation in a society are not only essential elements of a system but are based on value consensus i.e. all the members in a society have a general agreement on what is good and what is bad.
3. The basic argument advanced by Parsons is that the "stratification system as are based on common values i.e. the individuals are the criterion of determining

evaluation is subjective judgment which help in the formation of strata of social units or statues. This is similar' to the criteria adopted by Warner. It evaluated individuals in the society according to the values on which the members have consensus and on the basis of evaluations they are placed in some form of rank order. Social stratification is conceived in its valuating aspect as the ranking of individuals (units of socials systems) in a social system in accordance with the common value system. Thus, those who perform successfully in terms of society's values will be ranked highly and they will be likely to receive a variety of rewards and high prestige as they exemplify and personify common values.

4. For example: if a society places a high value on bravery and generosity - the brave individuals and generous individuals with be accorded high bank in the society. In. a society which values individual achievements, efficiency and productive activity in those societies the successful executives receive high onwards.

The central theme of Parsons theory is: 1) It is inevitable part of human society because the society weds it. (2) Since value consensus is an essential component of all societies, then some form of stratification does result from the ranking of individuals in terms of common values. (3) There is a general belief that 'stratification systems are" just, right and proper, the reason being that they are the impression of just values.

12.9 GLOSSARY

1. **Value consensus:** Agreement by all members of a social system on what is accepted for all.

2. **Functional prerequisites:** Those values that are necessary for promoting order and stability and this necessary for the survival of that society.

12.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1. Briefly outline the functionalist theory.

_____

_____

_____

Q.2. Describe what value consensus is? What role does it play in social stratification.

_____

_____

_____

Q.3. What is Authority.

_____

_____

_____

12.11 LESSON END EXERCISE

Question 1: According to Talcott Parsons, what determines an individual's rank in a

social stratification system?
A. Wealth

B. Power

C. Shared values

D. Education

Answer: C. Shared values

Question 2: Talcott Parsons argued that social stratification is a result of:
A. Exploitation by the ruling class

B. Individual competition for limited resources

C. The process of socialization into the dominant culture

D. The ranking of individuals based on their performance according to common values

Answer: D.

Question 3: Which of the following is a core concept in Talcott Parsons's theory of social stratification?
A. The proletariat and bourgeoisie

B. The sick role

C. Value-based ranking

D. Power derived solely from economic status

Answer: C. Value-based ranking.

12.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
2. Haralambos, Michael (1989), *Sociology, Themes and Perspectives*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
3. Horton, P. B. and Hunt, C., B. (1987), *Sociology*, McGraw-Hill, Singapore.

KINGSLEY DAVIS AND WILBERT E. MOORE: THEORY OF STRATIFICATION

STRUCTURE

13.0 Learning Objectives

13.1 Introduction

13.2 Overview of Davis and Moore theory of Social Stratification

13.3 Central arguments of Davis and Moore theory of Social Stratification

13.4 Two propositions of Davis and Moore's Analysis

13.5 Criticism of the Davis and Moore theory of Social Stratification

13.6 Let Us Sum Up

13.7 Glossary

13.8 Self-Assessment Questions

13.9 Lesson End Exercise

13.10 Suggested Readings

13.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- **The basic propositions of Davis and Moore**

- **Functional pre-requisite of Davis and Moore**
- **The importance of the theory in understanding Society**

13.1 INTRODUCTION

The functionalist analysis or theory is based on the assumption that the society is an organized, stable, established and integrated system in which most members have universal consensus over basic values. There are three premises of functionalism.

First, there is certain degree of functional unity among the constituent units. It also implies that the society is a system of integrated parts. Second, the social systems tend to be stable because they have built-in mechanism of social control. Third, the functions have universal values. Fourth, the functions are inevitable for the integrity and progress of the society. Fifth, the change in the society is gradual and agreed upon by the larger mass of the society. Finally, the integration of the society is based on the value consensus. Similarly, Parsons has given four functional pre-requisites, namely pattern maintenance and tension management, adaptation, goal attainment and integration.

13.2 OVERVIEW: THEORY OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION: DAVIS AND MOORE

The functional theory of social stratification was first proposed by Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore in their paper titled as "Some Principles of Stratification" published in 'American Sociological Review' in April 1945. This theory, according to Davis & Moore, is an attempt to show the relationship between stratification and the rest of the social order.

Starting from the proposition that no society is 'classless' or 'unstratified', an effort is made: -

• to explain, in functional terms, the universal necessity which causes stratification in social system.

• an attempt is made to explain the roughly uniform distribution of prestige as between the major types of positions in every society.

• to explain the varieties of social inequality and the variable factors that give rise to them.

But it should be kept in mind that this theory relates to the system of the positions only and not to the individuals occupying those positions.

Functional Necessity of Stratification

In the words of Davis and Moore, "the main functional necessity explaining the universal presence of stratification is precisely the requirement faced by any society of placing and motivating individuals in the social structure".

Thus, the functional necessity for social stratification arises on account of two

factors: -

• Each society has a social structure and various positions in which the society needs to place some individuals.

• The task does not end simply with the placement of individuals in certain positions but the society also requires some mechanism through which the individuals are continuously motivated to occupy some positions in the society.

It must, thus, concern itself with motivation at two different levels: -

• to instill in the proper individuals the desire to fill certain positions

• the desire to perform duties attached to them.

In order to keep up the continuous supply of individuals to fill up the positions, it needs continuous motivation. It is irrespective of the type of system i.e., competitive or non-competitive.

The Two Determinants of Positional Rank In granting the general function that inequality subserves, one can specify the two factors that determine the rotative rank of different positions-. In general, those positions convey the best reward and hence have the highest rank which

• have the highest importance for the society

• require the greatest training or talent.

The first factor concerns function and the second concerns means and is a matter of society.

Differential Functional Importance

Actually, a society does not need to reward positions in proportion to their functional importance. If a position is easily filled, it need not be heavily awarded, even though important. On the other hand, if it is important but hard to fill, the reward must be high enough to get it filled anyway. Functional importance is therefore a necessary but not a sufficient cause of high rank being assigned to a position.

Differential Scarcity of Personnel

Practically all positions, no matter how acquired, require some form of skill or capacity for performance. There are, ultimately, only two ways in which a person's qualifications come about through inherent capacity or through training. Some positions require innate talents of such high degree that persons who fill

them are bound to be rare. In many cases, however, talent is fairly abundant in the population but the training process is so long, costly and elaborate that relatively few can qualify.

13.3 CENTRAL ARGUMENTS OF DAVIS AND MOORE'S THEORY OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

M.M. Tumin argues that the following constitute the central arguments of Davis and Moore's theory of social stratification.

• Certain positions in any society are functionally more important than others and require special skills for their performance.

• Only a limited number of individuals in any society have the talents which can be trained into the skills appropriate to these positions.

• The conversion of talents into skills involves a training period during which sacrifices of one kind or another are made by those undergoing the training.

• In order to induce the talented persons to undergo those sacrifices and acquire the training, their future positions must carry an inducement value in the form of differential i.e., privileged and disproportionate access to the scarce and desired rewards which the society has to offer.

• These scarce and desired goods consist of the rights and pre-requisites attached to or built into the positions and can be classified into those things which contribute to:

a. Sustenance and comfort

b. Humor and diversion and

c. Self-respect and ego expansion

• The differential access to the basic rewards of the society has as, a consequence, the differentiation of the prestige and the esteem which various strata acquire. This may be argued that rights and pre-requisite constitute institutionalized inequality.

- Social inequality is thus an unnecessarily evolved device by which societies ensure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons.

• Therefore, social inequality in terms of scarce and desired goods, power and

prestige, is inevitable and functional in any society.

13.4 TWO PROPOSITIONS OF DAVIS AND MOORE'S ANALYSIS

There are two underlying propositions of Davis and Moore's analysis. First, no society is classless or un-stratified due to universal functional necessity of differentiation and ranking. Second, the stratification systems all over the universe are variable in terms of their form depending upon the nature of their respective social structure. These two assumptions raise one significant question that why there is universal functional necessity for stratification in human society? To Davis and Moore, the functional necessity for stratification arises on account of two factors: (i) each society has a social structure and various positions in which the society needs to place some individuals; (ii) the task does to end simply with the placement of individuals in certain positions, but the society also requires some mechanism through which the individuals are continuously motivated' to occupy some positions in the society. The basic contention of the authors therefore is that in view of the existing functionally essential positions the society must somehow distribute its members in social positions and induce them to perform these duties.

By implications, one can also argue the functional necessity of a society make each society to prepare itself to deal with two very significant dimensions or problems by way' of developing a policy framework. First refers to distribution of positions in the society and development of distribution criteria. Second deals with the problem of induction of individual into certain positions to perform these duties. The inducement requires certain amount of training, skill formation and socialization with projected future rewards attached with the positions. Both the dimensions have one aspect in common, i.e. motivation to individuals at two levels: (i) to instill in proper individuals the desire to fill certain positions; (ii) after the fulfillment of these positions, to instill in them the desire to perform the duties attached with the positions.

With regard to motivation there are two questions or issues emerge: (i) why does a society require motivating the individuals at all at one point of time? (ii) Why should a society need continuous motivation of, individuals in spite of the fact that the filing up of the needed positions had already been accomplished? Davis and Moore discuss the questions of motivation of individuals- both at a given point of time and varying points of time. They argue that (i) each system may be static at one point of time but it is guided by a continuous process of metabolism i.e. individuals come in and go out of the system in a continuous manner, i.e. they are replaced. In order to keep up the continuous supply of the individuals to fill up positions it needs continuous motivation. It is irrespective of the type of system i.e. competitive or non-competitive. The difference may be of degree and not of kind; (ii) different positions differ in tends of their requirements. This implies that different talents and skills therefore require different levels of motivation. The different levels of motivation for different positions involve differential rewards i.e. more important the position, higher the reward. The distribution of rewards for different positions creates an order or structure of rewards along with which the individuals are ranked. The operation of such a system creates social stratification in the society.

A question arises here, what does a reward mean in the context of an occupation in a given society? The reward according to Davis and Moore means right perquisites attached with or built into the positions. Since the rewards at different and unequally distributed in the society the continuity of the process of distribution creates signification in the society. The second associated question with the regard is: what sort or rewards a society may have for distribution among its members. The rewards often consist of

two types of things: (i) things which are essential to sustain human and social life and offer comforts to the incumbent of certain position; (ii) things through which the human beings are able to derive gratifications in the form of social as well as psychological satisfaction and diversion from the routines of life. In other words, these may include extra satisfaction by fulfilling wants and desires of the incumbent of certain positions; (iii) things which help an individual in high social esteem, prestige and enhances his self-respect in relation to other in the society and also makes possible ego expansion (associated with self).

Following the above explanation, Davis and Moore hold that if the rights and perquisites attached with different positions in a society must be unequal then the society must be stratified. They therefore argue that social inequality is unconsciously evolved device by which societies make sure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons. The society must differentiate and have legitimized inequality.

Another question arises here, what are the factors that determine differential positional rank of individuals in the society? According to Davis and Moore, in general, one can refer to a position having high reward as occupying higher status. But the positional ranking is done otherwise on the basis of two additional factors. (a) Position having the greatest importance in the society. (b) Position that requires greatest training for special talents and skills. As far as the position's importance is concerned, it is seen in talents of its function i.e. to what extent a position is important in performing certain functions which cannot be otherwise fulfilled by persons not having the talents and skills. On the other hand, the second aspect concerns the means through which one can acquire a position. The means include the time spent or sacrificed, the money and resources for the acquisition of training and talents.

The most significant question here is that how do we determine the importance

of any position in tends of the functions performed by the incumbent of a particular position? This is a different question especially when we have to examine it at cross cultural level. The reason being that a position that is important in one society or culture may be less important in another. For example, relative importance of soldier in a peaceful country is low in comparison to the country

vulnerable to external aggressions and which has to in for fighting. However, two factors are very important in this context. First, the degree to which a position is functionally unique and no other position able to perform the function attached with a unique position. Second, the extent to which the other positions are dependent on the one in question. It is asserted that higher the dependency of other positions, greater is the importance of that position in the social context. Hence higher will be the position in the social structure.

It is further stated that there is differential scarcity of the personnel suitable for certain positions that are not easily attainable. Why does a society face the scarcity of certain positions? The reason cited for the scarcity is that each position (especially functionally important) requires some skill or capacity for performance i.e. an individual must have the requisite abilities to accomplish things. The requisite qualification come either through inherent intelligence as all cannot be inherently intelligent or acquire skills through scarcely available training, a functionally important capacity and resource. It implies that the availability of training is scarce as it requires resources that are not available with all the members of a society. Only few can afford to have the resources at their disposal due to the prevalent inequalities. While training is scarce the position in question must also be high. There is a definite correlation between the two. Since all cannot get into high and scarce positions due to their limited numbers the race for getting high positions become highly competitive. Therefore, the acquisition of high position depends upon the special skills and talents not possessed by others.

Following the above argument of differential scarcity of personnel and functional importance of various positions it is further maintained by these authors that in complex societies all major functions such as religious educational, political, economic etc. are performed by distinct structures which cannot be easily changeable. The distinctiveness of a structure is detrained on the basis of the dependence of others upon it. If it

creates determination and these different positions are organized around it then the key position within this structure will be highly valued and functionally very important than otherwise.

To examine the above proposition, it is important to take into account multiple functions of certain social organizations in a society. In the context of stratification, it imperative to

see what relationships between the certain important organization's functions and stratification have been purported by Davis and Moore. To begin with, religion which is a social fact as well as a major function of any given society? One of the major assumptions regarding the role of religion held by pioneer sociologists (e.g. Emile Durkheim) and cultural anthropologists (Rad Cliff Brown) is that the religious beliefs and rituals help in societal integration through exerting control over human behaviour and by bringing people together.

The integrating function has a very high value in the human society. In view of the purported role of religion those performing religious activities enjoy greater rewards, prestige and esteem in relation to those who do not have such a position. This is particularly the case of a theocratic society, governed by some divine law. The religious functionaries because of their position wield more power and enjoy a very high status.

There arises one important question, needing careful consideration: why do the religious functionaries not get complete control over the entire society? It is that the religious duties do not involve very high level of technical competence. Such a role is easily replaceable by anyone with little knowledge of religious beliefs and practices. The presence of priestly guild in a society can have higher status for functionaries and where these guilds are about to fall first the functionaries do not enjoy much prestige, Moreover, advancement in science and technology has lowered the status of priests.

The other powerful entity having important social functions is the government. It acts as agent of people, government officials command high respect because of the authority they have, enjoy monopoly and play very significant role in society: Organization of society in terms of law anal authority is the function of the government of clients towards the actual rather than unseen. Enforcement of norms, arbitration of clashing interests, planning and direction to society are some of the important functions that the government has to perform. But the society is also characterized by differences and inequality. There is

political inequality in terms of power and authority which also leads to inequality in other areas or cause differentiation in society.

Davis and Moore, however, argue that there are other factors which prevent political power becoming absolute power. The number of those having political power and control are few in comparison to the total population of the society. The rules framed and

implemented in the society are people oriented rather than self, therefore there also exist constraints on the exercise of power. The political power is dependent upon one's political office. Davis and Moore see that rulers have less power than the expected. The implication of such a system perhaps is that the government as an agency of social control also acts in certain manner that creates differentiation in the society. But differentiation remains and order for the governance of the society. Therefore, the important positions held by some people have greater power and prestige in comparison to those who are not having an access to power and privilege.

The other important functions of the society are related with wealth, property and Labour. All these cause inequalities in a society. It is understood that each position in a society is economically rewarded i.e. and in general the income becomes an index of status of human beings. However, a question also comes up: Can we say that income earned by an individual while being in a position gets power and prestige in a society? On this question, Davis and Moor argue that income is not the source of power and prestige. It is the possession of capital goods that leads to inequality in the society. The capital goods are not consumer goods. These are the assets the ownership which cause differential social standing. It also means ownership which causes differential social standing. It also means ownership of light over production goods and light over the labour of others. This kind of ownership has greater significance for stratification as it entails unequal relationship.

Therefore, the major argument in the context of wealth, property and labour made by Davis and Moore states, "Unequal control of goods and service must give unequal advantage to the parties to a contract".

Technical Knowledge also performs some important role in the society with special reference to its bearing on the social structure. With regard to technical knowledge there are two situations: (a) Very high rewards in a situation of scarcity;

(b) Less rewards in the situation of abundance. The systems of stratification have a wide range of positions of technically competent persons which are associated with degree of specialization. The latter is the function of division of labour. It is argued that division of labour creates many specialties and specialists, it brings in prominence, accentuates the position of true experts like scientists, engineers, administrations. Such persons with high position in the society

command high rewards. The differential reward systems also create differentiation in the society.

Davis and Moore also discuss the issue why an over the universe stratification system are variable? There are a large number of factors (internal as well as external) affecting the stratification systems. These include the degree of specialization. It affects the tininess and multiplicity of the gradations in power and prestige. Differential emphasis based on amount of specialization e.g. polar types: specialized and unspecialized result in differentiation and inequality. The nature of functional emphasis e.g. sacred vs. technical also creates variations. It is therefore mugged that the magnitude of individual differences (the degree of extent to which there exists the chance to excite values such egalitarian vs. in egalitarian, degree of opportunity mobiles vs. closed or immobile societies etc. are causes differences in a society. Furthermore, the degree of class solidarity, the promotion of class interest e.g. class organized and class unorganized, external conditions i.e. conditions outside the system i) stag of cultural development, ii) situation with respect to other societies, iii) size of the society, etc. are all have significant being on the system of stratification. In this way, Davis and Moore provided a functional theory of stratification based on the assumption that each important function of any organization has a definite being on the social structure of human society. These cause differentiation and stratification.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is the highlight of the theory of Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E Moore about the theory of stratification:

A. Equal value to all work

B. Valuing all works

C. Unequal value of different work

D. Valuing the work on the basis of nature

Answer: C

2. Which determines the importance of a job

A. The degree of training required for a job

B. The degree of skill required for a job

C. The education qualification necessary for a job

D. The degree of education qualification necessary for job

Answer: B

3. Which is the paper of Davis and Moore referring the functional perspective of stratification:

A. Principle of inequality

B. Principle of division

C. Principle of classification

D. Principle of Stratification

Answer: D

4. Which is the insistence of Davis and Moore about the arising of social stratification.

A. Social inequality

B. Social division

C. Similarity

D. classification

Answer: A

1.What is the main functional necessity of stratification.

2.Why do functionalist scholars consider stratification as necessary.

13.5 CRITICISM OF DAVIS AND MOORE'S THEORY OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

M.M. Tumin criticizes Davis & Moore's theory of social stratification on various counts: -

• Social stratification system functions to limit the possibility of discovery of the full range of talent available in any society. This results from the fact of unequal access to appropriate motivation, channels of recruitment and Centre's of training

• Social stratification functions to set limit upon the possibility of spending the productive resources of the society.

• Social stratification system functions to provide the elite with the political power necessary to procure acceptance and dominance of an ideology which rationalizes the status quo.

• Social stratification system functions to distribute favorable self-images unequally

throughout the population which is a necessary requirement for development of the creative and self-potential man. Thus, social stratification limits the development of this creative self-potential.

• Since inequalities in social rewards cannot be made fully acceptable to the less privileged in a society, thus social stratification system encourage hostilities, suspicion and distrust among various segments of society and thereby limiting social integration.

• Since the sense of significant membership depends upon the one's place on the prestige ladder of society, social stratification system functions to distribute unequally the sense of significant membership.

• Since loyalty to a society depends on a sense of significant membership in the society, social stratification system functions to distribute loyalty unequally in the population.

- Since participation depends upon the sense of significant membership in the society, social stratification system functions to distribute the motivation to participate unequally in the population.

In spite of these criticisms by M.M. Tumin, Davis & Moore's theory has stilt got enough to offer in the study of social stratification in any society. Thus, Davis and Moore's theory is still very useful in the study of social stratification.

13.6 LET US SUM UP

To sum up, the following constitute the central arguments of Davis and Moore's theory of stratification:

1. Certain positions in any society are functionally more important than others, and require special skills for their performance.
2. Only a limited number of individuals in any society have the talents which can be trained into the skills appropriate to these positions.
3. The conversion of talents into skills involves a training period during which

sacrifices of one kind or another are made by those undergoing the training.

4. In order to induce the talented persons to undergo these sacrifices and acquire the training their future positions must carry an inducement value in the form of differential i.e. privileged and high proportionate means to the scarce and desired rewards which the society has to offer.

5. These scarce and desired goods consist of the lights and perquisites attached to or built into the positions and can be classified into those things which contribute to: (a) substance of control, (b) humour and diversion (c) self-respect and ego expansion
6. The differential access to the basic rewards of the society has as a consequence the differentiation of the prestige and the esteem which various strata acquire. This may be argued that lights and perquisite constitute institutionalized inequality.
7. Therefore, social inequality among different strata exists in terms of the amounts of scarce goods and the amounts of prestige and esteem which they receive is both positively functional and inevitable in any society.

13.7 GLOSSARY

1. **Functional Prerequisites:** Those value that are necessary for promoting order and stability and thus necessary for the survival of that society.
2. **Function:** The part a component plays in the integration of a whole e.g. the part economy plays in integrating society.

13.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1. List down the functional prerequisites of Davis and Moore.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q.2. Explain the basic propositions of Davis and Moore.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q.3. The functionalists view society as an organizing with various parts. Comment on it.

_____

_____

_____

_____

13.9LESSON END EXERCISE

- **Tick the right answer:**

1.Kingsley Davis is a……...sociologist

A. Indian

B. American

C. Russian

D. British

Answer: B

2.Wilbert E Moore was a……sociologist

A. Hungarian

B. Italian

C. American

D. Indian

E. French

Answer: C

3. Where Kingsley Davis was born?

A. Trier

B. Erfurt

C. Tuxedo

D. Montpellier

Answer: C

4. When was Kingsley Davis born?

A. 1857

B. 1905

C. 1858

D. 1908

Answer: D

5. What is the basic idea behind the stratification theory of society put forwarded by Davis and Moore?

A. Functional necessity

B. Inequality

C. The degree of skill necessary for a position

D. Structural-functional necessity

Answer: A

13.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Ghurye, (1986), Caste and Race in Modern India, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.
2. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), Social Stratification, Oxford University Press, New Delhi. Haralambos, Michael (1989), Sociology, Themes and Perspectives, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
3. Horton, P. B. and Hunt, C., B. (1987), Sociology, McGraw-Hill, Singapore.

MARXIAN: THEORY OF STRATIFICATION

STRUCTURE

14.0 Learning Objectives

14.1 Introduction

14.2 Overview of Marxian theory of Social Stratification

14.3 Marx developed two class model of social stratification

14.4 Marx's views on social classes

14.5 Let Us Sum Up

14.6 Glossary

14.7 Self-Assessment Questions

14.8 Lesson End Exercise

14.9 Suggested Readings

14.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- **Marx's models of social stratifications**
- **Marx's views on social classes**
- **Transformation class in itself to class for itself.**

14.1 INTRODUCTION

To understand Marxist theory of social stratification it is important to view it in the overall perspective in which Marx analyzed the human society, particularly in his historical and dialectical materialistic conception of history and the, emergence

of social classes, Emergence of Marxism in the 19th century not only produced a distinct stream of thought on society, social relationships, various class and conceptual categories with distinct methodology i.e. dialectical materialism and historical materialistic analysis of history, but also led to the division of the total world into two camps or blocks - the socialist and capitalist. Marx's social thought and vision of society is called socialist social structure; it is based on the assumption that all the resources are socially owned. It emanated from Marx's quest for how to undo the suffering of the poor in a society - a society which is just not static but always in the process of evolution - which he explained in one of works - historical materialism.

It was the "idea of whole man" that made him to theorize a model of society based on distribution system, during his times, Marx saw that after the industrial revolution and the capitalist method of production at the turn of eighteenth century, the fragmentation of man through the process of division of labour, mechanization, exploitation and commerce had become the fundamental basis of social organization of European Society.

Developed by Karl Marx, this theory focuses on the relationship between economic structures and social inequality.

- Stratification arises from the ownership and control of the means of production (e.g., land, factories, capital).
- Central to the theory is the idea of class conflict between the bourgeoisie (owners) and the proletariat (workers).
- In the beginning there were no classes or stratification (Primitive communism)
- With time, production of surplus in agriculture/ private property came. It led to inequality and classes

14.2 OVERVIEW

Marxian Theory of Stratification

Marx's writings of the nineteenth century are perhaps the most influential for attempting to understand the origins and development of stratification in capitalist societies. According to Marx, the division between two classes—the dominant capitalist or bourgeoisie class and the subordinate working class or proletariat—would inevitably grow until a dynamic class struggle forced revolutionary societal change.

Marx's Conceptualization of Class

The concept of class has long been the focus of sociological debate and theory, and Marx's analysis of class is no exception. While there exists a lack of consensus on the core concepts of class analysis within the Marxist tradition, Marx's focus on class has sparked endless debate and research for its complex analysis of the origins and development of class structure.

Class, in its most general of definitions, refers to the grouping of individuals with similar incomes and occupations. Marx's conceptualization of class suggests a definition beyond that of relation to purely economic resources: it elaborates these relations with regard to the individual's relationship to the society's means of production. According to Marx, the means of production refers to the productive resources in society; in other words, things that are necessary to supply the society's economic needs, for example, the types of technology used to produce basic necessities within the economic system. An individual's relationship to the economic system depends on how he relates to the sources of power in that system. In feudal times, for example, the landlord had power over the society's productive resources and the peasants. In modern times power resides in the hands of capitalists who own the means of production. The worker, possessing no

capital, only labor power, must sell it to the owner of capital (Freedman, 2005). Thus, for Marx, those people who hold the same position with regard to the productive process share a class—owners and workers, haves and have-nots.

Essentially, then, societies are composed of two classes: the owners of the means of production and the workers. Indeed, within all societies, according to Marx, regardless of their different productive processes there exist these two opposing classes (e.g., masters and slaves in slave societies). In Marxian theory, these two classes in capitalist societies are the bourgeoisie or capitalist class, and the proletariat or working class.

The Bourgeoisie & the Proletariat

Bourgeoisie is a Marxian term that refers to the class of owners of the means of production who are the employers of the workers. The proletariat refers to the class of workers who do not own the means of production and are therefore forced to selling their labor in order to make a living. Inequality, then, arises out of this division of society into capitalists and proletariat, owners and workers. This is the essence of Marxian theory of stratification and inequality as presented in The Communist Manifesto. According to Marx's analysis of class, the specific roles that people play in the economic system are not of their free will, but are forced upon them by necessity. The unequal distribution of society's productive resources creates a system of stratification. Authors often use an analogy from the field of geology to illustrate the sociological meaning of stratification—that is, different layers of the earth's subsoil or strata have different properties. In sociology, of course, it is human groups that are arranged in different layers or vertical order. From a sociological perspective, people situated at these various rankings in the vertical order receive unequal shares of the society's wealth and possess differing degrees of power over others.

Marx views capitalism as a political tool for this ranking of human groups for the purpose of distributing wealth and power within the economic system rather than as a system for producing goods and services to fill human needs. It is the social institutions in societies such as the economy, government, and education that operate to assure the position of various human groups (Freedman, 2005). In Marxian theory, the capitalist class (the bourgeoisie) is able to maintain its power within the system of stratification because it possesses three key assets:

- The means of production,
- Control of the state, and
- Control of ideas and values

The proletariat or working class, without power and control over the means of production, are forced to sell their labor to the capitalists, and thus, must accept what the capitalists will pay in wages. According to Marx, workers are not paid the full value of their labor despite their role in producing wealth for the economic system; they get only what the capitalist is willing to pay and the surplus is taken by the capitalist for profit. It is unlikely then in these exploitative conditions that a worker will ever be able to save enough to ultimately possess their own productive property and become capitalists themselves. (Marger, 2008)

The proletariat, the modern working class, developed-a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market (Marx & Engels as cited in Shapiro, 2005, p. 40).

Capitalist Control of Government & Social Order

The capitalist class is also able to maintain its power within the system of stratification because it controls the state or government: "The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie". The class structure thus gives rise to a governmental institution that functions for the sole purpose of protecting the property and privileges of the capitalists.

Capitalists are further able to maintain their power within the system of stratification through possession of society's ideas and values which serve to assure workers' compliance with the social order of capitalist society. Marx stated in The Communist Manifesto that "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time the ruling intellectual force". Workers, lacking class consciousness or self-awareness of their own class interests hence regard the ideas and values of the dominant capitalist class as "natural" and comply.

Class Conflict and Societal Transformation

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," states Marx in the opening line of The Communist Manifesto. To Marx, inequality among classes is a result over the struggle for the control of society's productive resources (i.e., the means of production). One segment of the population owns these resources, while the other does not and can therefore offer only human labor in exchange for material needs. Marx argued that class conflict is inevitable in societies as long as one dominant class has control over the means of production, the state, and ideas and values. Marx considers class struggle as the major generator of transformation within societies. Indeed, Marx was optimistic about the potential end to inequality, as he viewed classes as forces that hold the

capacity for societal change.

Marx believed that any changes in a society's class structure could be realized only by a revolutionary movement that would strip capitalists of control of the means of production. To arrive at this position, the workers or proletariat class first must become aware of their common sociopolitical and economic interests and commit to a struggle with the capitalist class to protect and enhance their interests. Marx states, "the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more". Thus, Marx felt the workers' transformation into a political group would lead to a revolutionary confrontation with the bourgeoisie (Marger, 2008). In other words, the workers achieve class consciousness and possess a readiness to liberate themselves into "the class that holds the future in its hands." Eventually, according to Marx, class conflict gives rise to social transformation, resulting in a new type of production and thus, creating a new ruling class. This conflict leads to the proletarian movement characterized by the demise of capitalism and the emergence of socialism in which the workers control the means of production, and ultimately, a communist and classless society emerges.

Though it is largely speculative based on interpretations of Marx's writings, the nature of society following the revolutionary movement that Marx envisioned is characterized by a transitional period of socialism in which the workers control the means of production, resulting in a shift of power to a proletarian state. Only with the complete elimination of classes would communism emerge. With communism in place, there is then no need for the state because there are no class interests to protect (Marger, 2008). Therefore, it is the class conflict between capitalists and proletariat that provides the momentum toward the demise of capitalism and emergence of socialism, followed by communism. As Marger (2008) points out, however, Marx was uncertain about the nature of the

revolutionary struggle between the classes; though he did conceive that worker exploitation and rapid industrialization would eventually drive the revolutionary movement. In the end, "Marx devoted very little energy to elaborating a real theory of the destination itself".

Although the process of differentiation and social stratification is historical in nature but there are phases of differential degree of intensification of these processes," The process of social stratification certainly intensified with the advent of industrialization in Western Europe. What emerged a consequence were: (i) Division of Labour, specialization on parts and then fragmentation of man, as a specialist of part than the whole; (ii) Turned man into an appendage of machine in the process of automation and mechanization: (iii) The resultant exploitation deprived man from the fruit of his own labour: and, (iv) Commercialization made everything weighed in terms of value. In the process, even labour could not escape its brunt. These four points can be stated as the characteristic features of European society during the life of Karl Marx. What is important here is that due to capitalist method of production, the poor people having no control over forces of production, primarily 'infrastructure, confronted certain consequences. Friedrich Schiller writes: (i) Enjoyment was divorced from labour: (ii) the means from the end: and (iii) the effort from the reward. Besides the said, the man found himself everlastingly chained to a single little fragment of the man found himself everlastingly chained to a single little

fragment of the entire system of production. Though complete in himself but develops into a fragment within and: everlastingly the monotonous sound of the wheel that the man has been turning for producing goods has been affecting his ears. Due to which he never develops the harmony of his being. Instead of patting the stamp of humanity upon his own nature, they become nothing more than the imprint of his occupation of his specialized knowledge.

In this way, Marx found two developments taking place simultaneously. First, marginalization of man from his own self and second, fragmentation of society into distinct social formations based on the relations of production. In fact, it was in his very young age Marx saw man being reduced to nothingness i.e. an alienated being from his own self, from his relationships, even from the products he himself produced. This is what led Marx to think of a non-capitalist society-a society in which the vision of total man could be realized and man could be free from exploitation by other man.

What was exactly happening in the capitalist system of production and which is even true in the contemporary society is that: "Labour certainly produces marvels for the rich, but it produces Privation for the worker? It produces palaces, but hovels for the workers. It produces beauty but deformity for the worker. It replaces labor by machinery, but it casts some of the workers back into a barbarous kind of work and turns the others into machines. It produces intelligence, but also stupidity and eccentrism for the workers."

The exploitation of labour is not something peculiar to capitalism. Marx believed that the exploitation of working class whatever may have been the mode of production, has always been there. In his earlier writings - Paris Manuscripts, Marx outlined existence of two social classes, namely proletariat and bourgeoisies as principal classes in any historical society. It is argued that there always been two inevitable situations for human

beings essential from the point of view of the production of social life. First the relations of production are independent of man's will and indispensable for man's existence. Second, relations of production corresponding to definite stage of development of material forces of production.

Both the relation of production and forces of production during different periods of history of human society have been the source of social stratification. The forces of production or productive forces are very vital as on these forces rests the entire super-

structure law, politics, morals, religion, philosophy and even art. The relations of production or property relations, mainly concern with the form of ownership. It is argued that property relations are directly linked with mode of production. The latter gradually change come into conflict with the existing and more static relations. To reflect on the emergence of social formations during each phase of history, Marx examines four major phases of material history.

In the primitive communism i.e. the pre-historic society with no or least develop open material forces, communism was the mode of production and there were no classes. Since material resources i.e. the natural objects were gathered and hunted as common property there were no distinctions based on classes. Only elementary division between sexes existed in the society. In such a society, each member shared similar relations with the forces of production, every member was a producer and owner; all provided labour shared equally. Such relations could be possible because of the subsistence level of economy and little development of productive forces.

Marx argues that man bring the possessor of "projective consciousness and intelligence" in the process of his interaction with the natural world or the external world expanded his imagination and transformed his ideas into reality and advanced further from his mere subsistence living. While acting upon nature he altered the existing natural objects in accordance with his needs and thus makes additions to the formation of a new order with new forces of production i.e. enters into Asiatic mode and resort to settled agricultural production. To Marx, with the emergence of agriculture as the dominant mode of production classes appear on the scene. In such an organization of productive forces a smaller number of people can produce food for large numbers some people are freed from production process and they specialize in other tasks. In this way, from a mere subsistence level the society enters into a higher stage of development. It is argued that very act of

diversification in activities augments differentiation in the form of specialized tasks leading further to specialized division of labour. Agricultural development also leads to production of surplus health. The exchange of surplus goods also results in trading within as well as between communities. Ultimately the development of private property i.e. the land in the agricultural economy and the accumulation of surplus wealth is the real cause of the development of class society.

It was in this process of development of productive forces with diversification and increasing specialized division of labour that generated two opposite classes Serfs vs. Lords, legally bound with mutual obligations. In accordance with dialectical reasoning, a method used by Marx throughout his writings, feudal mode of production was negation of primitive communism. The process has been going on. In the modern capitalist mode of production, based on profit maximization and market-oriented production the relationship changed from mutual obligation to contract relationship, money wags etc. The two principal classes that emerged in this process were Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.

The presence of different classes has always based on two was relationship. First, there exists relationship of mutual dependence. This is what made Marx to argue that these are indispensable and independent of man's will. It implies that for bourgeoisie as well as proletariat entering into some sort of relations of production is essential - whether they will or not, their survival is based on these relations. Second, there always arises an antagonistic interest. The reason for the rise of conflicts is due to: (i) wage labour sells its labour for the purpose of survival and for survival it must sell to the capitalist who owns the means of production. The wage labour cannot do without it as it has to for its survival. Second, the capitalist who depends upon labour for production, has to employ labour.

The emergence of social stratification is a divisive rather than an integrative process. It basically implies division of society into different groups called social classes. A social class is not defined in terms of work functions, income or consumption patterns but by the relations its beats with the mode of production. He therefore argued that in all stratified societies there have always been two major groups. One owning the means of production and as a matter of their ownership control and rule the society. They are called "Haves", the other class that does not own the means of production but engages itself with the means of production owned by others for the fulfillment of its needs is called "Have Not's". It only owns labour power and sells it to the Haves.

14.3 MARX DEVELOPMENT TWO CLASS MODEL OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Marx theory is mentioned as two class theory. In all stratified societies there are two major social groups: a ruling class(bourgeoisie) and subject class (proletariat). The power of the ruling class derives from its ownership and control of the forces of production (forces of production: raw materials that are required to produce goods such as land, money, energy, labour etc.). The ruling class (bourgeoisie) exploits and oppresses the subject class (proletariat). As a result, there is basic conflict of interests between two classes. From a Marxian perspective, systems of stratification derive from the relationships of social groups to the forces of production.

According to Karl Marx in feudal system (agriculture system) there were two main classes distinguished by their relationship to land. The feudal nobility owns the land and the landless serfs who work in the land. Similarly, in the industrial society capitalist class (bourgeoisie) owns the forces of production (raw materials) and the proletariat (working class) only sell their physical labour in return for wages. According to Marx western society had developed through four main ages:

1. Primitive communism- Society was based on a socialist mode of production (equality). They communally owned everything men used to hunt and the women were gatherers of fruits and roots. Classes did not exist since all the members of the society shared the same relationship to the force of production. Every member was both producer and owner.

2. Ancient society: There were two classes master and slaves. In this society slaves produce for masters.

3. Feudal society: The society where agriculture became dominant mode of production. It

divided society into two class lords and serfs.

4. Capitalist society: there were two classes bourgeoisie and proletariat.

The improvement in agriculture results that only sections of society is needed to produce the food requirement of the whole society. Thus, many individuals are freed from food production and are able to specialize in other tasks. For example, full time producer of pottery, clothing's etc. As agriculture developed, surplus wealth was produced. This was accompanied by the development of a system of private property. In particular, they provide the conditions for the emergences of a class of producers and class of non-producers. This result into a class of non-producers (bourgeoise) which own the forces of production and class of producers which owns only its labour power.

According to Marx relations between these two classes is one of mutual dependence and conflicts. In capitalist society bourgeoisie and proletariats are dependent upon each other. The proletariats must sell his labour power in order to survive since he does not own the forces of production. The bourgeoisie are dependent on the labour power without it there will be no productions. Instead, it is a relationship of exploiter and exploited. According to the Marx bourgeoise invest his capital (money) in the production of goods. Capital is accumulated by selling those goods at a value greater than their cost of production. Which leads to production of "surplus value". The main producers of wealth are proletariat but they are getting less wage as what they have produced. According to Marx power of the bourgeoisie therefore originate from its ownership and control of the forces of production. Since the superstructure of society- the major institutions, values and beliefs systems- is seen to be largely shaped by economic infrastructure. According to Marx only when the forces of production are communally owned will class disappears, thereby bringing an end to the exploitation and oppression of some by others. The capitalist systems create tremendous inequality. the process of exploitations is such that the rich become richer and the poor becomes poorer. Marx named this process as "pauperization".

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1.What is meant by conflict in social stratification.

2.What is the Basic premise of Marxist Scholars for social stratification.

3.Is the stratification found in feudalist system:

A. Yes

B. No

Answer: A

4. Which are the predominant classes commonly found in feudalist economic system:

A. Capitalist & Workers

B. Lord & serf

C. King & People

D. Feudal Lord & King

Answer: B

5. Which are the strata predominantly found in capitalist society:

A. Bourgeoisie & Lumban Proletariats

B. Bourgeoisie& Proletariats

C. Workers & Masters

D. Capitalist & common

Answer: B

6 Karl Marx opined that…….is the byproduct of class inequality:

A. Classless society

B. Class struggle

C. Stratification

D. Class conflict

Answer: C

14.4 MARX'S VIEW OF SOCIAL CLASSES

Marx's view of social classes, as suggested by many was not monolithic but always involved dialectics. On ruling class, he wrote that a "ruling class is never a homogenous group but consists of contradictory elements, the representatives of heavy industry, light

industry, finance capital etc. This unity remains as long as their interests are held together. Similarly, our issue of class consciousness is vulnerable to causing splits between different groups. Certain workers groups may reflect ruling class ideas and thereby protect the interests of ruling class rather than that of the proletariat.

It is therefore suggested that the development of class consciousness is dialectical and contradictory in structure. Marx himself states that working class consciousness is not a given datum but is created in struggle, struggle can take many forms, from trade union and strike activity to direct political confrontation between the (a) Ruling, and (b) Oppressed Class.

There is ongoing struggle between these two classes that determines the relationship between men. Why does struggle arise? The struggle arises because (a) the ruling class not only controls the means of production but (b) also the moral and intellectual life of the people. The reason for such a control is that the super-structure i.e. law, government (politics), art, literature, science and philosophy: all serve more or less the interests of the ruling class.

On the initial stages the classes act in corporation with each other. However, with the beginning of struggle the process of unification of class begins which transform the character of the class. Subsequently there is emergence of two distinctive categories of classes: (i) Class is itself, (ii) Class for itself. What is meant by these two categories? A class in itself is one in which (a) various strata, although engaged in dissimilar work activities, (b) are united by their broad social and economic ties, (c) being united objectively form a class against capital, (d) but remains in non-conscious of the antagonistic relation with an oppressing class.

A class for itself means, a class in which the members have become (a) profoundly aware of their objective, conflictive connection with another class thus; (b) develop the appropriate consciousness and (c) action necessary to defend its interests (It may be noticed that it is not only proletariat but also bourgeoisie which becomes class for itself).

These two distinctive forms of classes arise in the process of continuous engagement of the collectivity in the given mode of production. To Marx, man's position in the production process provided the crucial life experience which eventually determines the beliefs and actions of the collectivity an aggregate (here means group). The experience is gained necessarily in the process of making living with special relation to economic conflict.

It is associated with changing material conditions of life. What facilitates transformation of class in itself to class for itself. According to Marx, there are a number of variables which facilitate the process in which class transforms from class in itself to class for itself. (i) Conflicts over the distribution of economic reward between the classes. (ii) Easy communication between the individuals in the same class position- helps in the dissemination of ideas and action programmes. (iii) Growth of class consciousness members of the class have sense of solidarity. Understanding of their historic role in the production of material constitutions of life. (iv) Dissatisfaction of the lower class over its mobility to control the economic structure- which itself builds but gets exploited and becomes a victim of that i.e. the growing miseries. (v) Organization of class into a political party because of economic structure, historical situation and maturation of class consciousness. In this context, Marx writes the Poverty of Philosophy that an oppressed class is vital condition for every society founded on the antagonism of classes.

The emancipation of oppressed implies creation of a new society. This can be possible through the destruction of the existing relations or production. Among all the productive installments, the most powerful is the revolutionary class itself. It is here that the boundaries between the classes become significantly obvious. Marx argues that it is only in such a situation that a class can only be identified both in terms of property ownership or non-ownership and thus the degree of control over, or subservience to, exploitation and the degree of personal freedom that the members of a class enjoy.

It emphasizes the economic relation between the mode of and relations of production, and the subjective awareness by the worker of his freedom his similarities with other workers and the authority and power of a dominant class. There is conjunction of two subjective ad objective conditions which create class consciousness. So far', especially in view of the assertions made by Marx in his earlier writings, we have been treating mode of production at a given point of time as a homogenous category or having homogenous structure. But in view of the logic of dialectics the development of mode of production is dialectical i.e. each society contains within in survival or previous mode of production, residues which strike at the heart of pure class model.

The two-class model advocated by Marx in his earlier writings should not be takes as find because Marx himself in his later more scientific and historical work repudiates this too simplistic class model. In the historical study "The eighteen the Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Marx makes distinctions between the numbers of groups. (i) financial bourgeoisie, (ii) industrial bourgeoisie, (iii) petit bourgeoisie, (iv) proletariat, (v) land- lords and (vi) free farmers. In other studies of France and Germany he notes classes like: (i) Bourgeoisie, (ii) petit bourgeoisie, (iii) farmers, (iv) peasants, (v) serfs (vi) agriculture workers, (vii) Lumpen proletariat, and (viii) feudal lords.

MARX CLASS STRUGGLE AND SOCIAL CHANGE:

According to Marx with revolution between bourgeoisie and proletariat which would transform the society and private property would be replaced by communally owned property. The communist society will replace the capitalist society. However, before the drawing of this utopia, certain changes must occur.

- Marx argues that a social group only fully become a class when it

becomes “class for itself”. Members must have class consciousness and class solidarity. Members of a class develop a common identity, recognize their shared interests and unite when members realize that only by collective action can they overthrow the ruling class.

- The polarization of the two classes. The competitive nature of capitalism only wealthy companies will survive and prosper. Competition will eradicate petty bourgeoisie; owners of small business, will sink into the proletariat. This will result in polarisation of the two major classes. Now the battle lines were clearly drawn, Marx hoped that the proletariats revolution would shortly lead to communist society of his dreams wold finally become a reality.

14.5 LET US SUM UP

For Marx, such inequality is not part of the human condition, but in a capitalist society it is a fundamental characteristic. All societies throughout human history ultimately divide into two conflicting classes: the dominant ruling class who own the means of society's productive resources and workers who do not. Workers have no choice but to work for the ruling class. Thus, inequality is a product of the ownership of the means of production. Marx's theoretical contribution to the understanding of the origins and development of social class and stratification is likely to have lasting significance. By placing social class as the key ingredient in the process of societal conflict and change, his ideas remain relevant to contemporary sociology. Marx's theory has been the focus of much theoretical analysis, and its endurance is a testament of its strength. Whether or not the upper or capitalist class in the United States is truly a ruling class continues to be a subject of lively debate.

14.6 GLOSSARY

1. **Conflict Approach:** The approved in which stratification is seen as a result of two opposing classes. The class which owns means of production exploits the working class.
2. **Capitalism:** The system in which there are owners of the means of Production and the workers. This leads to an exploitation of the latter by the former.
3. **Egalitarian:** The principle that each individual must have equal status and opportunity.
4. **Blue-Collar Workers:** Those who work in manual occupations.
5. **Bourgeoisie:** In Marxian theory, the owners of the means of production or capital in a capitalist society. Also referred to as the capitalist class.
6. **Capitalist Class:** The class holding the top position in the stratification system, whose members obtain most of their income from investments and assets. In Marxian theory, the class that owns society's means of production. Also referred to as the bourgeoisie.
7. **Class:** A grouping of individuals with similar positions and similar political and economic interests within the stratification system. In Marxian theory, it is a dimension of social stratification based upon property ownership or lack of ownership.
8. **Class Consciousness:** Awareness among members of a class of their common economic and political interests in relation to other classes. In Marxian theory, it includes a class's capacity to act in its own interests, and it is a necessary precursor to a successful revolution.
9. **Lower-Middle Class:** An occupationally diverse class composed of middle-managers, semiprofessionals, craftpersons, and some types of service workers.
10. **Lower Class:** Individuals and families with no property, who are often unemployed and have no authority, and as a result are poor.
11. **Means of Production:** In Marxian theory, productive resources; i.e., things that are

necessary to supply the society's economic needs such as the types of technology used to produce basic necessities and other valued goods.

12. **Middle Class:** Individuals and families with relatively little property but high-to-middle positions and authority in the class system. Further distinction is made with respect to upper-middle class (corporate managers, doctors, lawyers) and lower-middle class (salespeople, office workers).

13. **Proletariat:** In Marxian theory, the industrial working class; those who do not own the means of production.

14. **Ruling Class:** In Marxian theory, the class that controls the means of production, and as a result, the political system as well.

15. **Socialism:** A political theory or system in which a society's means of production is controlled by the people on the basis of equity rather than market principles. In Marxian theory, the stage emerging from capitalism that follows the proletarian movement as a society transition to communism.

16. **Social Stratification:** The ranking of persons and groups on the basis of various social, and sometimes physical, characteristics; the vertical dimension of social structure, implying inequality. The condition in which layered hierarchy and inequality has been hardened or institutionalized, and there is a system of social relationships that determines who gets what, and why.

17. **Socioeconomic Status (SES): A** combination of income and wealth, occupation, and education.

18. **Upper Class:** Established families with significant ownership of major corporations and therefore, extensive authority and economic power flowing from such ownership.

19. **Upper-Middle Class:** Individuals and families with above-average income and

who occupy managerial, professional, and technical positions.

20. **Working Class:** Individuals and families with little or no property, middle to low positions in occupation, and little or no authority.

14.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1 Write down Marx's ideas on the division of labour.

_____

_____

_____

Q.2. Describe what the meaning of class according to Marx.

_____

_____

_____

Q.3. Describe the concept of class consciousness.

_____

_____

_____

14.8 LESSON END EXERCISE

- **Tick the right answer:**

1.Karl Marx is a……...thinker
A. German
B. British
C. England
D. Russian

Answer: A

2. ……is the way a society is organized to produce goods and services
A. Forces of production
B. Production process
C. On the basis of machines

D. Modes of production
Answer: D

3. Which are the two elements constituting the modes of production:
A. Base structure & super structure
B. External structure & Internal structure
C. Class & Class conflict
D. Machines & Labour
Answer: A

4. How Karl Marx conceptualizes the stratification theory of society:
A. On the basis of economic system
B. On the basis of forces of production
C. On the basis of different modes of production
D. On the basis of economic organization
Answer: C

5.What are the different modes of production?
A. Ancient, Asiatic, Primitive & socialist
B. Primitive, Ancient, Feudal& Capitalist
C. Communal, Capitalist & socialist
D. Primitive, capitalist & Modern
Answer: B

6. Which is the stratification found in primitive communism
A. Two classes
B. Multi classes C. One class
D. Classless society
D. Master& Slave
Answer: D

14.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
2. Haralambos, Michael (1989), *Sociology*, Themes and Perspectives, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
3. Horton, P. B. and Hunt, C., B. (1987), *Sociology*, McGraw-Hill, Singapore.
4. Stem, Robert (1998), *Changing India*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi.

RALF DAHRENDORF'S THEORY OF STRATIFICATION

STRUCTURE

15.0 Learning Objectives

15.1 Introduction

15.2 Explanation

15.3 Concept of power

15.4 The difference between Marx's and Dahrendorf conception of capitalism

15.5 Let Us Sum Up

15.6 Glossary

15.7 Self-Assessment Questions

15.8 Suggested Readings

15.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- **The Functions of conflict**
- **Dahrendorf's theory of capitalism**
- **The difference between Marx's Conception of capitation and that of Dahrendorf**

15.1 INTRODUCTION

In the middle of twentieth century, as is always the case in the history of human society, a paradox emerged between the ongoing philosophical theorization of social

processes and social reality on the one hand and the increasing failure of the emerging theoretical paradigms to solve the problem of human society on the other. Marxism, a philosophy and a methodology emerged as an alternative doctrine that not only challenged the conservative and idealistic ideas but also offered a scheme through which the emerging contradictions of the human society could find a reprieve. The latter was to occur in the form of a revolution putting an end to exploitation of the working class by establishing a communist society. However, the growth of capitalism did not follow the process Marx viewed as essential and inevitable. The process of capitalist development with many of its innovative policies and programmes fragmented the working class and minimized the possibility of a revolution. The conflict between the classes remained put the nature of conflict changed considerably.

15.2 EXPLANATION

The Conflict theory, however, remained a general alternative analytical system to explain the structure of any society characterized by some form of stratification. The conflict theorists' conception of society is "an arena in which groups fight each other for power and in which the control of conflict means that one group is able temporarily to suppress its rivals." For example, the functionalists see law sanctions or normative order essential for social unity, integration whereas the conflict theorists tend to look at law, norms, sanctions as means which the ruling class and its functionaries evolve in order to suppress the non-ruling and powerless groups.

Within the conflict school, there had, in fact, been two major streams of sociological thinking. The one primarily developed as a critique of society: Among these the name of Marxism by Karl Marx and after him, Frankfurt School represented by Habermas etc. The other called Analytical School of thought that tended to see the possibility of development of positive or scientific sociology. The prominent among these were scholars like C. Weight Mills, Ralf Dahrendorf etc.

Both these schools differed from each other. The critical theorists looked at the social sciences as intrinsically forming the part of the political action and deny that fact and value can and should be separated. The analytical sociologists however, conceived such a separation as essential to the scientific analysis. 'The belief within both the schools therefore also raised the controversy regarding having a value free sociology. The area of differences,

also important from the point of view of stratification, refers to how a society is stratified, the critical school looked at society as divided on the basis of single dimension i.e. ruling group opposed to the non-ruling and vice-versa. The analytic school does see such a division but in fewer societies. This school believes that on the whole the societies are divided on the basis of various complex dimensions, the way power and status are distributed. The power is, to analytical conflict theorists, derived from various sources and not just from one particular set of institutions i.e. property.

To analytical conflict theorists, conflict is permanent and conflict of interests is inevitable in the society. Dahrendorf, a conflict theorist is concerned with two things in understanding of society and social classes. There are general principles of social explanation that he calls theories of society, in this context, Dahrendorf stresses the primacy of power and consequent inevitability of conflict in human society. His second concern, somewhat similar to Marxism, is that how active conflict is determined in a society. One can argue that Dahrendorf is basically concerned with how the social institutions generate social groups with conflicting interests and the conditions leading to the organization and activation of groups -in conflict situations or with conflict orientation towards each other.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Fill up the blanks:

1. Class is placed in the _____ structure.

2. Status group is placed in the _____ order.

3. Parties rest in the house of _____.

Answer:1. Authority 2. Social differentiation and social stratification

3.Imperatively Coordinated Associations (ICAs)

15.3 POWERS IS SIGNIFICANT IN CONFLICT / CONCEPT OF POWER

The underlying assumption of Dahrendorf's theory is that there is an "inherent tendency for conflict in society, for the groups with power will pursue their interests and those without power will pursue their own interests. Therefore, conflict is the great creative force of human history". Power is significant in conflict. This further implies that distribution of power in a society determines the type of social structure a society has and how the distribution of power creates stratification and inequality.

Dahrendorf's conception of power is similar to that of Weber. Therefore, power means "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests". Further, his essence of power is the "control over sanctions". He argues that with control over sanctions, the people in power are able to extract whatever they want from the powerless. The powerful is able to give orders and expect obedience from those ordered.

It is in such situations that emergence of conflict between the powerful and the powerless becomes immanent. The rational of expecting conflict is embodied in the

interests of the powerful and the powerless i.e. former is always in the defense of power and like to maintain the status quo and the latter in pursuit of power. Power is a lasting source of friction in the industrial society.

The power in Dahrendorf's scheme of analysis is essentially "coercive power". This implies that the use of power is carried out even with the use of force. In other words, when the power is used against the powerless the latter is compelled to - accept the command even against one's will. Such a view makes him different from functionalists' view who see possibility of equilibrium (e.g. Parsons) and power in terms of functional imperative to the attainment of societal goals. As far as Parsons was concerned, he described it as secondary and it was derived as an ability to acquire what one wants.

Unlike the functionalist thinkers, Dahrendorf asserts that power is necessary in the achievement of goals by the large organizations. He, therefore, argues "the powerful are not granted power by the community to carry out some common will, but they grasp and use that power for their own ends". Power includes actors within a set of social relationships. This is basically what Weber argues about power. This means a situation in which the actions and/or others also matter. But there are times when people are free to do whatever they like.

With regard to norms, Dahrendorf argues that norms do not come into being merely from social consensus (the value which is dominant aspect of functionalists, like Talcott Parsons). Norms, in fact, to conflict theorists "are established and maintained by 'power' and their substance may well be explained in terms of the interests of the 'powerful'. One of the hard facts of any society is that 'norms are backed by sanctions. The sanctions co-exit along with the expected standards of behaviour. But the question is who create sanctions? There is nothing the fact that, obviously, those who wish to maintain norms for the pursuance of their interests as create sanctions. In a way, sanctions backing norms involve control and use of

power, especially the power of law and punishment. The norms that are established in a society become the ruling nouns. The ruling norms definitely also imply existence of a ruling class that makes use of the established norms to further its interests.

Dahrendorf comes closer to Max Weber when reference is made to the role of

norms and their association with the process of differentiation and constructions of hierarchy. The capitalist society is seen as an extrapolation from economic to social relations. It implies an estimation of the consequences of capitalism. Marx's extrapolation of capitalism was development of conflicting relationships between the ruling and the ruled, bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the two classes that have always been in the human society. However, Dahrendorf argues that there are two basic facts, which are distinguishable from each other, characterize the industrial society. The positions and jobs are different therefore demand different skills and different jobs are treated superior and inferior to one another. These two facts indicate that in a society there is both differentiation of positions and hierarchy of positions expressed in a rank order of social status called social stratification. The latter is caused by norms. The application and operation these norms categorize certain things as desirable and others not desirable. Therefore, values are also embodied in the operation of norms in the society. In other words, the normative structure in the process of development also incorporates values. The behaviour patterns envisaged by norms entail discrimination against those who do not comply with the norms. The source of norm is power. It has already been stated earlier that norms are established and maintained through power or power upholds norms. It is in the process of power playing a regulatory role that the said power becomes the central basis of social stratification in a society. In totality, it is the trinity of norms, sanctions and power that give rise to inequalities (which one can see in the form of different positions ranked as superior and inferior).

He argues that social norms and sanctions are the basis not only of ephemeral individual ranking but also of lasting structure of social positions. Sanctions are the instruments of maintaining the norms, Norms and sanctions are sustained by authority structure. This authority structure is a usage or substitute for power. In view of the assertion that unequal positions are ranked in a social order as superior and inferior to one-another, what we can deduce is that Dahrendorf talks of existence of social

classes in a society which are maintained with the said three factors i.e. norms, sanction and power.

15.4 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MARX AND DAHRENDORF CONCEPTION OF CAPITALISM

One very crucial aspect of Dahrendorf's concept of class is that he being a conflict theorist he differs from Karl Marx. In fact, Dahrendorf's innovating of a separate concept is motivated by his systematic criticism of Marxist theory of capitalist

society. In fact, he sees that the predictions made by Marx have failed in the post-capitalist industrial society. He therefore defines class as a category for the analysis of conflict Oriented formations with systematic roots in the structure of society. On the contrary, Marx made beginning with social relations of production as the foundation of the classes. He also views classes as "aggregates of the incumbents of identical or similar positions within particular relations of authority which to him are relations of legitimate authority which are primary ill the determination class interests and class conflict within an industrial society. Unlike Marx who stated conflict between the two major social classes, Dahrendorf to the similar question and argues that social conflict takes place systematically among groups that differ in authority they enjoy over others. While defining authority, he follows Max Weber and says "by authority it means the sort of power that is attached to a social role or position i.e. legitimate in the sense of being defined and delimited by norms and backed by sanctions up to these limits". Authority in his theoretical schema operates in a dichotomous manner i.e. you have it or not your interests are formed accordingly.

Dahrendorf however affirms with Marx that conflicts involve only two sides and authority is the crucial divide. Another question that arises relates to in what way Dahrendorf view the mobilization of classes in a society in relation to the conflict or one can say what the mechanism of mobilization of classes for conflict is. According to him, mobilization of classes depends upon two types of requirements: (a) Structural (b) Psychological. The structural requirements on which formation of groups depends are: (a) technical, groups, requires a leader founder, charter of ideology, (b) political nature of state is of critical value. The more liberal state provides chances of action mobilization for active conflicts. The social component of structural mechanism includes three social factors: (i) Group formation. This depends upon the concentration of members. When the members are well concentrated the process of group formation is fast. (ii) The means of communication with for better information and linkages. (iii) When the members have similar relation to authority and

come from same type of families and educational organizations.

The psychological requirements include individual identification with the dominant interests associated with his position is important and real to them. In other words, development of social consciousness is essential for meeting the psychological needs of human individuals in a given situation.

The intensity of conflict that takes place in the society is not to the same scale as was envisaged by Marx. He visualized full-fledged war and consequently revolution in the human society. But to Dahrendorf, the intensity of class conflict is affected by a number of factors. These factors include the following situations:

(a) How far conflict is institutionalized?

(b) Degree to which people who are in position of subjugation in one association are in the same position in the other associations.

(c) Degree to which authority in an organization is held by people who are also on top in other respects in a society.

(d) The degree of mobility from the position of subjugation into dominating positions.

The chances of conflict are affected by the fact that the structure of classes becomes somewhat fluid with the change in the nature of the capital and the industrial production with the growth capitalism. He argued that changes in the industrial society have defused the hostility and obliterated the distinctions between classes. The emergence of joint stock companies decomposed the capital and resulted in heterogenisation and embourgeoisement of labour. The latter is also called decomposition of labour through which the labour is fragmented. The emergence of new middle class constituted an important dimension of the industrial society that basically affected the power of the capitalist. The control and management of revolutionary consciousness through trade unionism, increased rates of social mobility, extension of welfare services, universal adult franchise, growing affluence and diminishing differentiation of wealth have resulted .in the elimination of class struggle.

15.5 LET US SUM UP

To sum up, Dahrendorf's theory of stratification it may be argued that his theory provides a systematic critique of Karl Marx theory of stratification and class conflict. In his scheme, the social stratification is the function not only of the economic structure of the society but also involves the role of norms, sanctions and power. It is the power that becomes the real basis of stratification in the society.

15.6 GLOSSARY

1. **Capitalism:** The system in which there are owners of the means of production and the workers. This leads to an exploitation of the letter by the forms.
2. **Decomposition:** The breaking down of a class or group into smaller groups, e.g. that of Labour and capital-based groups.
3. **Function:** The part a compound plays in the integration of a whole e.g. the part economy plays in integrating society.

15.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1. In which way does Dahrendorf's theory differ from that of Marx.

_____

_____

_____

Q.2. Power is significant in conflict, discuss briefly.

_____

_____

_____

Q.3. Explain the two types of requirements which needs for mobilization of classes in a society.

_____

_____

_____

15.8 LESSON END EXERCISE

15.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Ghurye (1986), *Caste and Race in Modern India*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.
2. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
3. Haralambos, Michael (1989), *Sociology, Themes and Perspectives*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

SOCIAL MOBILITY – MEANING, NATURE AND TYPES

STRUCTURE

16.0 Learning Objectives

16.1 Introduction

16.2 Meaning of social mobility

16.3 Nature of Social Mobility

16.4 Types of Social Mobility

16.5 Factors affecting social mobility

16.6 Why social mobility matters

16.7 Let Us Sum Up

16.8 Glossary

16.9 Self-Assessment Questions

16.10 Lesson End Exercise

16.11 Suggested Readings

16.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- **Various types and forms of mobility.**

- **Nature of social mobility.**
- **Various factors that affect the social mobility.**

16.1 INTRODUCTION

Human society is characterized by social stratification that divides the entire society,

at first instance, into a macro hierarchical order and places all the individuals differently in the vertical order high and low, depending on their evaluation and ranking. The differently placed groups in an order of high and low represent social formation such as social classes, castes, estates, ethnic and racial groups. These are also called forms of social stratification. Although these social formations constitute historical entities with historicity but these are observable and found in operation in fluid form even in the contemporary human society. Within the macro hierarchical order encompassing the entire society there are numerous micro hierarchical orders with further divisions based on the relative position, socio-economic power and the authority commanded by the individuals within the order.

In the micro hierarchical order too, the placement of individuals is carried out on the basis of ranking and rating according to the social value scale. Any change in the value scale or any movement of individuals and groups affects changes in hierarchical order as well as in the social, status of individuals. Similarly, while ranking and rating individuals differently their occupational standing, income and other attributes such as social prestige, esteem within the society enjoyed by them at different points of times' is taken into consideration. Such changes are quite visible in the human society. The members of the priestly class under monarchy or during the feudal system enjoyed high prestige. They were rated higher than the members of other social class during those, times in Europe as well as in India. Their position however started declining after the transformation of the political system from monarchy to democracy.

In the contemporary times, in the changed political and economic system the priestly class does not enjoy the similar high status as it used to be in the past. A doctor or engineer enjoys greater prestige than a priest. Likewise, if a person becomes a minister from an ordinary shopkeeper, his status also goes up. On the other hand, if the minister loses his job and comes to his old shop, the status of minister enjoyed by him is lost. It may therefore be noted that people in society continue to move up

and down the status scale with the changing values scale of the society. This movement of people and the groups from low to high and high to low in a given social structure is called social mobility.

16.2 MEANING OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

The concept of social mobility not only indicative of the movement of people in the hierarchical order of the society but also suggests the level of unity and solidarity among

the people. In fact, it is believed to be an indicator of class formation as well as dissolution of the society. Social mobility is the movement of individuals, families, households or other categories of people within or between social strata in a society. It is a change in social status relative to one's current social location within a given society. This movement occurs between layers or tiers in an open system of social stratification. Open stratification systems are those in which at least some value is given to achieved status characteristics in a society. The movement can be in a downward or upward direction. Markers for social mobility such as education and class, are used to predict, discuss and learn more about an individual or a group's mobility in society.

Anthony Giddens argues that a society where social mobility is the minimum tends to have higher order of social solidarity. The concept is having varying connotations. It therefore also needs to be distinguished from other types of movements of people, especially movement from one place to another place i.e. migration which is a movement over a geographical space and also called spatial mobility. This movement can be from village to the town, from town to the city, from one region to another region and from one country to another country. Anthony Giddens refers to it as lateral mobility that is also geographical movement between neighborhoods, towns and regions. Since in such a movement change of geographic place, direction of change etc. is involved it is also called geometrical mobility.

Definitions

1. **Scott**: "Social mobility refers to "the movement of an individual or group from one social class or social stratum to another". ·

2. **Wallace and Wallace:** "Social mobility is the movement of a person or persons from one social status to another".

16.3 NATURE OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

One of the most fundamental questions to understand social mobility is its nature. This raises the issues whether social mobility is a self-caused phenomenon or conditioned by certain socio-cultural, economic and political factors or such forces embodied in the social system as well as structure of the society. In other words, another question related with the nature of social mobility is its causation. In order to understand the causation of social mobility one needs to carry out two-fold analysis. **First** refers to the theoretical framework that explains the process of change and the consequent transformation in the lives of people. **Second** deals with empirical analysis of social mobility and their underlying cases.

The sociological frameworks dealing with social change resulting in social mobility are divided into two. The first includes those theories describing change as a natural phenomenon and such a change further cause's change in the overall structure of the society i.e. patterns social relationships at different points of time. The social relationships are affected due to the change that occurs in the social order, level of material development and social sentiments. It is believed that human society is characterized by social evolution. There are certain natural forces and principles that constitute the part of social evolution. It is argued that human organism constitutes the most agile being that has tremendous adoptive and adaptive abilities in relation to the environment in which he is placed. It is due to this natural ability that man has been able to live through thousands of years

adopting and adapting to the continuous changing conditions. August Comte, a French sociologist, argues that there are certain natural principles or laws operating in the universe and brings about change in the society. The development of human knowledge and mind, the emergence of corresponding material phase, social order, and formation of basic social unit, sentiments and concerns proved progressive in nature and placed man in a higher pedestal in comparison to his previous conditions of existence. This is a kind of mobility that takes place during the life span of generations of human beings, sometimes noticed and sometimes un-noticed.

The other natural factor that has had bearing on the human living is the population. Emile Durkheim, a pioneer sociologist, refers to the relationship between the increase in the population and the quantification of needs in the society. The population increase is a natural factor but the process of satisfaction of increasing needs leads to division of labour in the society causing" differentiation at first instance and then leading to division of society into hierarchically arranged order. An examination of the process suggests that the ability that occurs in this process is both upward and downward. In other words, the change from the horizontal to vertical divisions transforms the society from a more or less system of equality to a system of inequality.

The evolutionary thought became a popular system of understanding changes within the society, particularly after Darwin. It was argued that there is a process of natural selection in which the fittest survives and the weak is eliminated. This idea has been widely used by the evolutionist theorists like Herbert Spencer to Talcott Parsons. The basic argument in the context of social mobility that emerges is that the biological levels create two distinct social formations in the society. One group of those who can survive healthy with greater adaptation to their environment and the other which is either eliminated due to lack of adaptability or if not eliminated survives and perpetuate malnutrition, disease, poverty etc. In the valuation scale of the society, they occupy higher and lower positions respectively. When the movement takes place between the two due to the changes in the levels of biological fitness it results in the upward or the downward mobility.

Among the evolution theorists there have been some whose analysis indicate mobility of the society as whole in a cyclic manner. Spengler, the man who coined this theory,

argued by that human society passes through certain cycles of its birth, growth, maturity and decay. Each stage in the cycle is indicative of a social order and the composition of social order. Although Spengler does not say anything regarding social mobility as such, yet two implications of the argument are obvious. First, the changes occurring within the cycle i.e. from birth to growth, there must follow some changes in the social order as the society and its various functions and aspects expand. Second, the expansion must also induce changes in the social segments. It is difficult to say what kind of mobility might have been under such a system of change but one can certainly suggest that during the phase of growth, a progressive phase the society must have witnessed upward mobility. In the stage of maturity, the social formations must have stabilized and started downward trend during the decay period. Since according to the cyclic theory history repeats itself, the process of change not only in the society but also in the states of the human beings continues to experience upward and downward mobility.

The second includes set of theoretical positions indicating that the change is caused by socio-economic and political processes in the society that ultimately affect changes in the position of the individuals and the groups in the society.' In this context, one can refer to changes that come about in the structure, of society caused by the human action that boosts vertical movement among the social formations. The change in the nature of capitalism from industrial to post-industrial society created classes within the classes and some of the classes earlier occupying low social position in the hierarchy by virtue of the divisions earned higher social status.

There is also change of the structure of the society which completely transforms the system. The Marx's thesis of proletariat over throwing bourgeoisie in fact refers to change of the structure which ultimately replaces the existing social order. In the process, social classes earlier devoid of power and privileges gain heights and upward mobility. In this process the downward mobility of certain groups cannot be ruled out, especially when they lose their power and privileges.

16.4 TYPES OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

The above view point suggests that social mobility and its nature do not only constitute the movement of individuals and the groups in the social scale or hierarchy but it is also connected with power and privileges. The entire issue in fact involves the social

structure and the social system of the society which also get affected due to various changes occurring in the society. From the above description one can also draw an inference that social mobility is not of one type but also has multiple dimensions. This is visible from its various types discussed below.

Mobility has been classified as under:

1. **Absolute mobility:** Absolute mobility is social mobility that is quantifiable in absolute terms for an entire group of people. For instance, if a certain agrarian society undergoes rapid industrialization, leading to more free time for education for all its citizens, this sort of economic development renders the entire society socially mobile in a way it wasn't before in an absolute sense.

2. **Relative mobility**: Relative social mobility is any type of social mobility that depends on various other factors, from the opportunities and hard work of a specific individual to the varying degrees of economic growth experienced in a specific labor market to income inequality in a society as a whole. None of these factors guarantee social mobility upward or downward in an absolute sense.

3. **Intragenerational Social Mobility**

Intragenerational mobility refers to changes in a person's social position or economic status during their own lifetime. It's about how individuals move up or down the social ladder within their generation, rather than comparing their status to their parents or grandparents.
It focuses on the changes an individual experiences within their own lifespan. It can be upward (e.g., promotion to a higher-paying job), downward (e.g., losing a job and taking a lower-paying one), or horizontal (changing jobs within the same social class). A person starting as a clerk and becoming a CEO, or someone initially working in a low-paying job who later becomes a successful entrepreneur.

4. Intergenerational Social Mobility

Intergenerational mobility refers to the extent to which an individual's socioeconomic status differs from that of their parents. It essentially measures how much a child's success is independent of their parent's success. This can be examined through various measures, including education, income, and occupation, and is often used to assess social and economic opportunity within a society. Intergenerational mobility examines the change in social position across generations within a family. It is divided in two parts i.e. **Vertical:** Movement up or down the social hierarchy compared to one's parents (e.g., a child earning more than their parents). **Horizontal Mobility:** Moving to a different position within the same social class. **Examples**: A child becoming a doctor after their parents were farmers. A child earning significantly less than their parents due to economic hardship.

5. Horizontal Social Mobility

Horizontal Social Mobility occurs when a person's employment changes, but their general social position stays unaffected. For instance, if a general doctor transitions from treating patients to teaching at a medical school, their employment has changed, but their reputation and social position are likely to stay the same. In simple words, horizontal mobility is defined as a shift in religious, geographical, economic, etc.

6. Vertical Social Mobility

Vertical Social Mobility is related to a change in an individual's vocational, governmental, or religious class that results in a shift in their cultural position. An individual progresses from one social class to the next. Vertical mobility can occur in either upward or lowering directions. Ascending comprises an individual migrating from a lower status to a higher one or forming a comparable group with higher societal standing rather than coexisting

with its present group. The reduction in the level of mobility happens; for example, a businessman suffers losses and is compelled to declare themselves bankrupt, which results in a relocation to a lower social stratum.

This type of mobility involves movement up or down the social hierarchy. This can be further divided into:

- **Upward Mobility:** This refers to moving to a higher social class or position. For example, a person from a working-class background becoming a successful entrepreneur and achieving a higher social status.
- **Downward Mobility:** This refers to moving to a lower social class or position. For example, a wealthy individual losing their fortune and becoming impoverished.

7. Downward Social Mobility

When a person travels from a higher to a lower position in society, it is referred to as downward mobility. It can happen when someone is found doing something wrong that could lead to losing their present job. Downward mobility may be exceedingly unpleasant for people whose social position is worsening. They may struggle to adjust to the new situation since it is not similar to the quality of living they are familiar with. Downward mobility demonstrates how much people value equal chances and stability.

8. Upward Social Mobility

Upward Social Mobility occurs when a person advances from a lower social position. People in higher positions within the same society or group might also be included. However, while upward mobility is seen positively, it can come at a cost to individuals. When a person advances in their career, they frequently must leave behind the comforts of home, such as family and locations. They may be required to modify their thoughts and

conduct. As a result of their upward mobility, an individual needs to adjust to a new environment and adopt new habits in the growing society.

9. **Structural Mobility:** This type of mobility is caused by changes in the overall structure of society, such as industrialization or economic growth, which create new opportunities for social mobility. It is sometimes called forced mobility, means movement in and out of occupational categories. Sometimes the change in the occupational structure itself results in the change in the number of individuals in those occupational categories. Such changes also come out of the change in the process of production, change of technology that makes obsolete the existing skills of the working class and replaces them, etc. Such changes also occur due to the change in the demographic structure or the demographic behavior of certain professional classes producing a smaller number of children.

10. Circular Mobility: The circular mobility on the contrary refers to that mobility which becomes possible due to the opening up of the opportunity structure and creation of new employment avenues which were not earlier open to the people. This type of social mobility is caused by the change in the nature of the political system and expansion of the civil liberties that enable the erstwhile disabled people to take up new positions. For instance, the Civil War in the USA ended discrimination against blacks and opened new opportunities for them. Similarly, with the implementation of affirmative policy (Reservation Policy) for the members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes their segregation has been ended and they have been enabled to take up higher social and economic positions with power and privileges. In other words, any policy framework or any action that makes possible for the people to move into jobs from which they or their ancestors were barred is called circular mobility.

11. Exchange Mobility: This type of mobility involves individuals changing social positions without changing the overall social structure.

12. Sponsored mobility: This type of mobility refers to upward status sniffs which occur due to the decision of the 'sponsor' or members of the elite group into which the individual in invited to join.

13. Contest Mobility: It refers to mobility which occurs through open competition. Social Mobility of any of the above-mentioned types is inevitable. Although an absolute class or caste system is impossibility, yet there are both limiting as well as liberating factors. Social change is both a natural and social phenomenon. The moment there is a change caused by natural or the social forces there is also bound to be some social mobility. Probably no society absolutely forbids social mobility and no society is immobile. If, for example, we wished to have each caste occupying the same status generation after generation a uniform rate of population replacement would have been a necessity in every caste. There is no such factor which can ensure homogenous.

democratic behavior. It is by the law of nature that some castes expand in population while others contract. For those that expand, some new occupations must be found while for those who contract replacements from other castes must be had. Thus, differences in population, increase or decrease of various castes make social immobility impossible.

Likewise geographical adaptations require social adaptations. There is a constant change in the physical setting of a society. As population grows, forests are depleted and fields eroded to provide more housing accommodation. New calamities and diseases appear. New economic and political developments take place. Naturally the social system must adjust itself to the changing physical conditions and such adjustment inevitably entails a certain amount of social mobility.

Further, every society allows some scope for personal ambition. Had it not been so, there would have been no progress. In every system there are different awards for different achievements and man makes an effort for that kind of achievement that is most rewarded. The belief that individuals can get ahead legitimately by their own efforts is a basis for social progress. The social scale is related to and based on a scale of values. Any group that improves its: standards, will also improve its social status. And inevitably some groups will strive to improve themselves. Thus, the very system of different values for different characteristics itself induces people to move up the scale of social status.

Henry M. Johnson lists down the following important conditions that make the social immobility impossible in a given society. The first pre-condition is the value scale of the society on which social prestige depends. When in any system certain qualities of achievements are socially valued the people tend to strive for them. There is nothing in the nature or there is no constant tendency for intelligence and other kinds of native capacity to be confined to upper classes. Historically, there are numerous instances of

people from the low socio-economic background rising to the highest position in society. Since no system of production or technology is constant and undergo change at varying rates of speed the changes are always occulting in the demand for different kinds of skill. Due to the changing demographic behavior of the upper classes the prevalent birth rate of each class never exactly fills all the positions in the class.

This is interesting to note that despite the increasing inequalities that hinder equality of opportunity in a society, a great deal of mobility continues, to occur in every society.

This tendency in the society and the people to experience social mobility makes sociologists study it to ascertain data and information about the relative "openness" of asocial structure. As Anthony Giddens observed the greater the amount of social mobility, the more open the class structure, particularly in the industrial society. Since the industrial societies are economically more progressive, as the case has been with the developed societies of the world, it is the most important factor in determining the rate of mobility in any country. There is a relationship between economic progress and industrialization and the latter is associated with a higher rate of mobility. Osowski argues that even a socialist system needs economic development more than a capitalist one. Therefore, one of the immediate aims of the leaders of the socialist states was to reach the level of more advanced capitalist countries in the context of industrialization, urbanization, development of communications, and spread of mass education. All such initiatives not only implied but also ensured social mobility in socialist countries as well as elsewhere.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is an example of upward social mobility?

A) A factory worker becoming a business executive

B) A person switching from one clerical job to another

C) A teacher moving to a managerial position

D) Both A and C

Answer: D) Both A and C

2. Which factor has the most significant impact on social mobility?

A) Family background

B) Personal ambition

C) Geographic location

D) Political affiliations

Answer: A) Family background

3. Social mobility is higher in:

A) Societies with rigid class structures

B) Societies with strong educational institutions and equal opportunities

C) Feudal societies

D) Societies with minimal economic development

Answer: B) Societies with strong educational institutions and equal opportunities

4. Downward social mobility occurs when:

A) A person loses their job and social status declines

B) A family improves their financial condition

C) A person moves from one job to another at the same level

D) A country experiences economic growth

Answer: A) A person loses their job and social status declines

5. Social mobility in modern societies is influenced primarily by:

A) Birth status

B) Education and skills

C) Religious beliefs

D) Political allegiance

Answer: B) Education and skills

6. A person moving from a working-class job to a managerial position is an example of:

A) Horizontal mobility

B) Upward vertical mobility

C) Downward mobility

D) Structural mobility

Answer: B) Upward vertical mobility

7. Define social mobility.

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8.What is a difference between intergenerational mobility and intragenerational mobility.

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16.5 FACTORS AFFECTING SOCIAL MOBILITY

a) **Economic Prosperity:** There are three main groups; in the society known as poor, middle and rich. There are various differences in their standard of living, Rich people are respected very much in the society due to their riches. Therefore, every individual in the society is trying his best to earn money and to improve upon his position so as to enter into the category of rich people.

b) **Structure of Society:** Social structure of society influences the social mobility. The societies of the world can be divided into two groups closed societies and open societies. Closed societies are caste ridden (as in India) and the status of a person is determined by his being born in a particular caste. Therefore, in such a society chances of mobility are very less because such society remains within the bonds of caste and heredity. For example, A person born in a family of Brahmins, may be poor of bad character, will enjoy the status of Brahmin due to his birth; in a Brahmin family. But in an open society equality of opportunities are provided which encourage more social mobility due to the capabilities and educational achievement of the individuals.

c) **Level of Aspiration and Achievement:** Social mobility is directly proportional to the aspirations of the people. If, the people are more aspirants, we will find more social mobility in that society.

d) **Demographic Structure:** Social mobility is closely related with diffusion of population. Its size and density. Birth rate and migration of village folks towards towns and cities are closely connected to social mobility.

e) **Education:** Social mobility is promoted through development. Propagation and spread of education. The people who receive more and more education achieve higher and higher social status.

f) **Occupational Prestige:** All the occupations in the society do not get the same respect. Some professions carry higher prestige in comparison to other professions. For example. I.A.S. officers and Doctors are considered to be better than the Engineers, Lawyers and Teachers. Administration In democratic society greater opportunities are provided for social mobility in comparison with other types of administrative societies, Democratic administration promotes social mobility to be great extent.

g) **Legal and Political Factors:** Many of the legal and political restrictions have been removed after independence. Untouchability has become a sin. Everyone has seen provided political equality and equality of educational opportunities etc. Any member of the society can visit temples/gurudwaras etc. By these changes in the legal and political restrictions, mobility takes place from the lower group to the higher group.

h) **Intelligence Factor:** In the modern industrialized society. The inherited positions have become less and less because the person occupying the hair cannot always give the same chair to his son or daughter. Thus, there are changes in the social positions held from one generation to another generation and thus making the people mobile.

i) **Education and Social Mobility:** Education is a very potent means of encouraging social mobility the Indian society. It has multidirectional influence in promoting social mobility. Education plays such an important role in following ways.

1. Education is the need of every person because on it depends proper development of man. It is education that reveals the latent qualities and potentiates of man and enables him to understand self and the environment surrounding him.

2. Education sharpens the intellect, widens the vision, helps in the wholesome and balanced development of man and above all it leads to social, economic and political development of a nation.

3. Both the streams of education i.e. formal and non-formal play a great role in bringing about social mobility.

4. Formal education is directly and causally related to social mobility. This relationship is generally understood to be one in which formal education itself is a cause or one of the causes of vertical social mobility.

5. Education is directly related to occupational mobility and the subsequent improvement in economic status and on the other hand, kit forms and element of social change. Persons with higher education and better employment are respected more in the society.

6. It is a purpose of education to develop within the individual such motivation as will make him to work hard for the improvement of his social position.

7. Higher education helps in gaining higher income and, thus, education is an important means for upward social mobility.

8. A change in occupation is considered to be the best single indicator of social mobility. The reason for it is that occupational status is closely correlated with educational status. Income style of life and the other determinants of class status.

9. Education helps students belonging to lower strata of the society to go up in the social scale and attar in a high social position in the society.

10. Education helps in preparing one-self-employment, which is an important aspect of social uplift meant.

11. The popularity of education among women has considerably altered the social status of women. It has helped in raising their social position, status and achievement of high social prestige; which indicates upward social mobility of the women.

Medium of instruction in educational system can play a great role in bringing about mobility among the people of the society. One of the effects of adopting a regional language as a medium of instruction in schools and colleges is that it hinders spatial mobility of students and teachers which is related to both horizontal and vertical social mobility. The teachers belonging to the lower case, by joining this noble profession of teaching. Help in upward social mobility. Teachers engaged in research work innovations and imparting higher education help; in breaking the barriers of caste and are respected by the student's community for their help, guidance and scholarly taste and talent and promote intergenerational social mobility. Education is a means to achieve

higher social status and position in society. Hence, all students try to obtain more and more education to gain higher and higher social status without education. Achievement of higher status or social, mobility is not possible.

16.6 WHY SOCIAL MOBILITY MATTERS

Currently, your parents' occupational class affects where you are likely to end up. A man with a higher professional family background has 20 times better odds than a man with a routine working class background of ending up with a higher professional job (e.g. doctor) than a routine working class job (e.g. bricklayer).

We believe that where you start in life may help to shape your opportunities, but should not determine where you end up. Instead, your own potential, individual choices and merit determine your outcomes. Your background, such as the place you grew up in or your family circumstances, should not limit your options or future.

It's not true that social mobility is getting worse on all counts. In reality, the picture is complex. Occupational mobility has been fairly stable for decades, while on other aspects there is less consensus.

Nonetheless, there are pockets of real concern. Even if social mobility is not deteriorating, it can still be much harder for some compared to others.

Our work aims to ensure that the circumstances of your birth do not determine your outcomes in life.

16.7 LET US SUM UP

In view of the above discussed nature, type and measurement of social mobility briefly it

may be concluded that social mobility, an upward or downward movement in the hierarchical order of the society is significantly associated with social, economic, political dimensions of the individuals and the groups. It is manifested in many ways and under varying types depending upon the nature of socio-economic and political system of the society. It may also be stated that although the measurement of social mobility is possible but nowhere in the world the rate of social mobility is uniform. It differs from

country to country and within countries from class to class. Even in the industrialized counties it is not uniform. Its other correlates are division of labour and sex. Both result in differential rates of social mobility.

16.8 GLOSSARY

1.Contest Mobility: Refers to mobility which occurs through open competition.

2. Horizontal Mobility: Refers to shifts in position in a society which does not involve movement between starts.

3.Intergenerational Mobility: This is mobility when someone moving up or down, the social ladder within their lifetime.

4. Intergenerational Mobility: Refers to mobility within the time span of two or more generations.

5. Sponsored mobility: This type of mobility refers to upward status sniffs which occur due to the decision of the 'sponsor' or members of the elite group into which the individual in invited to join.

16.9 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1. Distinguish between intergenerational and intergenerational mobility.

Q.2. Write a note on ‘upward’ and ‘downward’ mobility.

Q.3. Discuss briefly the concept of social mobility.

16.10LESSON END EXERCISE

1. What is social mobility?

A) The ability to change one’s physical location

B) The movement of individuals or groups within a social hierarchy

C) The expansion of economic opportunities

D) The study of human behavior

Answer: B) The movement of individuals or groups within a social hierarchy

2. Which type of social mobility occurs when a person moves from one job to another within the same social class?

A) Horizontal mobility

B) Vertical mobility

C) Intergenerational mobility

D) Structural mobility

Answer: A) Horizontal mobility

3.Intergenerational mobility refers to:

A) Changes in social status within a person's lifetime

B) Mobility that occurs between different generations of a family

C) Changes in social class due to government policies

D) Migration from rural to urban areas

Answer: B) Mobility that occurs between different generations of a family

16.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Ghurye (1986), *Caste and Race in Modern India*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.
2. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi. Haralambos, Michael (1989), *Sociology, Themes and Perspectives*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

MEASUREMENT OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

STRUCTURE

17.0 Learning Objectives

17.1 Introduction

17.2 Measurement: Meaning

17.3 Qualitative and Quantitative Measurement or Assessment of Social Mobility

17.4 Different types of Mobility Measurement

17.5 Let Us Sum Up

17.6 Glossary

17.7 Self-Assessment Questions

17.8 Lesson End Exercise

17.9 Suggested Readings

17.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- **Meaning of measurement of social mobility.**
- **Qualitative and quantitative measurement or assessment of social mobility.**
- **Different types of social mobility measurements.**

17.1 INTRODUCTION

Studies on social mobility since the classical study of Social Mobility in Great Britain by David Glass (1954) have brought out to the fore many methodological and conceptual issues that are of immense value to the studies on social mobility, both cross cultural as well as within the same culture across generations. This Unit broadly touches upon the types of measurement, the methodological and conceptual problems in social mobility studies. It also attempts to point out the limitations of measurement, especially in the Indian context. It is important to understand that social mobility studies play an important role in assessing whether improvements in educational and occupational opportunities have their impact on improving the status of individuals or groups at the bottom of the stratification or hierarchy. It is also essential to analyze data across generations vertically and also within the same generation horizontally in order to assess whether the opportunity structures and educational opportunities offered to different sections of people, within and across regions and nation states. It is generally expected that a growing and developing economy offers its citizens scope to improve their status and close the gaps of inequalities across social spectrum. Thus, measurement of social mobility, both educational and occupational mobility, offers a good analysis of economic and social changes across socio-economic realm.

17.2 MEASUREMENT: MEANING

Measurement, wherever possible, offers clear indication of the trends and direction of the movement of things, be they any aspect that we wish to analyze more objectively. Social mobility studies have an important role to play in studying change taking place over generations in educational and occupational profiles of individuals. This is important for understanding as to how far a society is fluid and offers individuals opportunities to improve their chances of social mobility. Further, it also entails a comparison of different

societies across societies and nations. This gives us an opportunity to plan opportunity structures for the people across social spectrum.

17.3 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE MEASUREMENT OR ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

Social mobility can be measured quantitatively as well as assessed qualitatively. While quantitative measurements can provide the trends and direction of social mobility, qualitative assessment can provide the insights of the processes that hinder or promote social mobility. As mentioned earlier, it can also indicate the nature of either rigidity or fluidity of the given social structure and the tenacity of the prevailing social inequalities. The studies made by social anthropologists or sociologists in India are largely qualitative in nature. These studies have given rise to many concepts about the process of social mobility in the Indian society, in the past as well as in the present. They have also brought out the role of hierarchy and inequality structures in restricting or inhibiting social mobility of some groups. This has enabled the planners and policy makers to devise ways and means to undertake corrective measures through different plans and programmes. These studies are of different nature as compared to the quantitative studies made elsewhere. The reason why it is difficult to apply quantitative measurement of social mobility in the Indian context is because of the complex nature of its social structure. One need to factor caste (its hierarchical nature), class, religion and ethnicity while designing the instruments of measurement. Otherwise, it will lead to spurious results.

Coxon and Jones observed that social mobility studies by sociologists usually attempted to understand individual intergenerational, vertical male occupational mobility in industrial societies. Besides intergenerational mobility, there are other measurements to check how far the individual mobility is independent of a parental status. Thus, ‘perfect mobility’ measures the influence or lack of it on the individuals. This is to check whether the efforts of government

have any bearing on individual attainments. Similarly, Sibling Correlation (SC) is another conceptual framework to 'measuring the importance of common family and community effects which includes anything and everything shared by the siblings. Emran and Shilpi argue that it is important to look at the difference between sibling correlation and Intergenerational Correlation as indicative of measures of intergenerational persistence in economic outcomes. They point out that, 'We compare the estimated sibling correlations with the estimates of intergenerational correlations and neighborhood effects. This allows us to deduce the extent of sibling correlations that can be accounted for by the parent-child link and the neighborhood effect. The part of sibling correlations that remains unaccounted for by these two factors is mainly due to common family environment such as family structure (e.g. divorced/ separated parents) and parental skills and patience in child rearing etc. Note that if the strong sibling correlation observed in the data is due mainly to intergenerational correlations in education and common neighborhood effects, then it indicates higher inequality in opportunities than if it were due to parent's child rearing skills. In a way, such measurements will enable us to understand the ground reality so that corrective measures can be taken up right earnest.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1.What is meant by qualitative and quantitative measurement.

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2.Discuss briefly any three types of social mobility measurements.

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3. Social mobility is measured by

A. The extent to which an individual can move the strata to which he/she belongs.

B. The promptness with which an individual accepts foreign assignments.

C. The extent to which inter- caste marriage is encouraged by the society.

D. The extent to which the society as a whole shift its habitat.

Answer: A. The extent to which an individual can move the strata to which he/she belongs.

4. What does social mobility primarily refer to?

A The transition of an individual or social object from one social position to another

B The decline of social classes over time

C The ability to maintain the same social position throughout life

D. The process of social stratification without any movement

Answer 4: A

17.4 DIFFERENT TYPES OF SOCIAL MOBILITY MEASUREMENTS

When we try to analyze social mobility data, we must understand different types of data that can be gathered to measure different indices of mobility that may be useful as inputs for planning and monitoring of any policy outcomes relating to mobility. In a way we need to appreciate that different measurements require different sets of data. If we try and measure mobility at the individual level, we can do it through intergenerational, intragenerational, vertical (both upward and downward), horizontal, perfect, sibling correlation or intergenerational correlation mobility. Each one of them gives us different perspectives of social mobility. As observed above, stratum or group mobility indicates the mobility of group or category, irrespective of specific individuals' mobility achievements. Similarly, when we compare across countries, we need different set of data to evaluate the performance of the countries vis a vis their policies and programmes. Social mobility studies largely concentrated on shifts in occupational positions either individually or by stratum at the cost of the other dimensions, such as 'movements in economic and / or political power; movements in social position in the community'. This only indicates that social mobility studies have to be multidimensional in order to capture the reality context.

1. **Intergenerational Mobility:** Intergenerational mobility studies compare the social position of parent and offspring. Intergenerational mobility can be analysed both in terms of education as well as occupational mobility of individuals. Both are interrelated and they buttress each other. In intergenerational mobility, the status of a parent plays a critical role in influencing the status of his or her offspring. Intergenerational social mobility can be either upward or downward. Social mobility studies focusing on individual conduct and status attainment ignore important factors like role of individual's family and kinship group and other

relationships that contribute to one's social mobility. Apart from this, one's birth order, inheritance and succession also play an important role in a person's social mobility. In other words, the chances of social mobility even in a family vary among its members. In case of intergenerational mobility studies, the stress was largely on the analysis of occupations only. Studies dealing with educational mobility are not much emphasized, though educational mobility is an important aspect of social mobility. In India, education and occupation were reflective of the caste as well as class status. Traditionally, there was an overlap between occupational and educational status and the caste hierarchy. Occupations were graded hierarchically and were mostly hereditary. British rule and the changes initiated by it have affected the relationship between caste and occupation. This has also altered the link between caste and education status. Thus, the overlap between caste and occupation and caste and education is not much there today. One can notice changes in this regard, thereby the opportunity for social mobility have increased multi-fold for the lower as well as the deprived castes. Most of the mobility observed today is largely positional shifts rather than structural. In other words, relative mobility still follows the caste hierarchy.

2. **Intragenerational or Career Mobility:** In contrast to intergenerational mobility, intragenerational or career mobility studies focus on comparing the social position of the individuals at different periods of time in one's working span of life. This would indicate not only the shifts in the career of an individual and mobility in the career but can also point out the influence of different socioeconomic and cultural factors that have a bearing on such mobility. Sometimes the mobility could be upward or downward or it hits a flat in the mobility terrain. A comparative analysis of intragenerational mobility would indicate the variations across different caste classes and can be a pointer for policy intervention. Vertical Mobility: Here we measure the mobility of individuals from stratum to another. The mobility can be

either upward or downward. In spite of limitations to social mobility of individuals placed by social structure, individuals move up or down in the social ladder. In fact, the direction of social mobility of individuals from different strata to other levels would indicate the changes that are taking place in a given social structure. Vertical mobility can be measured for individuals as well as to the groups at large. Upward social mobility would bring in changes in the way of life, including the changes in values, behavioural pattern and social relations. Sharma observed that "Downward social mobility does occur and is a complex process involving social and economic, cultural and motivational factors". Downward mobility in some cases may be voluntary and ideological. In many cases, downward mobility can affect individual behavioral patterns, upset many social relations, and may also affect the relations of individuals or groups with the others. A downwardly mobile person or persons as well as groups have a bearing on the status ranking of individuals or groups. A downward mobility of large number of individuals of a group can lower their ranking in the social ladder and can lead to sometimes changes in the social structural alignments.

3. **Perfect Mobility:** The concept of perfect mobility measures to what extent an individual's mobility is independent from his or her parental background. This test can tell us about the decreasing impact of social stratification or social structure on the chances of individual mobility. This does not imply that individual mobility is completely free from the influences of familial and other aspects. However, it can indicate as to how far such influences on individual social mobility are weakening thereby one can attain upward mobility irrespective of one's background. In this regard, the measures taken by the governments and others through certain interventions can delink the individuals from the burden of their parental or other baggage. This mobility is measured between 0 and 1 and any values above 0.5 are regarded as an indication of the independence of social mobility from the parental

background.

4. **Horizontal Mobility:** In case of Horizontal mobility, one notices a change in a person's occupation without affecting his or her social status. In other words, horizontal mobility may not upset the existing social stratification. In case of horizontal mobility, we measure the shifts of occupations in the career of an individual. Sometimes it may indicate a status change of a person but it mostly may be from one occupation to another similar status occupation. A measurement of horizontal mobility in a group would point out most of the times the static or stable nature of a given social strata or social structure at any given time as compared to vertical mobility.

5. **Group or Stratum Mobility:** Contrary to intergenerational and intragenerational mobility studies, group or stratum mobility studies concentrate on the changing fortunes of particular groups in comparison with the others in the social status hierarchy. As observed earlier, the focus here is not on the individual but on the stratum. This would indicate the positional or structural changes taking place in the society at large. In the Indian context, group mobility needs to be understood differently from that of purely class-based societies. Measuring group or stratum mobility helps us to understand the social mobility of groups or even nation states. This kind of measurement helps us to analyse the bearing of policies, welfare measures and development programmes. These studies take the statistics available at the national as well as at the regional level. Impact of the measures undertaken by the governments and the initiatives taken by the others will point out to the way in which such measures have either impacted positively helping the vulnerable strata to move up in the ladder or have negatively affected them thereby further denting their position.

17.5 LET US SUM UP

In the foregoing discussion we have tried to understand the basic issues involved in the measurement of social mobility and the qualitative and quantitative methods of measuring social mobility. We also have tried to know the need and usefulness of social mobility studies, different types of social mobility measurements and the issues involved in their measurement. We have also tried to understand the methodological issues involved in the measurement of social mobility. This understanding helps us to take necessary precautions while planning to gather and analyze the data for assessment of social mobility. We have understood the significance of social mobility measurement for policy and planning for interventions to better the conditions of the lower sections of the population to improve their status. In a way, it helps us to build a more inclusive society.

17.6 GLOSSARY

1. **Income and Wealth**: Tracking changes in earnings and assets over time.
2. **Education**: Measuring educational attainment and its impact on social standing.
3. **Occupation**: Assessing changes in job type, social status of the job, and career progression.
4. **Well-being**: Including dimensions like health and other aspects of quality of life in the assessment.

17.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q1. Explain briefly any two social mobility measurements.

Q2. Write a note on indicators of social mobility.

Q3. Discuss briefly the concept of social mobility.

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17.8 LESSON END EXERCISE

1. What does intergenerational social mobility measure?

a) An individual's status change within their lifetime.

b) A family's movement up or down the social ladder compared to its ancestors.

c) Horizontal movement between jobs of similar status.

d) The social status of a single individual.

Answer: b) A family's movement up or down the social ladder compared to its ancestors.

2. Which of the following is a key indicator for measuring social mobility?

a) Social stratification.

b) Horizontal mobility.

c) Educational attainment.

d) Social inequality.

Answer: c) Educational attainment.

3. Intragenerational social mobility refers to:

a) Movement between social classes across generations.

b) Movement between social classes within a single generation.

c) Movement within the same social class.

d) Movement between different countries.

Answer: b) Movement between social classes within a single generation.

4. A person moving from a factory worker to a doctor is an example of:

a) Horizontal mobility.

b) Downward mobility.

c) Intergenerational mobility.

d) Upward mobility.

Answer: d) Upward mobility.

5. Which of these is considered a major factor contributing to upward social mobility?

a) Decreased urbanization.

b) Migration to a new country with fewer opportunities.

c) Lack of education.

d) Increased industrialization.

Answer: d) Increased industrialization.

17.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Ghurye, (1986), *Caste and Race in Modern India,* Popular Prakashan, Bombay.
2. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi. Haralambos, Michael (1989), *Sociology*, Themes and Perspectives, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
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Course Code: SOC-C-204 **Unit–IV**

Lesson No. 18

EMERGENCE OF MIDDLE CLASS

STRUCTURE

18.0 Learning Objectives

18.1 Introduction

18.2 Overview

18.3 The concept of class and middle class

18.4 Middle Class in the Western Countries

18.5 Middle Class in India

18.6 Economic transformation

18.7 C. Wright Mills Theoretical Schemes

18.8 Let Us Sum Up

18.9 Glossary

18.10 Self-Assessment Questions

18.11 Lesson End Exercise

18.12 Suggested Readings

18.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- **The concept of middle class;**
- **Middle classes in India and Western Countries;**
- **Politics of the middle class.**

18.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of middle class is widely used by the people in indicating their social position in the social structure in the contemporary human society. It covers people

working in different occupations starting with low level executive to high profile managers in the corporate sector and economic organizations. In order to understand middle class, it is important to raise some small but highly significant questions. First, what does a middle class signify or mean? Second, how does a middle class come into existence? And what is its importance of the middle class in the contemporary human society?

18.2 OVERVIEW

The concept of middle class, **according to Anthony Giddens signifies,** "**a social class composed broadly of those working in white- collar managerial occupations"**. However, the composition and the characteristics of this Class nave never been homogenous. In fact, the evolution of middle class has been from a simply observable phenomenon to a theoretical construct. Historically, each phase of evolution of the middle class corresponds with the different phases of development of human society and its economic structure. Since the knowledge about the middle class has become highly accessible the concept therefore has become more fitting for analysis.

In the initial phase of its formation and development, the evidence suggests existence of middle class, what is called as old middle class. In the pre-capitalist society, the initial stage of its formation, the number of people falling in this category has been very small. They had limited range of functions to perform in the society.

In the phase of refinement, the period during which it starts expanding is called the new middle class with a wide range of functions to perform in the society. The combination of the two phases of formation of the middle class along with its expanding functions it becomes a continuum of wide range of roles, statuses and functions. The general definition of middle class therefore explains, it as an "amorphous group" occupying a middle position between workers and the capitalist.

Ralf Dahrendorf, in his work, "Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society" discusses the concept of middle class. He argues that on the basis of the existing literature on this class one conclusion is drawn. The studies of salaried employees in industry, trade, commerce and public administration indicates "that there

is no word in the modern languages to describe this group which is no group, class that is no class, and stratum which is no stratum". Despite the amorphous nature and composition of this' group it has become the most significant category of study in human society

According to Marx, there are four formulations on the description of middle class. The first views it as an extension of the capitalist class. The second looks at It as-an extension of the working class. The third describes it as a fragmented class and part of it is, an appendage of bourgeoisie and the other is part of proletariat. The fourth formulation refers to it as the intelligentsia, a creator and producer of ideas. The four formulations have one common factor describing middle class is any category which stands between the capitalist and the working class.

Dahrendorf argues that the confusion and the vagueness in the definition of the middle class by Marx arises due to the reason that the latter had viewed that middle class would ultimately whether away and therefore does not remain a fact of the dynamic social structure. Since, the middle class in its initial phase of formation has remained somewhat fluid; the initial phase of the development of the concept of middle class has been described as a phase of take of stage from where the concept has been further developed as an analytical construct.

C. **Wright Mills** argues that there are three factors due to which difficulties arise in the understanding of the concept of middle class. First difficulty is linked with the fluid nature of the class that makes it difficult to delimit the group in terms of its size and numbers. There are problems in defining its lower and upper limits as it includes a wide range of occupational groups- post office clerks to senior executives, doctors, engineers, etc. Along with the given there are problems involved in the cross-cultural comparison of middle classes making it further difficult to define the boundaries and the concept.

18.3 THE CONCEPTS OF CLASS AND MIDDLE CLASS

The concept of class has been one of the most important categories in the Western sociology. There has been a long tradition of looking at the Western

society through the conceptual framework of class. The classical sociological thinkers, Karl Marx and Max Weber, have written a great deal on the concept of class. Class was the most important. category for Marx in his analysis of the Western society and in his theory of social change. Marx's model of class is a dichotomous one. It is through the concept of class that he explains the exploitation of subordinate categories by the dominants. According to Marx, in every class society, there are two fundamental classes. Property relations constitute the axis of this dichotomous system - a minority of 'non-producers', who control the means of production, are able to use this position of control to extract from the majority of 'producers' the surplus product which is the source of their livelihood. 'Classes', in the Marxian framework, are thus defined in terms of the relationships of groupings of individuals to the 'means of production'.

Further, in Marx's model, economic domination is tied to political domination. Control of means of production yields, politica1 control. In this dichotomous model of class structure, the position of the middle class is only transitional. The middle classes for Marx were the self-employed peasants and the petty bourgeoisie. They were so described because they continued to own the means of production they worked with, without employing wage labour. Marx predicted that these middle classes were destined to disappear as the capitalist system of production developed. Only the two major classes, proletariat or the working class and the bourgeoisie or the capitalist class were significant in the Marxian framework of class relations.

The other theorists of class have assigned much more significance to the 'middle classes'. Foremost of these have been sociologists like Max Weber, Dahrendorf and Lockwood. Max Weber, though agrees with Marx that classes are essentially defined in economic terms, his overall treatment of the concept is quite different from that of Marx. Unlike Marx, he argues that classes develop only in the

market economies in which individuals compete for economic gains. He defines classes as groups of people who share similar position in a market economy and by virtue of this fact receive similar economic rewards. Thus, class status of a person, in Weber's terminology, is his "market situation" or, in other words, his purchasing power. The class status of a person also determines his "life chances". Their economic position or "class situation" determines how many of the things considered desirable in their society they can buy.

Though, like Marx. Weber also uses the criteria of property ownership for defining classes, his theory provides a much greater scope for a discussion of the middle classes. He agrees with Man that the two main classes in capitalist society are the property-owning classes and non-property-owning classes. However, Weber does not treat all the non-property-owning individuals as belonging to a single class of the proletariats. The "class situation" of the non-property owners differ in terms of their skills. Those who possess skills that have a definite 'market value' (for example, doctors, engineers and other professionals) are rewarded better than the unskilled labourers.

Thus, their "class situation" is different from that of the working class and it is they who, in the Weberian framework, constitute the middle classes, Further, unlike Marx, Weber does not see any tendency towards polarization of society into two classes. On the contrary Weber argues that with the development of capitalism, the white collar 'middle class' tends to expand rather than contract., The later sociologists have tended to follow the Weber line of thinking in their discussions and studies on the concept of middle class: A crucial distinction is made in the sociological literature between the "old" middle classes and the "new" middle classes. The term "old " middle class is used in the sense in which Marx had used the term "petty-bourgeoisie" i.e. those who work with their own means of production such as traders, independent professionals and farmers. The

term "new" middle class is broadly used to describe the skilled or white-collared workers1 salaried employees and the self-employed professionals. Even though they do not own the means of production they work with, they are distinguished from the unskilled blue-collar workers. Their incomes being much higher than that of the blue-collar workers, they can lead a lifestyle that is very different from that of the working class.

18.4 MIDDLE CLASSES IN THE WESTERN COUNTRIES

Historically speaking, the term middle class was first used to describe the emerging class of bourgeoisie in Western Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During the initial phase of development of the industrial economy, the bourgeoisie (the new class of merchants and industrialists) stood between the gentry (land owning classes and the aristocracy) on the one hand and the poor working classes on the other. As the industrial economy developed further, the land-owning gentry declined and the bourgeoisie - consisting of the big industrialists and financiers - emerged as the ruling class. The term middle class began to be used for the independent small traders, professionals and artisans who stood in between the bourgeoisie on the one side and the working class on the other. These classes grew in number with the development of towns and increasing urbanization that accompanied the development of industrial production. The direct trading between consumers and producers became more and more difficult with growth of big towns and, cities. These groups were latter called the "old middle classes". The emergence of "new middle class" is attributed to the further expansion of industrial capitalism and the rise of big corporations with large and complex organizational structures. G D.H. Cole, a well-known sociologist. attributes the birth of the new middle class to two important developments in the Western economy. First, an increase in the number of public schools and spread of education. And secondly, the spread of joint stock companies. These developments fostered large-scale enterprise and

brought into existence a new class of salaried managers and administers. Lockwood, another sociologist, also attributed the rise of the white-collared salaried class to the developments of corporate capitalism and the emergence of big organization.

The crucial difference between the "old" and the "new middle classes" is their position within the economy. The old middle classes occupied that position by the virtue of their being placed outside the polar class structure. They were neither part of the capitalist class nor of the working class. The new middle classes, on the other hand, did not enjoy any such autonomy. They were part of the big organizations. Their intermediate position came from their place inside the industrial economy. Their growth occurred because of the new demands of modem industry that required the services of a large number of specialists, professionals, technical and administration skills. The "new" middle classes further expanded with growth of the "tertiary" or the servicing sector of the economy. Along with urbanization and industrialization, a large number of tertiary industries, such as banking, insurance, hospitals, hotel, tourism and the mass media developed. These servicing industries employed skilled labour and professionals. The proportion of this segment has been consistently increasing in the total working population in most of the Western industrialized countries. The Western experience seems to have proved Marx wrong. Though the "old" middle classes seem to have declined in strength, the size of the "new" middle classes has been expanding.

18.5 MIDDLE CLASSES IN INDIA

As we have seen above, the middle classes emerged for the first time in Western Europe with the development of industrial and urban economy. We have also seen that the term middle class was initially used to describe the newly emerging class of

bourgeoisie. industrial class. And later on, the term was used for social groups placed in-between the industrialist bourgeoisie on the one side and the working class on the other i.e. the skilled professional. The historical context of the development of middle classes in Indian is quite different from that of the West. It was in the nineteenth century, under the patronage of the British colonial rule that the middle classes began to emerge in India. Though they emerged under the patronage of the British rulers, the middle classes played an important role in India's struggle for independence from the colonial rule. During the post-independence period also, the middle classes have been instrumental in shaping the policies of economic development and social change being pursued by the Indian State, Hence the need to understand the middle classes, their history, their social composition and their politics.

18.6 ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

In spite of the problems, the process of economic transformation has led to the expansion of this class. Dahrendorf refers to the consequences of economic transformation in terms of (i) decomposition of capital leading to differentiation between owner and controlled (ii) increasing needs of the industries for specialists at different levels of the production system has resulted in the decomposition of Labour.

Given the description of middle classes as inclusive of salaried employees: from post office clerk to senior executives, etc., there arise two typical situations, First, those employees who in terms of their salaries, delegated authority and social prestige come very near to the wealthy or men who live in the house of power, second those employees

who are just on the bottom of the scale of the social hierarchy but still forming part of the middle class. A question arises that given these two extreme's situations of existence can such differentially placed groups can be regarded as middle class. The answer would certainly be in negative, because from the point of view of the theory of conflict there cannot be any such class with extreme positions within it. Dahrendorf, therefore, argues that the contradictions of the above kind can be resolved by way of having two theories of middle classes. The first theory espoused by Corner states that "mew middle class constitutes an extension of the old, capitalist or bourgeois, ruling class and in this sense part of the ruling class". This statement is based on the fact that in "structural terms the salaried class is characterized by the exercise of delegated authority- the authority which it has been delegated from the real position of power.

The second theory (as propounded by C. Wright Mills and others) states that new middle class though not extension of proletariat, but at any rate comes closer to the working class than to the ruling class whether capitalist or managerial. Mills argues that objectively the structural position of the white-collar mass is becoming more and more similar to that of the wage-based workers. Both are, of course, property-less, and their incomes draw closer and closer together. All the factors of their status position which have enabled white collar workers to set themselves apart from wage workers are now subject to definite decline.

The essence of both the theories obviously seems contradictory. However, Mills argues that both the theories may not peacefully coexist even though they may be correct. The theory explaining salaried employees as having delegated authority and are part of ruling class obviously do not mean office boy or the sales girl or even the skilled worker having the symbolic status of salaried employee. The theory explaining that salaried employees are closer to working class does not mean senior executives, higher civil servants and professional people. The contradiction between the two theories can be resolved by employing a criterion through which we can identify which category

of salaried employees is closer to working class and which one has to ruling class.

The first is constituted by the salaried employees who are part of bureaucratic hierarchy; and the second, salaried employees whose position does not form a part of bureaucratic organization. In order to make it clear it is important to understand the

conditions that are involved in the formation of the structure of the middle class. These conditions, according to Dahrendorf, mean those conditions that help the middle class to emerge as a distinct category of white-collar workers and are certainly different than the blue-collar workers. In other words, the conditions following two distinct categories of people having distinct characteristic features.

One of these factors is Market Capacities of the group concerned. There is differentiation between the market capacities of white-collar and blue-Collar workers in terms of their capacity to bargain for wages. The other distinction is the differentiation confine-ed by educational and technical qualification. This differentiation can also be seen in terms of the differences between the manual skills based on pure Labour power of the blue-collar workers. These differences further lead to clear cut divergences in income and other modes of economic rewards. The differences in many respects caused by differential market capacities, there occurs a division in the forms of non-manual vs. manual workers.

Historically, these differences in rank sub-merged in the Great Britain and United States during the World War I and the subsequent war. But these were re-established and therefore the differences have continued to exist. The reasons that account for the differences are:

a) The traditional superiority of the white - collar worker in terms of job security continues to exist.

(b) The range of promotional opportunities open to white-collar workers is not visible in the case of blue-collar workers.

(c) In terms of earning, there has been a decline in the case of manual workers whereas in the case of white-collar workers it has been relatively increasing (the annual increments etc. add to the increased capacities of such classes).

(d) The length of the working week is longer in the case of manual than the white collar (non-manual workers).

(e) The considerable proportion of non-manual workers draw fringe benefits of various kinds such as pension, sick pay, gains from tax remissions etc. which in the case of larger proportion of the manual workers are denied.

(f) Working conditions of non-manual workers include desk seated jobs and involve fewer physical strains whereas the manual workers carry on the most strenuous works.

The issue of significance of middle class, especially after the new middle class has displaced the old one, has become very vital for sociologists and the political scientists alike. What interests them most is the political role of this class. In fact, this question has been widely discussed and debated. The question of political role of the new middle class is linked with another important dimension of the modern society i.e. the system of social stratification and the position of the middle-class occupations within the modern social stratification. Second, the political role and its link with stratification was first discovered by the Marxist theoreticians or in other words this linkage could be found in Marxist prophecies whereby it was expected that society would be polarized into class conscious proletariat and bourgeoisie. The middle class which did exist in a very smaller proportion due to its decline would choose to join either proletariat or bourgeoisie, thus revolution will take place. But the development of capitalism did not follow the way Marx thought or predicted.

The critiques of Marx including the Marxist of Dahrendorf stature argued that the Marxist prophecies and expectations of the Marxist theoreticians could not be realized even in the so-called socialist societies. The situation that has emerged in the contemporary socialist societies and the rise of the middle classes within these societies make the role of middle all the more interesting. Because it presents a problem to Marxists in terms of "shift from simple property versus no property dichotomy to differentiation within no property groups". The groups being property-less, yet differ in their political attachment. It does not coincide with their economic position i.e. the lack of property. Thus, the middle class may represent only a numerical "up-thrust of falsely conscious people".

18.7 WRIGHT MILLS THEORETICAL SCHEMES

C. Wright Mills, from the given theoretical schemes infers four major possibilities of the political directions of the middle class.

First, the new middle class, as a whole or certain segment of it, will continue to grow in numbers and power: as a result of which and in

the due course of its growth it will develop into a politically independent class. Since this class has emerged as a pivotal

functionary in the modern society, it will gradually displace the ruling class and will itself become a ruling class.

Second possibility is that though the middle class continues to grow in its size (number) and power, but it will not become a force in itself which can rise into an independent power. Rather the most significant role of this group will be to establish balance between different classes in a society. This is due to the fact that since it creates balance, it certainly becomes a hindrance to what Marxist sociologist visualized. Thus, middle class hampers revolutionary upsurge in the capitalist society. The consequence of which is the continuance growth of the liberal cap. The spread of this class checks the creeping proletarianization (the reason being that some sections of the proletariat because of their economic advancements become a part of the middle class). This is something that also goes against the Marxist predictions. Therefore, the role of middle class becomes that of "buffer between labour and capital: bridge contrasts and mitigates class conflicts; as balance wheel of class interests, this class is identified as that of stabilizers and harmonizes.

Third, the social character and political outlook of the new middle class is such that it represents bourgeoisie and it will remain that (e.g. what Croner talks in terms of extension of bourgeoisie). It has been noted that these groups have a tendency to become 'status groups' rather than economic classes. For instance, take the case of Nazi Germany where the middle classes acted for conservative forces, reactionary and even fascist movements. What it shows is that such groups act more as status groups and that too as allies of the bourgeoisie. As far as its political role is concerned one possibility is that it acts as conservative force for the maintenance of status quo. To illustrate this further one can also talk of middle class of 19th century Indian society and the way it combined national liberation and social reforms with their programme of preserving status-quo.

Fourth, the possibility could be in terms of Marxist schema, i.e. middle class

is reduced to the level of proletariat and thus becomes homogenous group and will follow the socialist policy. It has been argued that the new middle class in fact is a proletariat which has the interests similar to proletariat.

The four-fold possibilities of the political role of the middle class do not mean that everything is sailing smooth. In fact, there are problems that start with the basic description or the definition of middle class and pertain to its role in totality. It may be argued that

one of the problems is similar to the one faced in describing what a middle class is. All the four arguments cannot be compared because all these arguments do not emerge on the basis of analysis of similar occupations coming within the purview of "middle class". As a consequence of which the image of the political role of middle class is bound to differ.

Second, all the theorists have covered varying historical span. As far as the occupational groups which composed strata during the historical spans studied by theorists have changed. In view of which one can say that divergent views on the political role i.e. as vanguard of revolutionary struggle and as conservatives and hindrance in the way of struggle, can prevail side by side and can be regarded as correct also.

Third, the other problem faced is that most of the theoretical arguments concerning middle class's political role are based on the general theories of the course of capitalist development. The views of these scholars are, -as C. Wright Mills put it, are not based on the analysis of middle-class stratum rather based on the political programmes which these classes have. It makes quite difficult for us to sort out the real role.' Besides political programmes another base is of the argument is ideological position of the class and what in reality is happening in the twentieth century industrial societies.

In view of the above arguments, it obvious that historically the middle class has both the roles to play i.e. revolutionary as well as non-revolutionary. Historically, what Marx predicted in the nineteenth century was rejected by sociologists in 1950's and 1960's and suggested the opposite. Marx predicted intermediate (middle) strata will be reduced to proletariat but the process of embourgeoisement that had set its pace with the advancement of capitalist society is proving differently. The stratification system that once indicated pyramid type structure of the society and distribution of population has turned into a diamond type distribution of population with ever increasing number of the middle class.

The process of change has also been occurring in the advanced capitalist societies along with the increasing general economic prosperity. The earnings of the manual workers were increasingly getting into the white-collar range. Another associated belief was that the stratification was fast disappearing i.e. the number of poor was decreasing in the industrially advanced societies. Although this remains to be validated as poverty has certainly increased even in the advanced societies but the poverty is relative.

Another factor of change was the demands of the modern technology and an advanced economy. According to Clark Kerr, advanced industrialization requires an increasingly highly educated, trained and skilled workforce. Since the workforce is highly educated, trained and skilled, it leads to higher pay and higher status occupations. These factors further make possible mass consumption by the affluent workers on the one hand and the possibility of their mobility on the other.

In view of the ongoing changes Bernard argued that it is not the "proletariat who has absorbed the middle class rather the situation has taken other way round course i.e. middle class is absorbing the proletariat.

Another consequence of embourgeoisement is that it has led to the formation of middle-class life styles - i.e. the adoption of the norms, values and attitudes of the middle class. In terms of the change in the political role what happened in Britain was that traditional political loyalties were eroded and a large number of manual workers started supporting the conservative party. In other words, the emerging economic scenario has resulted in the emergence of new interests and the formation of new alliances based on the new interests.

Moreover, the process of embourgeoisement itself was accelerated by the demand of the modern industry of the mobile work free. Physical mobility broke down traditional communities which has affected the structure of stratification as well as community-based stratification system. The new communities have been established where there could not be much distinction between the white collar and the manual workers. The important issue therefore for consideration is that if the embourgeoisement thesis holds true, then the conservative role of the middle class has to be accepted. In case one has doubt over it with special reference to synonymity between an affluent worker and while-Collar worker then probably the role of middle class has to be rethought.

In fact, certain doubts did arise over the embourgeoisement hypothesis. Goldthorpe and others conducted a study "the affluent worker in the class structure" in England. The study revealed certain very significant finding which not only contrasted between the affluent workers and the white collar but also showed that embourgeoisement thesis could not be accepted in totality. Some of the findings suggest that the affluent workers define their work in instrumental terms i.e. it is a means to certain ends i.e. earning money whereas white collar workers

do not purely define their work in instrumental terms. One conclusion drawn from such differences is that affluent worker is not becoming middle class. The most interesting change in the case of affluent workers is that their solidarity and collectivism is replaced by instrumental collectivism.

By instrumental collectivism what we mean is that even participation in the union activities is motivated by the fact of personal gains in wages etc. They do believe in collective action and solidarity but not the way it was looked upon by the traditional workers. In the latter case it was more in terms of kinship ties and neighborhood relationships. But in the case of affluent workers, it is only a mean to maximize their wages. They differ from white collar on the other hand in one respect. While the affluent workers unionize for wage rise the white collar was instrumental solidarity to improve their market situation. From such differences it is said that affluent workers are not becoming middle.

18.8 LET US SUM UP

The foregoing discussion on the middle class indicates that the emergence of this class is linked with the transformation in the economic system of the society. One may also find that the existence of middle classes even in other modes of production; i.e. the feudal mode in which the lords had the military elite and other courtiers etc. But, by and large the rise and development of middle class is associated with the rise and development of the capitalism, joint stock companies, multipurpose corporate sector requiring the middle-class managers and professionals.

18.9 GLOSSARY

1. **Domination:** To exploit, and be superordinate. Used in Marxist literature to describe the class which owns the means of production.

2. **Dichotomous:** Refers in stratification literature to the two-class model of Marx.

3. **Property Relations:** The relations which arise (antagonistic or other) out of one class owing means of production and the other one being employed as wage workers by the class which owns the means of production.

18.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1. Explain Marx's dichotomous model of class structure.

Q.2. Write a brief note on middle classes in India.

Q.3. Write a brief note on C. Wright Mills Theoretical Schemes.

18.11 LESSON END EXERCISE

Question 1: What was a key factor in the emergence of the middle class in 18th century France?
(a) The rise of the aristocracy

(b) The expansion of overseas trade and manufacturing

(c) The dominance of a feudal land-based economy

(d) The privileges granted by birthright

Answer: (b) The expansion of overseas trade and manufacturing

Question 2: In India, which of the following was a crucial element in the rise of the new middle class?
(a) Lack of opportunities for employment

(b) Restriction on English-language education

(c) Participation in the market economy and state development

(d) Reliance on traditional, non-market-based professions

Answer: (c) Participation in the market economy and state development

Question 3: The emergence of the "new middle class" in Western economies is often linked to:
(a) The decline of industrial capitalism

(b) The rise of big corporations and complex organizations

(c) A return to agrarian-based societies

(d) The rejection of technological advancement

Answer: (b) The rise of big corporations and complex organizations

Question 4: Which of the following is a characteristic of the modern "new middle class" in India?
(a) Apathy towards consumer culture

(b) Resistance to globalization and transnational corporations

(c) A focus on self-sufficient, local production

(d) Participation in global commodity chains and consumption culture

Answer: (d) Participation in global commodity chains and consumption culture

Question 5: Which of these factors did the emerging middle classes in Europe strongly advocate for in the 19th century?
(a) The continuation of feudal privileges

(b) A society without special privileges based on birth

(c) A system of taxation based solely on land ownership

(d) A reduction in the role of a free market economy

Answer: (b) A society without special privileges based on birth

18.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
2. Haralambos, Michael (1989), *Sociology, Themes and Perspectives*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
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Course Code: SOC-C-204 **Unit–IV**

Lesson No. 19

MOBILITY WITHIN CASTE SYSTEM

STRUCTURE

19.0 Learning Objectives

19.1 Introduction

19.2 Mobility in Caste

19.3 Levels of Mobility

19.4 Sanskritization, Westernization and Social Mobility in Indian society

19.5 The dynamics of secularization and social mobility in India

19.6 The role of education in social change

19.7 Impact on SCs and OBCs

19.8 Industrialization and Urbanization

19.9 Let Us Sum Up

19.10 Glossary

19.11 Self-Assessment Questions

19.12 Lesson End Exercise

19.13 Suggested Readings

19.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- **To outline the processes and factors that influence mobility in caste;**
- **To describe the nature of mobility in class and the factors influencing it; and**
- **To highlight the factors influencing class mobility in India.**

19.1 INTRODUCTION

Sorokin has made pioneering contribution to the analysis and study of social Mobility and has contributed to conceptualization, types and channelization of it. He differences between societies that are 'closed' rigid, immobile and impenetrable and those that are 'open' plastic, penetrable or mobile, the nature while caste system is often associated with 'closed society' where avenues for mobility rare restricted and few. Classes are found in 'open' 'societies' which often-ample opportunities for mobility through achievement. It is important to investigate into the nature of mobility in caste and class to find out how far they confirm to the generalization mentioned by Sorokin.

19.2 MOBILITY IN CASTE

While the general impression has been that caste is a 'closed' system of stratifications, yet in reality it is for from true. No society is static and even in the traditional set up where ascription was the prime determinant one's ritual and occupational standing, access to

rewards and resources and social Mobility both upward and downward was not totally absent.

Social Mobility in the caste system is evident in the increasing discrepancy between caste and occupations, withering away of Jajmani obligation, the rigidity regarding purity and pollution and acceptance of secular lifestyle. In the olden days, Srinivas points out, there were two major sources of mobility. First was the fluidity of the political system, which made it feasible for new castes to assume the status of Kahatriyas and exercise power. Second was the availability of marginal land which could be brought under cultivation. As a consequence of these two available routes to upward mobility, leaders from dominant castes such as Reddis, Marathas could seize political power and claim Kshatriyas status. The Patridard of Gujarat originated as peasant caste. When the leader of a dominant caste escalated the rank of raja or king, it becomes a source of mobility for the other members and this was strengthened by adoption of practices and life style of the upper castes.

CASTE: A MISUNDERSTOOD SYSTEM

Contrary to the common perception of the caste system as an immutable hierarchy, it is dynamic. Traditional setups largely determined one's social standing by birth; however, complete immobility was not the norm. In reality, even within these ascriptive confines, certain routes to mobility existed.

SOURCES OF MOBILITY IN CASTE SYSTEMS

The political fluidity of historical societies allowed new castes to emerge and wield power, with access to land serving as another vehicle for upward mobility. This enabled leaders of dominant castes to ascend to ruling positions, subsequently elevating the status of their entire group. The transformation of certain castes over time, as they took on royal titles and adopted the customs of the upper castes, stands as testimony to the mobility within the caste system.

19.3 LEVELS OF MOBILITY

Mobility has taken place at the level of individual, family and group. K.L. Sharma has made a careful analysis of these levels of mobility.

1.Mobility of an Individual within a family: Some individuals even though of low caste, may have better status and prestige compared to other members of their family. This may be on account of one's personality traits such as integrity, honesty, acquisition of education and other achievements. Similarly, an individual of higher may lose his position on account of misdeeds and slothful habits. This may result in downward mobility for the individual.

2.Mobility among families within a caste: - This kind of mobility is linked to socio-economic and political aspects of the families. The improvement in status could be result of acquisition of land and education which is further reiterated by emulating the practices of higher caste with regard to dress, lifestyle and rituals. Mobility of this type is not cooperating in nature and can be viewed as 'horizontal mobility' rather than 'Vertical Mobility' which bridges the gap between status distinctions.

3.Group mobility: The third and most impactful level is the group mobility of a majority within a group. This collective shift in status, honor, and societal standing is often accompanied by changes in socio-cultural practices. By abandoning certain customs deemed impure and adopting more esteemed ones, entire castes have been able to rise in the social hierarchy, a process exemplified by Sanskritization.

THE PROCESS OF SANSKRITIZATION

Sanskritization remains a central mechanism by which lower castes have historically improved their status. This cultural assimilation involves adopting rituals, practices, and behaviors of higher castes, thereby gaining social acceptance for their upward mobility. Through Sanskritization, castes have been able to make significant strides in redefining their social position within the traditional stratification system.

19.4 SANSKRITIZATION, WESTERNIZATION AND SOCIAL MOBILITY IN INDIAN SOCIETY

There are several features and processes of mobility. We now turn to these: -

1. Sanskritization

M.N. Srinivas formulated and contributed immensely to the concept of Sanskritization as a process of Mobility in caste. He refers to Sanskritization as a "process by which a now Hindu caste or tribal or other groups, changes its customs, ritual ideology and way of life in direction of a high and frequently 'twice born' Castes. Sanskritization has been prevalent throughout history and has assumed various forms. It has been used as mechanism to bridge the gap between secular and ritual rank. Whenever a caste achieved secular power, it tried to legitimize its status by acquiring traditional symbols of high caste by adopting their customs, rituals.

Sanskritization: Traditional Path to Social Mobility

Sanskritization is a process where a lower Hindu caste, tribal group, or other communities emulate the practices of the higher 'twice born' castes to improve their social status. This emulation encompasses customs, rituals, ideologies, and overall lifestyle changes, such as adopting vegetarianism and teetotalism. Seeking services of Brahmin priests, undertaking pilgrimages, and gaining knowledge of sacred texts are also part of this phenomenon. This process, however, does not alter the overall caste structure but creates positional changes within it.

The Mechanics of Social Mobility Through Sanskritization

The recording of caste status during census operations played a pivotal role in claims for higher status. These claims often escalated with each census, where a caste that identified as Vaishya might claim to be Brahmin or Kshatriya in subsequent records. Alongside these claims, castes would emulate the lifestyle of higher-ranked warrior rulers (Kshatriyas) or Brahmins, seeking to legitimize their newfound status through visible attributes associated with these higher castes.

Patterns and Reactions Within Sanskritization

The phenomenon also displayed patterns of increasing Puritanism among castes rejecting the superiority of the twice-born, such as the Koris of eastern Uttar Pradesh who would refuse water from Brahmins. On the flip side, re-sanskritization occurred when westernized or modernized groups discarded symbols of modernization, reverting to traditional Sanskritic lifestyles. This process of de- and re-sanskritization contributed to the formation of new groups and political mobilization.

2. WESTERNIZATION

Srinivas defines "Westernization as the changes brought about it Indian society and culture as result of over 150 years of British rule, the term subsuming changes occurring at different levels technology, institutions, ideology and values, "(Srinivas 1966) Westernization is therefore a vast, multidimensional and a complex process which impinged upon various domains through a member of institutions and hence had a significant bearing on caste mobility. It not only altered the existing set up but also opened fresh

doors for social Mobility. A large number of inter-related factors are responsible for this.

Westernization accelerated the mobility process in more ways than one. On one hand it was a desirable mechanism of attaining mobility, on the other, it generated mobility also because the 'Westernized' become a model for emulation for the others.

It must be noted that westernization did not begin and end with British rule. It provided tracks which furthered and accelerated the mobility process. It set the ball rolling which gained further momentum after Independence. The Independent India over from the rationalistic egalitarian and humanitarian principles front the British and created further room for mobility.

(i) New Legal System: The British rule resulted in the political integration of the country into a single administrative unit with a uniform and homogeneous pattern of law and order grounded in the principles of rationalism, humanitarianism and egalitarianism. These laws were sometimes in contradiction with the pre-existing ones. For example, under the traditional law punishment varied according to the caste of the person committing the offence, while the British laws treated everyone equally. The caste Disabilities Removal Act and Abolition of Slavery were a great leap forward towards upliftment of lower castes. These laws were efforts in the directions of bridging the gap between lower and higher castes.

ii) Adoption of Reforms: Whenever efforts are made at reforming the society it generates opportunities for mobility. Buddhism, Jainism and later Sikhism which are the sects of Hindu religion have disregarded the rigidities associated with purity and pollution. They have advocated against the prevalent inequities and established a new egalitarian order within the sects. Similarly, the Christian missionaries during the British rule proselytized the most oppressed castes they extricated the untouchables from a life of misery and exploitation and provided them education and health facilities. This enabled them to find new employment opportunities and attain higher status and prestige than before.

The educated liberal reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda in their endeavor to reforms the society got abolished evil practices such as sati, child marriage human a sacrifice etc.

Mahatma Gandhi and B.R. Ambedkar fought vociferously for the upliftment of the untouchables and their efforts bore fruits in the form of abolition of untouchability and the provision for protective discrimination. This has generated large scale upward social mobility among.

19.5 THE DYNAMICS OF SECULARIZATION AND SOCIAL MOBILITY IN INDIA

The term "Secularization" implies that what was previously regarded as religious ceases to be such and it also implies a process of differentiation in the various aspects of society, economy, polity, laws and morality becoming i increasingly by discrete in relation to each other. With increasing emphasis on rationality and education the nation of purity pollution weakened and today it is common to see people of different castes work together in factories or rub shoulders against each other in buses and trains and even dine together in restaurants. Together with this, the manner of dress in the modern society serves to blue caste distinctions. The new law based on universalism and the constitutional recognition of equality for all citizens and the declaration of India as a secular state has served to abolish discrimination based on.

19.6 THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN SOCIAL CHANGE

Education was the prerogative of the Brahmins and "twice born" castes in the traditional setup. During the British rule educational institutions were opened to all and knowledge had a secular and rational basis.

Education had such a deep impact on the pace and patterns of mobility that it created a new middle class. After independence, in an effort to uplift the SC, ST and OBC's through education, seats have been reserved for them in educational institutions. Since then, these benefits have been appropriated by a small section. It has resulted in new cleavages among these sections. These cleavages are an aspect of mobility patterns based on those who have and do not have access to education.

19.7 IMPACT ON SCS AND OBCS

Under this section we will analyze two main modes of mobility i.e. mobility through conflict and mobility on account of protective discrimination.

For years the backward sections who were apprised remained submissive and

servile. But under British rule they improved their status and tried to legitimize it though Sanskritization. But simultaneously, the upper castes leaped forward by usurping new opportunities. The gap between the upper and lower castes widened and this they tried to bridge by laying claim to economic and political resources. These under privileged castes consolidated themselves against the upper castes in the form of castes of Sabhas the anti-Brahmin movement date back to 1870's Maharashtra and were led by dominant castes such as Kammas, Reddis, Nayars etc. The most significant movements were launched by Mahras under the leadership of B.R. Ambedkar. The other movements include those of 'Dalit Panthers' who united all sections of depressed people.

The backward sections have found opportunities for upward mobility on account of 'protective discrimination' polices which involves reservation of seats in education institutions, free ship and scholarships.

COURSES OF MOBILITY

Sociologist Pradeep Bose has identified two principal routes to social mobility. The first is through efforts to elevate the status of a caste via census participation and petitions to authorities. This often involved Sanskritization and distinguishing themselves from castes of similar rank, such as the Kayasthas and Bhumihar in Bihar. The second route arises from economic distress, where castes like Yadavs, Kurmis, and Keories have formed associations to transform their political and economic circumstances.

THE EFFECTS OF PROTECTIVE DISCRIMINATION

Protective discrimination, a policy initiative aimed at fostering upward mobility for backward sections of society, includes reservations in educational institutions and governmental bodies, along with scholarships and job quotas. While these measures were intended to level the playing field, the benefits have been somewhat concentrated, with recipients within these communities achieving significantly higher status than their peers. This has led to further intra-caste divisions.

19.9 INDUSTRIALIZATION AND URBANIZATION

Industrialization accelerated the rate of social mobility in various ways. It provided employment opportunities which emphasized on achievement and qualifications rather than caste. In the factories jobs were hierarchically graded according to qualifications and experience rather that ritual ranking. These employment opportunities were open to all and proved a source of upward mobility for the landless labors.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1.Define Sanskritization and Westernization.

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2.Discuss briefly three levels of mobility.

2.1……

2.2…….

2.3…….

19.10 LET US SUM UP

It can be noted from the above discussion on social mobility that even in so called 'closed' system of stratification, there is constant efforts among members to improve their social positions through the means available to them. As we have seen in India, some of the mechanisms and progresses involved in social mobility were culture specific as is the case of Sanskritization, the new avenues for mobility provided by education, urbanization and industrialization were quickly united for advantageous shifts in hierarchy.

Industrialization and Urbanization have played a vital role in generating mobility both in the caste and class societies by emphasizing on the role of achievement and skill acquired through education. These twin processes have widened the horizons for vertical and horizontal mobility.

19.11 GLOSSARY

1.SANSKRITIZATION

It is a process of social mobility in caste whereby a low caste may change its customs, Life style, rituals and ideology in the direction of high castes mainly Brahmins and Kshatriyas.

2.WESTERNIZATION

It is term used to describe the changes that came about as a result of British rule in India. These changes include those at the level of technology, institutions, ideology etc. Westernization open new doors for mobility at the level of individuals and castes.

3. SECULARIZATION

It refers to the process where religious institutions, beliefs, and practices lose their social significance, and society becomes less influenced by religion. This involves a decline in religious adherence, a decrease in the social influence of religious organizations, and a shift towards rational and scientific explanations for phenomena that were previously attributed to the supernatural.

4. PROTECTIVE DISCRIMINATION

Protective discrimination also known as affirmative action or positive discrimination, refers to policies designed to favor certain groups, typically those who have faced historical disadvantages, in order to promote equality and correct existing imbalances. These policies aim to address systemic inequalities by providing preferential treatment, such as reservations or special privileges, to these groups in areas like education, employment, and political representation.

19.12 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1. Write in brief about Sanskritization.

Q2. Write a short note on Protective Discrimination.

Q 3. Explain the term Industrialization.

19.13 LESSON END EXERCISE

Q1: The movement of individuals or groups to a higher or lower social status within the caste system is called:

- A) Horizontal mobility
- B) Vertical mobility
- C) Social change
- D) Occupational shift

Answer: B) Vertical mobility

Q2: Question: Which of the following processes describes a lower caste group adopting the customs and rituals of a higher caste in an attempt to improve its status?

- A) Industrialization
- B) Urbanization
- C) Sanskritization
- D) Westernization

Answer: C) Sanskritization

Q3: Question: Which of the following is considered a major factor that historically contributed to limited mobility within the caste system?

- A) Modern education
- B) The jajmani system
- C) Government policies
- D) Industrialization

Answer: B) The jajmani system

Q4: Question: The enforcement of which government act helped to change marital alliances among different castes?

- A) The Caste Disabilities Removal Act
- B) The Special Marriage Act of 1954
- C) The Constitution of India
- D) The Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955

Answer: B) The Special Marriage Act of 1954

Q5: Question: Which of these is an example of a barrier to social mobility that has traditionally been associated with the caste system?

- A) Occupational flexibility
- B) The notion of pollution and purity
- C) Increased educational opportunities
- D) Political representation

Answer: B) The notion of pollution and purity

19.14 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
2. Haralambos, Michael (1989), *Sociology, Themes and Perspectives,* Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
3. Horton, P. B. and Hunt, C., B. (1987), *Sociology*, McGraw-Hill, Singapore.

Course Code: SOC-C-204 **Unit–IV**

Lesson No. 20

MOBILITY WITHIN CLASS SYSTEM

STRUCTURE

20.0 Learning Objectives

20.1 Introduction

20.2 Class Mobility and Class Formation

20.3 Industrialization and Mobility

20.4 Education and Mobility

20.5 Intergenerational and Intra-generational Mobility

20.6 Social Mobility and Classes in India

20.7 Social Mobility in Agrarian Classes

20.8 Social Mobility in Urban Classes

20.9 Let Us Sum Up

20.10 Glossary

20.11 Self-Assessment Questions

20.12 Lesson End Exercise

20.13 Suggested Readings

20.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to know:

- **To describe the nature of mobility in class and the factors influencing it; and**
- **To highlight the factors influencing class mobility in India.**

20.1 INTRODUCTION

Sorokin has made pioneering contribution to the analysis and study of social Mobility and has contributed to conceptualization, types and channelization of it. He differences between societies that are: closed, rigid, immobile and impenetrable and those that are open, plastic, penetrable or mobile, the nature while caste system is often associated with 'closed society' where avenues for mobility rare restricted and few. Classes are found in 'open' 'societies' which often-ample

opportunities for mobility through achievement. It is important to investigate into the nature of mobility in caste and class to find out how far they confirm to the generalization mentioned by Sorokin.

20.2 CLASS MOBILITY AND CLASS FORMATION

The most crucial aspect of class formation is class mobility. A large number of scholars have shown keen interest in this area of study. Karl Marx was concerned about the relationship between class formation and action on the one hand and the extension of mobility between class positions on the other. He was of the view that proletarianization was inimical to the process of class formation. Also in advance capitalist societies, the expansion of middle class in based on recruitment from proletariat. Mark also recognized that a certain degree of immobility is seen as an indispensable prerequisite for the emergence of class consciousness. Similarly, Weber too emphasized on the significance of social Mobility for class formation. Weber recognized immobility as a chief determinant for social and cultural identify of a class.

20.3 INDUSTRIALIZATION AND MOBILITY

In the analysis of mobility processes and patterns that term class is not used strictly in the sense used by Marx or by Weber. Rather class is viewed in terms of occupational groupings because occupation is an aspect of one's merit, education and qualifications and it determines one's status, prestige and salary which is turn influences the consumption patterns pattern and life chances.

Industrialization has introduced a lot of changes not only in the economic sphere but in all realm of society. Industrial societies are referred to as 'open' societies where the opportunities for mobility are available in plenty. The high rates of mobility in industrial societies are attributed to rapid economic change which necessitates occupational geographical and social mobility to make optimum and efficient use of available talent. It is on this account that Lipset and Zetterberg feel that industrialism creates uniform mobility patterns. Duncan and Blua emphasis on number of factors generated by industrialization that have an impact on mobility patterns. They are of the opinion that industrialization is connected with growing rationalism which accounts for universalistic criteria for selection and up grading occupational division of Labour, weakening kinship and neighborhood ties.

20.4 EDUCATION AND MOBILITY

The impetus on achievement and qualifications as determinants of one's merit has resulted in the increasing emphasis on education and training to obtain them. Education has attained a key role in facilitating mobility especially in the industrial societies. The increasing specialization and division of labour presuppose the existence of qualified personal who can handle specialized tasks. These specialists whether in the field of industry laws, or medicine are trained and educated in specialized branches of knowledge. These educational and training facilities are open to all in the industrial societies.

20.5 INTERGENERATIONAL AND INTRAGENERATIONAL MOBILITY

It refers to mobility or shift (upward or downward) vis-a-vis one's parent's class. If a son or a daughter of a supervisor becomes an unskilled labour it would be downward mobility and if the same person's son or daughter becomes a manager it would amount to upward mobility.

One of the first major studies on inter-generational mobility was conducted in England and Wales by David Glass in 1949. It was found that inter-generational mobility was quite high and about two-third of the persons interviewed were in a difference occupational category form that of their father. Most of the mobility was short range i.e. people were found in categories close to their father. Upward mobility was more common than downward mobility and was mostly concentrated in the middle levels of the class structure.

Later studies by Hauzer and Hout have confirmed that short range mobility is greater than long range and that mobility is more likely in the middle of socio-economic hierarchy than at its peak. Intra-generational Mobility i.e., where the individual changes social position during his/her career. It has been found that work like mobility is generally less than inter-generational mobility its degree depends on the first job.

20.6 SOCIAL MOBILITY AND CLASSES IN INDIA

Very often it is expressed that classes in India are a result of social mobility induced by British rule in India. This statement is for form true because classes did exist in pre-british times. However, it cannot be denied that in the traditional setup

caste system was more predominant system of stratification. In the present set up classes and castes have co-existed as dynamic systems and have interacted to create a complex and multi-dimensional empirical reality. It is only for analytical purposes that the following different class strata are being identified.

20.7 SOCIAL MOBILITY IN AGRARIAN CLASSES

In traditional India, landownership was a symbol of prestige and could not be easily bought or sold. However, the British colonial rule introduced significant changes by making land a saleable commodity. This transformation had far-reaching consequences on agrarian relations and social mobility.

Land Reforms and Vertical Mobility

The introduction of land reforms in the 1950s aimed at abolishing intermediaries like the Zamindars and providing land to the tillers. This initiative generated both upward and downward social mobility. Some tenants were able to purchase surplus land, leading to upward mobility. In contrast, others were displaced by Zamindars who claimed to be cultivators, resulting in the pauperization of landless laborers.

Impact on Zamindars

Land reforms also led to downward mobility for the Zamindars, as they lost the right to extract taxes and shares from cultivators. This loss of income left them with fragmented holdings that could not sustain their feudal lifestyles. Additionally, legal measures like the introduction of panchayats and universal adult franchise diminished their influence and power.

Green Revolution and Social Inequality

The Green Revolution, initiated by the government in the 1960s, brought further changes to agrarian classes. This program aimed to increase agricultural productivity through the use of High Yielding Variety seeds and fertilizers. However, these advancements required

additional infrastructure like tube wells, which small peasants couldn't afford. This resulted in the emergence of a new class of 'Progressive Farmers' with large land holdings and the capacity to invest in resources like tractors and power threshers. These progressive farmers operated as entrepreneurs, further reinforcing social inequality.

Political Mobilization of Agrarian Classes

The prosperity of rich landlords at the expense of landless workers created conflict in the agrarian setup. Political mobilization among agrarian classes began during the freedom struggle and continues today, albeit with variations across regions, classes, and time periods.

20.8 SOCIAL MOBILITY IN URBAN CLASSES

Urbanization is not a new phenomenon for Indian society. During the pre-British period, there were a large number of cities with a district pattern of ranking and administration. After industrialization, the resultant urban ward migration has been rapid and enormous. This has grossly affected the nature of the social classes. There are four major classes that can be identified in an urban set up. These included.

A. THE CAPITALIST/BOURGEOISIE

The Britishers introduced modern industrialization in India. The setting up of industries, free trade and now markets gave impetus to trade and commerce. The traders became wealthier and took to industry. It is noteworthy that even today a large number of industrialists hail from trading castes and communities such as Marwaris in Rajasthan, Gujarati Banias and Jains in the west, Chettiars and the South. The merchant class was the first to become capitalist certain artisans and craftsmen who availed of the new economic opportunities also setup small scale factories.

B. ENTREPRENEURS TRADERS AND SHOPKEEPERS

Urban society always comprised of entrepreneurs who included traders and shop-keepers. These classes have flourished and expanded with the growth of cities and towns and cashed on the rising demands of new goods and services in them. This class would include entrepreneurs running restaurants, marriage bureaus, video libraries and other like property dealers, grocers, laundered, drycleaners, who are a direct link between suppliers of good and service and consumers. Some have diversified and expanded in their traditional occupations, while others have established entirely new enterprises.

C. PROFESSIONAL CLASSES

This class has undergone vast changes in its nature and complexion on account of the changes introduced under the British rule and after independence. The British required a large body of professionals for various purposes. They felt it was cheaper to educate Indians for the same. With the expansion of tertiary sector, this class has expanded both in size and prestige ranging from clerks to CA/S, Babus to bureaucrats. The British colonial era saw the establishment of educational institutions to train professionals, including doctors, lawyers, managers, bureaucrats, scientists, and technocrats. This professional class has expanded

significantly in both size and prestige, encompassing a diverse range of occupations. Education and qualifications play a crucial role in their status, and a substantial proportion of them are salaried employees in the public or private sector.

D. WORKING CLASS

The working class in India has evolved over time. Initially, it consisted of pauperized agricultural laborers who were landless or impoverished peasants. Many joined the workforce as "target workers" or seasonal laborers. With the recent expansion of industry, the working class has grown and diversified across the country. These workers have organized into unions to negotiate better terms with their employers. These trade unions often have political affiliations and have elevated their leaders to positions of influence. Studies have shown that the earliest working-class population comprised of pauperized agricultural labour who were landless or impoverished peasantry who had mort- gaged their land. The later joined the labour force on a short-term basis as 'target workers' to earn a fixed sum of money to be able to get back their land, Others Joined as seasonal workers in search of work during slack periods in agriculture. These workers worked in factories, textile mills. Plantations, and in informal sectors what characterized them all was object living conditions in slums. With the expansion of industry in recent decades, working class has expanded and diversified into various industrial set ups in all parts of the country.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1.Define agrarian class mobility.

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2.Discuss briefly social mobility in urban class.

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20.9LET US SUM UP

It can be noted from the above discussion on social mobility that even in so called 'closed' system of stratification, there is constant efforts among members to improve their social positions through the means available to them. As we have seen in India, some of the mechanisms and progresses involved in social mobility were culture specific as is the case of Sanskritization, the new avenues for mobility provided by education, urbanization and industrialization were quickly united for advantageous shifts in hierarchy.

Industrialization and Urbanization have played a vital role in generating mobility both in the caste and class societies by emphasizing on the role of achievement and skill acquired through education. These twin processes have widened the horizons for vertical and horizontal mobility.

20.10 GLOSSARY

1. **Sanskritization:** It is a process of social mobility in caste whereby a low caste may change its customs, Life style, rituals and ideology in the direction of high castes mainly Brahmins and Kshatriyas.
2. **Westernization:** It is term used to describe the changes that came about as a result of British rule in India. These changes include those at the level of technology, institutions, ideology etc. Westernization open new doors for mobility at the level of individuals and castes.

20.11 SELF ASSSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q.1. W r i t e in brief about Sanskritization.

Q.1 Write a short note on Protective Discrimination.

Q.2 Explain the term Industrialization.

20.12 LESSON END EXERCISE

Question 1: What is the term for an individual moving from a higher social class to a lower one?

a) Upward mobility

b) Horizontal mobility

c) Vertical mobility

d) Downward mobility.

Answer: Downward mobility.

Question 2: A person becomes a doctor after their father was a factory worker. What type of social mobility is this?

a) Intragenerational mobility

b) Intergenerational mobility

c) Horizontal mobility

d) Downward mobility.

Answer: Intergenerational mobility.

Question 3: A person who changes their job from being a teacher to being a librarian, without a significant change in social status or income, is an example of what?

a) Vertical mobility

b) Horizontal mobility

c) Upward mobility

d) Downward mobility.

Answer: Horizontal mobility.

Question 4: Which of the following is a concept associated with mobility within a caste system?

a) Ascribed status is irrelevant

b) Sanskritization

c) Exogamy

d) Individual achievement alone determines status.

Answer: Sanskritization.

20.13 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Gupta, Dipankar (1993), Social Stratification, Oxford University Press, New Delhi. Haralambos, Michael (1989), Sociology, Themes and Perspectives, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
2. Horton, P. B. and Hunt, C., B. (1987), Sociology, McGraw-Hill, Singapor