

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Edited By

Dr. Sukanya Das

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SYLLABUS

Social Stratification

Objectives

1. To familiarize the student about the concept of social stratification.
2. To familiarize the students about the changing dimensions of social stratification and about the concept of social mobility.

Sr. No.	Description
1	**Understanding Social Stratification:** Concept, Characteristics, Basic concepts relating to stratification
2	**Theories of Social Stratification I:** Theoretical formulations of Davis & Moore, Parsons
3	**Theories of Social Stratification II:** Theoretical formulations of Karl Marx and Max Weber
4	**Forms of Social Stratification:** Caste, Class, Gender, Social Stratification in Urban and Industrial Settings
5	**Caste**: Concept, features of caste system, caste system as a system of stratification
6	**Class**: Concept and as system of stratification, Class and mobility: Occupation and mobility
7	**Race and Ethnicity:** Race, Racial group, ethnic groups, minority & majority relations
8	**Gender and Stratification**: Gender as basis of stratification, Patriarchy and the Subordination of Women, women's empowerment
9	**Social Mobility:** Determinants, Patterns of Mobility in Caste and Class; Mobility in closed and open systems of stratification;
10	**Changing Dimensions of Social Stratification**: Emerging patterns of social stratification in India, Emergence of Middle Class system

Unit 1: Understanding Social Stratification

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Objectives
Introduction
1.1 Concept of Social Stratification
1.2 Meaning and the Characteristics of Social Stratification
1.3 Summary
1.4 Key–Words
1.5 Review Questions
1.6 Further Readings

Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Understand the Concept of Social Stratification.
- Explain the Meaning and the Characteristics of Social Stratification.

Introduction

Stratification is a hierarchy of positions with regard to economic production which influences the social rewards to those in the positions. In sociology, social stratification is a concept involving the "classification of people into groups based on shared socio-economic conditions ... a relational set of inequalities with economic, social, political and ideological dimensions." When differences lead to greater status, power or privilege for some groups over the other it is called Social Stratification. It is a system by which society ranks categories of people in a hierarchy Social stratification is based on four basic principles : (1) Social stratification is a trait of society, not simply a reflection of individual differences; (2) Social stratification carries over from generation to generation; (3) Social stratification is universal but variable; (4) Social stratification involves not just inequality but beliefs as well.

In modern Western societies, stratification is broadly organized into three main layers : upper class, middle class, and lower class. Each of these classes can be further subdivided into smaller classes (e.g. occupational). These categories are particular to state-based societies as distinguished from feudal societies composed of nobility-to-peasant relations. Stratification may also be defined by kinship ties or castes. For Max Weber, social class pertaining broadly to material wealth is distinguished from status class which is based on such variables as honor, prestige and religious affiliation. Talcott Parsons argued that the forces of societal differentiation and the following pattern of institutionalized individualization would strongly diminish the role of class (as a major stratification factor) as social evolution went along. It is debatable whether the earliest hunter-gatherer groups may be defined as 'stratified', or if such differentials began with agriculture and broad acts of exchange between groups. One of the ongoing issues in determining social stratification arises from the point that status inequalities between individuals are common, so it becomes a quantitative issue to determine how much inequality qualifies as stratification.

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1.1 Concept of Social Stratification

The concept of social stratification is interpreted differently by the various theoretical perspectives of sociology. Proponents of action theory have suggested that since social stratification is commonly found in developed societies, hierarchy may be necessary in order to stabilize social structure. Talcott Parsons, an American sociologist, asserted that stability and social order are regulated, in part, by universal value although universal values were not identical with "consensus" but could as well be the impetus for ardent conflict as it had been multiple times through history. Parsons never claimed that universal values in and by themselves "satisfied" the functional prerequisites of a society, indeed, the constitution of society was a much more complicated codification of emerging historical factors. The so-called conflict theories, such as Marxism, point to the inaccessibility of resources and lack of social mobility found in stratified societies. Many sociological theorists have criticized the extent to which the working classes are unlikely to advance socioeconomically; the wealthy tend to hold political power which they use to exploit the proletariat intergenerationally. Theorists such as Ralf Dahrendorf, however, have noted the tendency toward an enlarged middle-class in modern Western societies due to the necessity of an educated workforce in technological and service economies.

Social stratification is a universal phenomenon, an unavoidable feature of all human societies, though found in different forms and degrees. Individuals, positions and groups are differentiated based on specific norms and criteria in a given society. The norms and criteria on the basis of which people are differentiated evolve over a period of time. Based on the nature of a society, its culture, economy and polity, stratification could be simple and less elaborate, or it could be complex and more elaborate. The considerations in stratification in a society could be achievements of an individual member, or of his/her family or community or of all the three in different ways and in different permutations and combinations. The units ranked in a society could therefore be an individual, a family, and a group or all the three in different contexts and situations or in conjunction with one another.



Did u know? No system of stratification is static/stable for ever. Even rigid systems of stratification based on caste, race, ethnicity and estate are changing quite perceptibly.

Flexibility in norms and criteria of social stratification is being considered today as an indicator of progress, development, equality and social justice. Old systems of social stratification are, however, being transformed and replaced by the new norms and criteria of social ranking. Thus, the study of social stratification involves the understanding of ideology, structure and process as parameters of inequality and its dynamics. Ideology implies values, norms and criteria on the basis of which units are ranked as higher and lower, superior and inferior. Structure refers to the totality of units ranked, and process indicates the changes which occur in the ideology and structure of social stratification.

Structural-Functional Viewpoint

Melvin M. Tumin defines social stratification as the arrangement of any social group or society into a hierarchy of positions that are unequal with regard to power, property, social evaluation, and/or psychic gratification. Normally, power, property (class) and social evaluation (status and prestige) are considered as the most important bases of determination of position in a given society. Max Weber refers to "class, status and party" as three important "orders" of society, namely, economic, social and political, in allocation of positions, duties and responsibilities. In the

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similar way, Talcott Parsons regards social stratification as the differential ranking of the human individuals who compose a given social system and their treatment as superior and inferior relative to one another in certain socially important respects. Parsons distinguishes quite carefully between "stratification" and "differentiation" as the criteria are also differentiated as "social" and "non-social", respectively. The social criteria are the basis of the differential evaluation of units in a social system. These are : kinship, personal qualities, achievements, possessions, authority, power, etc. The non-social criteria are simply basis of differentiation. These are age and sex. Thus, for Parsons, stratification is the main aspect of normative orientation of human individuals as units.

Kaare Svalastoga does not distinguish between "differentiation" and "stratification" like Parsons. Svalastoga prefers to use the term "social differentiation" instead of "social stratification" to refer to any differences between individuals, social positions or groups, which evolve in the process of social interaction. In fact, such a view is not substantially different from the definitions as given by Tumin and Parsons. Tumin also refers to evolution of stratification in the process of social interaction as it is observed by Svalastoga. However, Svalastoga is somewhat more precise in his conceptualization of stratification. He refers to four major forms of differentiation : (1) functional differentiation or division of labour, (2) rank differentiation, (3) custom differentiation, and (4) competitive differentiation. According to Svalastoga, rank differentiation refers to stratification - status differentiated, or stratified group, organization, society. Rank differentiation is present in all known human societies and in a wide range of animal societies. Svalastoga does not differentiate between rank differentiation and hierarchy. He observes that hierarchy is a stable phenomenon and functions as a distributive system for the allotment of privileges, and as such it further strengthens hierarchy and unequal distribution, and creates a vicious circle of inequality.

Functional differentiation or division of labour is an unavoidable necessity for smooth functioning of society. The functional divisions may be non-antagonistic grades evolved/created for meeting the basic needs of a given human society. Custom differentiation refers to the rules for differential proper behaviour. Competitive differentiation implies success and failure of individual members in general or in a given context. Thus, it is the rank differentiation that applies to individuals, social positions, groups and even to societies, hence it is found universally. Like Parsons, Svalastoga also refers to biological and sociological explanations of stratification. In the biological explanations, factors of time and space and variation in stratification are not considered. The sociological explanation stresses upon both cooperation and conflict among individuals and groups.



What is Stratification?

A somewhat elaborate conceptualization is provided by P.A. Sorokin. According to Sorokin, social stratification means the differentiation of a definite population into hierarchically superposed classes. It is manifested in the existence of upper and lower layers. Stratification thus implies unequal distribution of rights and privileges, duties and responsibilities, social values and privations, social power and influences among the members of a specific society. There are different and numerous concrete forms of social stratification, such as economically stratified, politically stratified, occupationally stratified. These are principal forms and interrelated with each other.

The above mentioned conceptualizations of social stratification imply mainly status distinctions in the modern liberal western world which is encapsulated by capitalism. The fact is that the non-western world is not having the same industrial and capitalistic ethos. The assumption is that the similarity of division of labour or necessity or functionality of the same activities cannot be validated

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in all the human societies. Therefore, it is necessary to have a critical view of the above generally assumed universality and functionally of social stratification.

While analysing social stratification in pre-industrial societies, M.G. Smith writes : "Stratification never consists in the mere existence or occupancy of differential positions, but in the principles by which the distribution of access and opportunities is regulated." According to Smith, age-sets and sex are the main considerations for having access and opportunities to resources in pre-industrial societies. Age and sex are not simply biological criteria. These are social and cultural phenomena in pre-industrial societies. Parsons and Svalastoga have stated these as simply biological or non-social criteria. Political power can be legitimated on a biological basis, as elderly men would have opportunity to lead their communities undermining younger people and female members.

Smith refers to analytic and concrete concepts of stratification like analytic and concrete structures or membership units and generalized aspects of social process. Analytically, the functionalists like Tumin and Parsons regard stratification as an abstract necessity of all social systems. Concretely, it refers to empirical distributions of advantages and benefits in specific societies. Thus, Smith considers stratification as a process as well as a state of affairs. Yogendra Singh, while analysing trends in social stratification in India, looks at stratification from the points of its theory, structure and process. He observes that the element of process is more fundamental than the other points, namely, theory and structure. According to Smith, the state of affairs is both a product and condition of social process.

The analysis made by Smith is quite significant because in his view institutionalization is the basis of social relations between the grpups/units in a given society. In other words, randomness, contingency and discord cannot be the bases of a ranking system at all, hence structural principles determine nature and functioning of a system of social stratification. The prevailing distributions of advantage (processes of distribution) are regulated by structural principles. The concept of structure facilitates identification of these principles (distributions) and their combinations. Structural change implies changes or modifications in structural units, that is, status. Thus, social stratification implies not merely a ranked hierarchy, but also a homogenous quality in each of various strata. However, homogeneity may not be found in "situs" systems and in caste systems. Inequality and stratification differ from each other to the extent that stratification is generally based on normatively constructed principles and values, whereas inequality may have its genesis in pre-given unchanging systems such as lineages and age-sets. Based on the sources of social inequality, a demarcation can be worked out between stratification and inequality or, in other words, between modern industrial societies and pre-industrial societies.

Marxian Viewpoint

The classical Marxian view on social stratification is analytically quite distinct compared to the structural functional conceptualization discussed above. It would not be correct to say that Karl Marx propounded a simple theory of technological or economic determination. He professed a grand structural explanation of society, incorporating concepts of class, class-conflict and change. In his classic work *Capital* (Vol. Ill) Marx writes : "The owners merely of labour power, owners of capital, and landowners, whose respective sources of income are wages, profit, and ground-rent, in other words, wage-labourers, capitalists, and land-owners constitute the three big classes of modern society based on the capitalist mode of production." Marx further observes that middle and intermediate strata obliterate lines of demarcation everywhere. The tendency is found more and more in the development of the capitalist mode of production, transforming labour into *wage labour* and the means of production into *capital*. Landed property tends to transform into the capitalist mode of production as well.

Marx poses two questions :

1. What constitutes a class ?

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2. What makes wage labourers, capitalists and landlords to constitute the three great social classes?

Though Marx has not given a clear conception of social stratification, however, he has emphasized on empirical referents of his formulation of class and class struggle. According to Marx, each period of history is characterized by a predominant mode of production and based upon it is a class structure consisting of a ruling class and an oppressed class, which could be seen as two strata of society. The struggle between these classes determines the social relations between men and groups. This is further determined by control over the means of production, and thereby the whole moral and intellectual life of the people. Law and government, art and literature, science and philosophy - all serve more or less directly the interests of the ruling class.

We do not find a clear distinction in Marx between "class" and "status" or between class hierarchy and social stratification. Marx makes it explicit that "production" is by "social individuals" and it needs to be understood in a given "social context". In the context of social stratification the Marxian framework highlights the terms such as "domination" and "subjugation" or "effective superiority-inferiority relationships". As such, the two classes are bourgeoisie and proletariat.

Thus, according to Marx, a social class is any aggregate of persons who perform the same function in the organization of production. Historically speaking, freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, or in a word, oppressor and oppressed, constitute social classes. Marx considers class as a social reality, an existing fact. A class is a real group with a developed consciousness of its existence, its position and goals. For Marx, class is a mirror for seeing the totality of relations in a given society.



Did u know? Based on the Marxian framework, we could say that stratification is determined by the system of relations of production and "status" is determined by a man's position in this system in terms of ownership and non-ownership of the means of production.

Max Weber's Viewpoint

A sound and logically formulated view by Max Weber on social stratification can be taken as a critique on the Marxian concept of class and stratification. "Power" is a keynote of the Weberian theory of social stratification. Weber draws a clear distinction between three "orders" of society, namely, economic, social and political. He observes that "classes", "status groups" and "parties" are phenomena of the distribution of power within a community. Such a distinction drawn by Weber makes his theory multidimensional as against the unidimensional theory of class propounded by Marx.

Regarding class, Weber writes :

(*a*) A number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances.

(*b*) This component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income.

(*c*) Further, this is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labour markets.

These three points put together refer to "class situation". The class situation is determined by "market situation". The term "class" refers to any group of people that is found in the same class situation. "Property" and "lack of property" are, therefore, the basic categories of all class situations. Competition eliminates some players in the market situation and patronizes others. Class situation is thus ultimately market situation. The kind of chance in the market is the decisive moment.

However, the two are not identical. The social order is determined by the economic order to a high degree, and in turn reacts upon it. Here, we find a skilful application of Marxist ethos in Weber's

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understanding of class. Part of Weber's work may be seen as an attempt to "round out" Marx's economic materialism by political and military materialism as observed by H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills. However, Weber makes it explicit that "status groups" and "classes" are not reducible to each other. The status groups hinder the strict carrying through of the sheer market principle. In contrast to classes, status groups are normally communities, generally of an amorphous kind. Like a "class situation", there is a "status situation", characterized by social estimation of honour, shared by a plurality. It may be knit to a class situation, and vice versa. But status honour need not necessarily be linked with a class situation. It normally stands in sharp opposition to the pretensions of sheer property. Both propertied and propertyless people can belong to the same status group. However, such an equality of status between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is unthinkable in the Marxist paradigm. The two are polar opposites, being class enemies, and their statuses would also differ in view of their antagonistic positions in the system of production.



"Social order" is defined by the way in which social honour is distributed in a society. The social order and the economic order are related to the legal order.

Weber uses the expression "guarantees of status stratification" in the context of status honour, expressed by a specific style of life. The most important point here is that there are restrictions on "social" intercourse, and this is not subservient to economic status. "Status circle" is evident through marriages. Visits to streets, neighbourhoods, groups, temples, specific places, etc., are examples of encircling of status groups. "Ethnic segregation" and "caste" are best illustrations of status circles. Stability of a system of status stratification comes from both legally sanctioned social order and conventions and rituals. "Stylization" of life originates from status groups. Consumption of goods and "styles of life" are indicators of stratification of status groups.

The most crucial element in Weber's formulation of social stratification is "power". Power is defined by Weber "as the "chance of a man or of a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others, who are participating in the action". There could be economically or socially determined power. However, power as such is different from the economically and socially determined power. On the contrary, the emergence of economic power may be consequence of power existing on other grounds. Man does not strive for power only in order to enrich himself economically. Power, including economic power, may be valued "for its own sake". Quite often, the striving for power is also conditioned by the "social honour" it entails. Not all power, however, entails social honour. Mere economic power or naked money power is by no means a recognized basis of social honour. Nor is power the only basis of social honour. Induced social honour, or prestige, may even be the basis of political or economic power. Power as well as honour may be guaranteed by the legal order, but normally it is not their primary source. The legal order is an additional source, and it cannot always secure power and honour.

In the famous essay "Class, Status, Party", Weber states that "parties" live in a house of power. Action of "parties is oriented toward the acquisition of "social power", that is, to say," toward influencing a communal action no matter what its contents may be. Power exists in any organization or in a given context in relation to the actors/participants having interaction therein. Parties always mean a societalization, aiming at a goal, may be due to personal reason. "Class situation" and "status situation" may determine "parties". But parties may not be either "classes" or "status groups". They are partly "class parties" and partly "status parties". And sometimes they are neither. Parties reflect the structure of domination within the community. Means of attaining

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power vary from naked violence to canvassing for votes with money, social influence, the force of speech, suggestion, clumsy hoax, etc.

Critique

After discussing various conceptualizations of social stratification, a critique of these becomes essential here. However, a somewhat detailed discussion will be taken up in the chapter on "Theories of Social Stratification". Ralph Dahrendorf provides a distinct explanation of social stratification. According to Dahrendorf, social stratification is an immediate result of the control of social behaviour by positive and negative sanctions. Sanctions always create "a rank order of distributive status". Stratification lies in certain features of all human societies which are necessary to them. A society has an authority structure to sustain its system of norms and sanctions. It has a system of "institutionized power". Thus, stratification originates from "closely related trinity of norm, sanction and power". The authority relations are always relations of superordination and subordination.



How is 'Class Situation' determined ?

As a critique of the Parsonian, Marxian and Weberian conceptualizations of stratification, Dahrendorf's views on stratification are quite refreshing and logically sound formulation. He observes : "A theory of class based on the division of society into owners and non-owners of means of production loses its analytical value as soon as its legal ownership and factual control are separated." The differential distribution of positions of authority in societies and their institutional orders create social classes and their conflicts. Control over the means of production is, therefore, a special case of authority. Classes are an element of social structure, determined by authority and its distribution. As such, classes are social conflict groups determined by exercise or non-exercise of authority within any imperatively coordinated association.

A critique of the concept of social stratification is also found in Stanislaw Ossowski's concept of class. According to Ossowski, the classes constitute a system of most comprehensive groups in the social structure. The class division concerns with social status connected with a system of privileges and discriminations not determined by biological criteria, and the membership of individuals in a social class is relatively permanent. What Ossowski has suggested is considerably different from the Marxian and the Weberian conceptualizations. It is closer to what is said by Tumin and Parsons. Ossowski suggests a scheme of "gradation" to understand social structure. Gradation denotes both subjectively evaluated and objectively measured rank. He classifies gradation into simple and synthetic categories. Gradation is based on objective criteria, such as income, wealth and property, which are bases of class divisions, and it becomes synthetic when two or more incommensurable criteria are involved.

Another critique of the conventional concept of stratification is found in the view that classes are subjective categories and strata are objective units. A social class is a group by way of its thinking for its position and interests, and a common outlook. Richard Centers considers "class" as a "subjective component", and "stratum" is determined by objective dimensions, such as occupation, income, power, standard of living, education, function, intelligence, etc. Class is subjective in character, being dependent upon class consciousness (i.e., a feeling of group membership). A man's class is a part of his ego. Such a view of class seems to be quite unconvincing, however, it provides a psychological explanation of class and stratification.

Close to the Dahrendorf's view on social stratification, is the view held by Gerhard Lenski. Contrary to the views presented by Tumin and Parsons, Lenski puts emphasis on causes of social stratification rather than its consequences. His focus is on power and privilege rather than prestige. He equates

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social stratification with the distributive process in human societies - the process by which scarce values are distributed as a basic phenomenon.

A look at the literature on social stratification makes it clear that the element of "process" has become pronounced in the wake of rapid transformation of human society. The terms such as "embourgeoisiement", "privatization", "deproletarianiz ation", "status incongruence", "status crystallization", "classles sness", "egalitarianism", "destratification", "restratification", "globalization", etc., have added more inputs in the conceptualization of stratification, and it has also made the task of defining social stratification quite difficult and complex.

Before we discuss the concept of "social mobility", while summing up the conceptualization of social stratification, we may again mention that stratification has two forms : (i) a ranked scale or inequality, and (ii) differential social ordering. The first one, as Dipankar Gupta argues, can be characterized as *hierarchy*, and the second one indicates more of horizontal distinctions or differences. There could be hierarchies of power, status or influence. Biological or linguistic differences are generally non-hierarchical, whereas differences based on income, wealth, power, etc., are ranked and they are essentially hierarchical. However, hierarchy and difference are related to each other, hence, social order and mobility are constantly part of the same reality, that is, arrangement of social relations in a given society. No system of social stratification is completely stable, static and closed; and similarly no system is completely dynamic, changing and open. It is a matter of extent/degree to which a system is closed or open. Social mobility in a given system of stratification would depend upon its nature and functioning.

1.2 Meaning and the Characteristics of Social Stratification

Differentiation is the law of nature. It is true in the case of human society. Human society is not homogeneous but heterogeneous. Men differ from one another in many respects. Human beings are equal as far as their bodily structure is concerned. But the physical appearance of individuals, their intellectual, moral, philosophical, mental, economic, political and other aspects are different. No two individuals are exactly alike. Diversity and inequality are inherent in society. Hence, human society is everywhere stratified.

All societies arrange their members in terms of superiority, inferiority and equality. The vertical scale of evaluation, this placing of people in layers is called stratification. Those in the top stratum have more power, privilege and prestige than those below. Thus, stratification is simply a process of interaction of differentiation whereby some people come to rank higher than others are.

Definition of Social Stratification

According to Ogburn and Nimkoff

"The process by which individuals and groups are ranked in a more or less enduring hierarchy of status is known as stratification".

Gisbert says,

"Social stratification is the division of society into permanent groups of categories linked with each other by the relationship of superiority and sub-ordination"

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

According to Lundberg,

"A stratified society is one marked by inequality by differences among people that are evaluated by them is being 'lower' and 'higher'.

According to Raymond W. Murry

"Social stratification is a horizontal division of society into 'higher' and lower' social units".

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Characteristics of Social Stratification

According to M.M. Tumin the main attributes of stratification are follows:

1. It is Social

Stratification is social in the sense it does not represent biologically caused inequalities. It is true that such factors as strength, intelligence, age and sex can often serve as the basis of strata are distinguished. But such differences by themselves are not sufficient to explain why some statuses receive more power, property and prestige than others. Biological traits do not determine social superiority and inferiority until they are socially recognized and give importance. For example the manager of an industry attains a dominant position not by his strength nor by his age but by having the socially defined traits. His education, training skills, experiences, personality, character etc. are found to be more important than his biological qualities.

Further as Tumin has pointed out, the stratification system

(*i*) is governed by social norms and sanctions,

(*ii*) is likely to be unstable because it may be disturbed by different factors and

(*iii*) is intimately connected with the other system of society such as practical family, religious, economic, education and other institutions.

2. It is Ancient

The stratification system is quite old. According to historical and archaeological records, stratification was present even in the small wandering bands. Age and sex were the main criteria of stratification then, women and children last was probably the dominant rule of order. Difference between the rich and poor, powerful and humble, freemen and slaves was there in almost all the ancient civilizations. Ever since the time of Plato and Kautilya social philosophers have been deeply concerned with economic, social and political inequalities.

3. It is Universal

The stratification system is a worldwide phenomena. Difference between the rich and the poor or the 'haves' and the 'have nots' is evident everywhere. Even in the non-literate societies stratification if very much present. As Sorokin has said, all permanently organized groups are stratified.

4. It is in Diverse Forms

The stratification system has never been uniform in all the societies. The ancient Roman society was stratified into two strata-the partricians and the plebians. The ancient Aryan society into four Varnas the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Sudras, the ancient Greek society into freemen and slaves, the ancient Chinese society into the mandarins, merchants, farmers and the soldiers and so on. Class, caste and estate seem to be the general forms of stratification to be found in the modern world. But stratification system seems to be much more complex in the civilized societies.

5. It is Consequential

The stratification system has its own consequences. The most important, most desired, and often the scarcest things in human life are distributed unequally because of stratification. The system leads to main kinds of consequences.

(*i*) Life chances and

(*ii*) Life-style refers to such things as infant mortality, longevity, physical and mental illness, childlessness, marital conflict, separation and divorce. Life-styles include such matters as the mode of housing residential area, ones education means or recreation relationship between the parents and children, the kind of books, magazines and TV shows to which one is exposed ones mode of conveyance and so on. Life chances are involuntary while life-styles reflect differences in preferences tastes and values.

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Self-Assessment

Choose the correct options

1. Stratification is broadly categorised into
   (*a*) Upper class (*b*) Middle class (*c*) Lower class (*d*) All of these
2. Class is subjective in character, being dependent upon class
   (*a*) Awareness (*b*) Consciousness (*c*) Standard (*d*) None of these
3. Human Society is
   (*a*) Homogeneous (*b*) Heterogeneous (*c*) Both *a* and *b* (*d*) None of these
4. The process by which individuals and groups are ranked in a more or less enduring hierarchy of status is known as
   (*a*) Social class (*b*) Stratification (*c*) Society (*d*) All of these
5. The ancient Greek society divided into
   (*a*) Freemen (*b*) Slaves (*c*) Both *a* and *b* (*d*) None of these

1.3 Summary

- Social stratification is a universal phenomenon, an unavoidable feature of all human societies, though found in different forms and degrees. Individuals, positions and groups are differentiated based on specific norms and criteria in a given society. The norms and criteria on the basis of which people are differentiated evolve over a period of time.
- The study of social stratification involves the understanding of ideology, structure and process as parameters of inequality and its dynamics. Ideology implies values, norms and criteria on the basis of which units are ranked as higher and lower, superior and inferior.
- The social criteria are the basis of the differential evaluation of units in a social system. These are : kinship, personal qualities, achievements, possessions, authority, power, etc. The non-social criteria are simply basis of differentiation. These are age and sex.
- Functional differentiation or division of labour is an unavoidable necessity for smooth functioning of society. The functional divisions may be non-antagonistic grades evolved/ created for meeting the basic needs of a given human society. Custom differentiation refers to the rules for differential proper behaviour. Competitive differentiation implies success and failure of individual members in general or in a given context.
- There are different and numerous concrete forms of social stratification, such as economically stratified, politically stratified, occupationally stratified. These are principal forms and interrelated with each other.
- Inequality and stratification differ from each other to the extent that stratification is generally based on normatively constructed principles and values, whereas inequality may have its genesis in pre-given unchanging systems such as lineages and age-sets. Based on the sources of social inequality, a demarcation can be worked out between stratification and inequality or, in other words, between modern industrial societies and pre-industrial societies.
- "The owners merely of labour power, owners of capital, and landowners, whose respective sources of income are wages, profit, and ground-rent, in other words, wage-labourers, capitalists, and land-owners constitute the three big classes of modern society based on the capitalist mode of production."
- According to Marx, each period of history is characterized by a predominant mode of production and based upon it is a class structure consisting of a ruling class and an oppressed class, which could be seen as two strata of society. The struggle between these classes determines the social relations between men and groups.

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- A social class is any aggregate of persons who perform the same function in the organization of production.
- A sound and logically formulated view by Max Weber on social stratification can be taken as a critique on the Marxian concept of class and stratification. "Power" is a keynote of the Weberian theory of social stratification. Weber draws a clear distinction between three "orders" of society, namely, economic, social and political. He observes that "classes", "status groups" and "parties" are phenomena of the distribution of power within a community.
- The class situation is determined by "market situation". The term "class" refers to any group of people that is found in the same class situation. "Property" and "lack of property" are, therefore, the basic categories of all class situations. Competition eliminates some players in the market situation and patronizes others.
- However, the two are not identical. The social order is determined by the economic order to a high degree, and in turn reacts upon it.
- "Social order" is defined by the way in which social honour is distributed in a society. The social order and the economic order are related to the legal order.
- Weber uses the expression "guarantees of status stratification" in the context of status honour, expressed by a specific style of life. The most important point here is that there are restrictions on "social" intercourse, and this is not subservient to economic status. "Status circle" is evident through marriages.
- The most crucial element in Weber's formulation of social stratification is "power". Power is defined by Weber "as the "chance of a man or of a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others, who are participating in the action".
- Induced social honour, or prestige, may even be the basis of political or economic power. Power as well as honour may be guaranteed by the legal order, but normally it is not their primary source. The legal order is an additional source, and it cannot always secure power and honour.
- Action of "parties is oriented toward the acquisition of "social power", that is, to say," toward influencing a communal action no matter what its contents may be. Power exists in any organization or in a given context in relation to the actors/participants having interaction therein.
- A society has an authority structure to sustain its system of norms and sanctions. It has a system of "institutionized power". Thus, stratification originates from "closely related trinity of norm, sanction and power". The authority relations are always relations of superordination and subordination.
- Ossowski suggests a scheme of "gradation" to understand social structure. Gradation denotes both subjectively evaluated and objectively measured rank. He classifies gradation into simple and synthetic categories. Gradation is based on objective criteria, such as income, wealth and property, which are bases of class divisions, and it becomes synthetic when two or more incommensurable criteria are involved.
- A look at the literature on social stratification makes it clear that the element of "process" has become pronounced in the wake of rapid transformation of human society. The terms such as "embourgeoisiement", "privatization", "deproletarianiz ation", "status incongruence", "status crystallization", "classles sness", "egalitarianism", "destratification", "restratification", "globalization", etc., have added more inputs in the conceptualization of stratification, and it has also made the task of defining social stratification quite difficult and complex.

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- All societies arrange their members in terms of superiority, inferiority and equality. The vertical scale of evaluation, this placing of people in layers is called stratification. Those in the top stratum have more power, privilege and prestige than those below.
- Stratification is social in the sense it does not represent biologically caused inequalities. It is true that such factors as strength, intelligence, age and sex can often serve as the basis of strata are distinguished. But such differences by themselves are not sufficient to explain why some statuses receive more power, property and prestige than others. Biological traits do not determine social superiority and inferiority until they are socially recognized and give importance.
- The stratification system is quite old. According to historical and archaeological records, stratification was present even in the small wandering bands. Age and sex were the main criteria of stratification then, women and children last was probably the dominant rule of order. Difference between the rich and poor, powerful and humble, freemen and slaves was there in almost all the ancient civilizations. Ever since the time of Plato and Kautilya social philosophers have been deeply concerned with economic, social and political inequalities.
- The stratification system has never been uniform in all the societies. The ancient Roman society was stratified into two strata-the partricians and the plebians. The ancient Aryan society into four Varnas the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Sudras, the ancient Greek society into freemen and slaves, the ancient Chinese society into the mandarins, merchants, farmers and the soldiers and so on.

1.4 Key–Words

1. Social Evaluation : Status and Prestige.
2. Canvassing : Persuade people to vote for the party.

1.5 Review Questions

1. What do you mean by Stratification? Discuss the concept of social stratifications.
2. Explain the characteristics of social stratification

Answers: Self–Assessment

1. (*d*) 2. (*b*) 3. (*b*) 4. (*b*) 5. (*c*)

1.6 Further Readings



1. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Perspectives on Social Stratification, Rawat Publication.
2. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Social Stratification & Mobility, Rawat Publication.
3. Hasnain, Nadeem, 2011 : Indian Society and Culture Continuity and Change, Jawahar Publishers and Distributors.

Unit 2: Basic Concepts Relating to Stratification

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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Explain the Equality and Inequality to Stratification.
- Describe the Hierarchy and Social Exclusion to Stratification.
- Understand the Poverty and Deprivation to Stratification.

Introduction

Social inequality is a universal phenomena. It can exist either in the form of a hierarchy of groups or individual or without the creation of a hierachy. When social inequalities do not create hierarchy it is called social differentiation. But when social inequality manifests itself in the form of hierarchy or gradation of groups, that is called *social stratification.* Social stratification is a process of hierarchical arrangement of social strata in a society. Ascription and achievement are two normative principles of determining such arrangements in all societies. According to Gisbert, "Social stratification is the division of society into permanent groups of categories linked with each other by the relationship of superiority and sub-ordination"

Social stratification is a historical process. It became a social institution of society at a certain level of social evolution and social development. In simpler societies, social differentiation did exist but were without institution of social stratification. With the generation of economic surplus and accumulation of wealth stratification started to grow.

Stratification in society created. But here the question is on what basis does society create the hierarchy? By conferring different rewards like wealth, prestige, power etc., to different groups society create the basis of stratification. Thus, there are three major organising principles of social stratification: (1) status, (2) wealth, and (3) power etc. These rewards can be overlapping and power too. This kind of stratification is called cumulative stratification.

Status is the earliest principle of stratification. So far as social stratification is concerned, status means a position in the hierarchy on the basis of honours or respect. In Indian society caste is an example of status group.

Wealth is another reward in organising stratification. Change in mode of production i.e. from agricultural to industrial, brought change in the principle of stratification. With the increase in

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production, more wealth was generated. Here accumulation of wealth became the basis of stratification. The group who has greater control over the wealth occupied higher rank in the society and *vice-versa*. Class is an example of wealth based stratification.

Power is the chance a man or group to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others by legitimate use of coercive method. Power is the power over others. Power enters into the notion or stratification when it is used by the state to take active role in influencing the principle of stratification. e.g. through the implementation of positive discrimination, state is changing the stratification system of Indian society. Lower caste people are now capable of changing their position in the traditional hierarchy.

2.1 Equality and Inequality to Stratification

Equality

The main question is : Is equality opposite of inequality ? The other questions are : Is equality illusory ? Is there equality only before the law ? Is there an inherent contradiction between individual rights and social equality ? Is equality a consequence of violent or radical action on the part of subordinate/subaltern groups ?

There is a view that "all men are created equal", at least at the time of birth, despite different backgrounds of their parents and cultural heritage. Another view is that democratic societies pronounce equalities of opportunity, outcome, conditions of work, etc. However, it is necessary to understand the varying meanings and definitions of the concept of "equality". The concepts of "equality" and "inequality" are basic to modern social sciences and the capitalist system. Politically speaking, equality may be a genuine expression, but economically, differential access to societal resources seems to be a stark reality. Such an inequality is rationalized and justified as an essential and inevitable phenomenon. Dichotomy between equality and inequality is quite obvious in almost all walks of life, however, the two are not absolute. Equality and inequality are relative phenomena, and undergo perceptible change over a period of time due to both structural and cultural factors of social change. There is always a striving for equality, and in this process, at times, new forms of inequality may also emerge, along with disappearance/weakening of the persisting inequalities.

When privileges based on status and birth decline, equality and citizenship flourish. However, genuine equality can be achieved only if capitalistic institutions such as the market, private property, family inheritance and class system are mitigated. Revival of individualism, competition and achievement as dominant values should normally encourage equality in life, but in effect, it does not happen. No society can achieve equality among its citizens without the state support and welfare measures for the weak and poor. Equality as a system of egalitarian relations disturbs stability or status quo in a given society. According to Bryan S. Turner, equality can be ensured only if there is political stability and egalitarian ideology. The nature of equality, the conditions of social stability, ideology and social movements bring about greater equality and coherence.

Equality as a Value and as a Concept

Turner observes : "Basically, I conceive equality as a value and as a principle, as essentially modern and progressive". Today, inequality is no longer taken for granted or as a natural circumstance of human beings. Why inequality ? What is its moral justification ? Not only equality is a modern value, it is also used as a measure of modernity and of the whole process of modernization. Equality is associated with the development of the nation-state, political egalitarianism and social justice.

Equality, both as a value and a principle, took a concrete shape in the slogan "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity", given in the French Revolution of 1789. Social inequality was rejected as an inevitable and natural phenomenon in the French Revolution. The American Revolution of 1765

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also boosted up the idea and practice of equality by emphasizing upon universalistic social participation. The election of Barak Obama as President of America in 2009 is a secure blow to the ethnic/racial factor in achievement of equality.



Did u know? Having origin of a black African Muslim, Obama's ascendance to the presidency of the US is a marvel not only in the annals of American society, but it is also a pathbreaking happening in the history of democracy and anti-apartheidism.

Equality undermines traditional distinctions of social status and hierarchy. The principle of equality also obliterates individual differences and liberties. True equality would not coexist with caste-based hierarchy and feudalism. No ascriptive differences or birth-based considerations would be allowed to determine opportunities and accesses in real life. Such a principle and pattern of equality could emerge through revolutionary movements and practice of egalitarianism. True equality would not be antithetical to personal liberty and cultural individuality. Turner writes : "The modern notion of equality cannot be divorced from the evolution of citizenship." While agreeing with R.H. Tawney and T.H. Marshall, Turner conceptualizes egalitarian citizenship in terms of three major dimensions : (i) equality before the law, personal liberty, the right to own property, and freedom of speech; (ii) political citizenship; and (iii) social citizenship. Political struggles are an essential ingredient of efforts for achieving equality. For example, democratic political systems have emerged due to (1) check arbitrary rules, (2) replace arbitrary laws with just and rational ones, and (3) obtain a share for the underlying population in the making of rules. Democratic systems have emerged from the destruction of political absolutism and despotism. Karl Marx talked of revolutionary class consciousness for overthrow of the hegemonic capitalistic system.

Equality and Social Justice

John Rawls in his well-known work *A Theory of Justice* (revised edition) deals with the question of "equality" from the point of social justice than merely as a political concept. Rawls relates equality to the basic structure of society and govern the assignment of rights and duties and regulate the distribution of social and economic advantages. He observes :

1. Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others.
2. Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices upon to all.

In fact, these are two principles of justice as put forward by Rawls. He further observes : "All social values - liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the social bases of self-respect - are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any, or all, of these values is to everyone's advantage." The second principle as outlined by Rawls is succinctly put as follows :

	Everyone's Advantage	
Equally open	Principle of Efficiency	Difference Principle
Equality as careers open to all	System of Natural Liberty	Natural Aristocracy
Equality as equality of fair opportunity	Liberal Equality	Democratic Equality

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To ensure equality in the true sense, basic structural conditions on the social system may be imposed. For example, free market arrangements can exist within a framework of political and legal institutions. The framework regulates excessive accumulations of property and wealth and equal opportunities of education for all. Rawls writes : "Chances to acquire cultural knowledge and skills should not depend upon one's class position, and so the school system, whether public or private, should be designed to even out class barriers." Rawls deals mainly with the "democratic equality". Natural aristocracy implies that social contingencies are not regulated beyond what is required by formal equality of opportunity, for the good of the poor sections of society.

According to Rawls, democratic equality and the principle of difference are coterminous and coexistent. The principle of difference removes indeterminance of the principle of efficacy by judging the social and economic inequalities of the basic structure. Equality implies improving the expectations of the least advantaged members of society, rather than higher expectations of the better situated members. Distribution of income and access to resources of society can explain the principles of difference and efficacy keeping in view the better off and the disadvantaged members and their expectations. The difference principle can benefit practically every one. For example, functional gradations, as explained by S. Ossowski in case of Poland, are based on the necessity of difference, and not on the basis of hierarchical arrangement of society.

Rawls explains equality as an egalitarian conception of justice. The principle of difference, being an inevitable phenomenon, is related to redressal of disadvantages of the deserving members of society. Inequalities are there because the distribution of natural talents and contingencies of social circumstance are unjust. Further, Rawls observes that "the natural distribution is neither just nor unjust; nor is it unjust that persons are born into society at some particular positions. These are simply natural facts. What is just and unjust is the way that institutions deal with these facts". Ascriptive basis for distribution is unjust in a caste society because the system becomes closed. Arbitrariness of the system makes it unjust and inequalitarian.

Further, Rawls mentions that the basis of equalities lies in justice. There are three levels as observed by Rawls where the concept of equality applies. These are : (1) the administration of institutions as public systems of rules; (2) the application of equality to the substantive structure of institutions; and (3) the entitlement of the moral persons to equal justice.

Thus, equality is essentially justice as regularity. Equal basic rights need to be assigned to all persons. Persons who are capable of having a conception of their good and a sense of justice, an effective desire to act and to adhere to the principles of justice, may be granted equality for their own good and that of their society. As such, equality cannot rest on natural attributes.

Rawls offers some general comments on equality. We have to ensure that everyone has equal rights. The principles of justice are applied equally to all. A procedural rule without substantive force alone cannot ensure justice and equality. Fairness is the kernel of equality, for example, the distribution of certain goods, and equality of the respect owed to persons irrespective of their social position, can be explained by the principle of justice. The first is defined by the second, and second is defined by the first. There is a balancing mechanism in society which is based on fairness of opportunity.

The ideas of absolute equality, justice and fairness are simply utopia. However, human history shows that efforts have always been made to eradicate, remove or weaken social and economic inequalities with a view to have equality among men to the maximum extent possible in a given society. As inequality persists, so is eagerness to have equality in society. The two are relative and paradoxical phenomena.

In the Indian context, particularly with reference to policy of reservations in educational institutions and in government jobs, Marc Galanter refers to formal vs substantive equality, and vertical and horizontal views on equality. In fact, Galanter talks of equal opportunity and the varied meanings

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of equality. The three cardinal principles, namely, equality, justice and fairness, remain the same in most human societies.

Inequality

Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote an essay on "What is the origin of inequality among men and whether it is authorized by natural law"? Rousseau, a maladjusted rebel, thought that the question of inequality was a basic one. He seriously pondered over the twin problems of man's "original nature" and the origin of society. He believed in the cause of the corrupting influence of civilization. "The social structure itself perverted human nature, our way of life, our search for happiness." "To ask how inequality came to be is to inquire how society came to be, since inequality is a social relationship." According to Rousseau, society "came to be", as an act of human will, and that it is possible to conceive of a "natural man" living in isolation (at least theoretically). However, Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* tells us : "Historical or social man, because of the very conditions of social living, is inevitably evil - that is, he is impelled to selfish actions that will hurt others. The more civilized, the society, the more evil he will be." Further, Rousseau's "natural man" is happy and unchanged. "The imposition of society on this natural man created a situation of conflict, inequality, distorted values, and misery."

Such an origin seems to be logically sound, philosophically convincing, but unrealistic in actual social life.

Income, wealth, occupation, education, power, style of life, etc., determine the nature and process of distributive justice or injustice, as the case may be. Based on differentiation emanating from these considerations, social relations are shaped among people in a society. Thus, there could be several modes of status determination, including birth, ethnicity, race, and the above mentioned criteria. A given pattern of stratification would determine the nature and functioning of a society.



Did u know? Social inequality is generally considered a matter of distributive justice and social relations among people of higher and lower strata.

Why Inequality ?

Some quite pertinent questions are put by R. Dahrendorf, Why is there inequality among men ? Where do its causes lie ? Can it be reduced, or even abolished altogether ? Or do we have to accept it as a necessary element in the structure of human society ?

Dahrendorf, while tracing the history of inequality, says that in the 18th century the origin of inequality was the focal point, and in the 19th century the formation of classes was debated, and today (20th and 21st centuries) we are talking of the theory of social-stratification. The original problem persists, however, a new explanation may be offered. The following statement by Dahrendorf is noteworthy :

> The lathe operator and pipe fetter, the general and the sergeant, the aristocratically gifted child and the mechanically gifted child, the talented and the untalented, are all pairs of unequals. Yet these inequalities are evidently themselves rather unequal, and have to be distinguished from one another in at least two respects. First, we must distinguish between inequalities of natural capability and those of social position; and second, we must distinguish between inequalities that do not involve any evaluative rank order and those that do.

Based on the combination of these two approaches, Dahrendorf refers to four types of inequality. In relation to the individual, there are : (a) natural differences of kind in features, character and

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interests, and (b) natural differences of rank in intelligence, talent and strength. Correspondingly, in relation to society, these are : (c) social differentiation of positions essentially equal in rank, and (d) social differentiation based on reputation and wealth and expressed in a rank order of social status.

Dahrendorf, while acknowledging Rousseau's distinction between natural and social inequalities and also preference for the natural inequalities as good, expresses his interest primarily in inequalities of the stratification type. Inequalities are both distributive and non-distributive. Wealth and prestige belong to the area of stratification, hence distributive. Property and charisma are non-distributive. The "distributive" and the "non-distributive" could also be termed as "intransitive" and "transitive" inequalities. Aristotle was also concerned like Rousseau with the origin of social stratification (inequality). However, both lacked what we need today as a sociological enquiry in social stratification. While commenting on the Aristotelian argument of natural equality, Dahrendorf observes : "If men are equal by nature, then social inequalities cannot be established by nature or God; and if they are not so established, then they are subject to change, and the privileged of today may be the outcasts of tomorrow; it may even be possible to abolish all inequalities." Rights of mans and citizens have roots in such a philosophy. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social differences, therefore, can only be based on general utility as observed by Dahrendorf.

The following questions are also posed by Dahrendorf :

1. If men are by nature equal in rank, where do social inequalities come from ?
2. If all men are born free and equal in rights, how can we explain that some are rich and others poor, some respected and others ignored, some powerful and others in servitude ?

It shows that the assumption of an original state of inequality, and the explanation of the origin of inequality in terms of property, have remained unchallenged till date. Theoretically, a society could be conceived without private property, but in reality even the erstwhile Soviet Union and East European countries and China of today have reconciled with differences of possession and income, hence, social inequality. Division of labour forms the basis of differences in occupation and income. This is also the basis of class formation (i.e., inequality of rank). Since occupations are differentiated, the emergence of social classes and positions becomes an inevitable corollary.

Ubiquity of Social Inequality

Going by the views of Talcott Parsons, Kingsley Davis and W.E Moore and others, we may state that the inequality is there in all human societies, and a set of norms of behaviour and sanctions are attached to them. Law, in a broad sense, is the epitome of all norms and sanctions. And, as such, law is both a necessary and a sufficient condition of social inequality. "There is inequality because there is law; if there is law, there must also be inequality among men."

All men may be equal before the law, but they may no longer be equal after it. In other words, norms, sanctions, that is, law, make people unequal. Two points may be noted here :

(*i*) that every society is a moral community, and therefore recognizes norms that regulate the conduct of its members; and

(*ii*) that these norms require sanctions to enforce them by rewarding conformity and penalizing deviance. Obviously, this is a functionalist viewpoint, and we will discuss the same later on while explaining approaches to the study of social stratification.

Though Dahrendorf seems to follow considerably the functionalist approach, the following searching questions raised by him are quite relevant for a critical appraisal of the Parsonian and Davis and Moore approach :

1. Where do the norms that regulate social behaviour come from ?
2. Under what conditions do these norms change in historical societies ?

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3. Why must their compulsory character be enforced by sanctions ?
4. Is this in fact the case in all historical societies ?

Dahrendorf claims that such questions weaken the rigidities of inequality. However, he observes that "the origin of social inequality lies neither in human nature nor in historically dubious conception of private property. It lies rather in certain features of all human societies, which are (or can be seen as) necessary to them". Differentiation of social positions in terms of the division of labour or the multiplicity of roles is a universal feature of all societies. However, evaluative differentiation of ranks or social positions based on scales of prestige and income is not correspondingly universal and inevitable.

According to Dahrendorf, social stratification is a very real element of our everyday lives. It is a system of distributive system, i.e., a system of differential distribution of desired and scarce things. Besides honour and wealth, prestige and income, legitimate power, patronage or the distribution of power as a reward for certain deeds or virtues could be considered as criteria of differential ranks. Following Weber's distinction between power and authority, Dahrendorf observes that power and power structures logically precede the structures of social stratification. Thus, explanation of inequality lies in power structures. In other words, norm, sanction and power are closely related phenomena in the explanation of social inequality. Inequality is a reality. The idea of a perfectly egalitarian society is unrealistic and terrible.

W.G. Runciman also asks the question : "What exactly should be meant by social inequality ?" The obvious answer to this question is that the rich and the poor are found everywhere and in all societies, and so are the strong and the weak in every known society. In every epoch, inequality has been a burning issue, and efforts have also been made to reduce its magnitude. The fact is that social inequalities are diverse and intricate as viewed by Runciman. He writes : "If social inequalities, of any kind, are to be either evaluated or explained, they must be first of all distinguished by reference to the numbers of separate dimensions in which the members of societies are collectively ranked above or below one another - that is, the meaning to be given to 'social stratification' as such." Based on such a definition of social inequality, and agreeing with Weber's triology of "class, status and party", Runciman affirms class, status and power as three crucial dimensions of social inequality (stratification). We would discuss this classification later on while explaining the Weberian approach.

2.2 Hierarchy and Social Exclusion to Stratification

Hierarchy

Ordinarily, the term 'hierarchy' is used for ordering of social units as superior and inferior or higher and lower. Race and caste are considered as natural hierarchies as both imply an ordering of endogamous groups having unchanging hereditary membership. On the basis of endogamy caste and race have some similarities, but the two are based on distinct and different principles, and the actual functioning of the two is also not similar.


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Hierarchy as a principle of ranking or ordering signifies for more rigidity and staticness compared to the terms like stratification, differentiation, class and power.

Louis Dumont on Hierarchy

Famous French sociologist Louis Dumont has given a big boost to the concept of hierarchy while explaining India's caste as a system of rigid and static system of stratification. Dumont's well-

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known work *Homo Hierarchicus* is, literally speaking, opposite of 'Homo Acqualis'. In other words, India is characterized by "hierarchy", and France (or Europe) is seen by "equality". For Dumont, caste system represents a special type of inequality explained by ideas and values. The hallmark of Dumont's analysis of the caste system is the fundamental opposition between the pure and the impure (binary opposition). However, the opposition is not absolute as the pure encompasses the impure, and the two together would form organic links of the caste system.

Even before Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus*, C. Bougle defined caste system in terms of hierarchically arranged hereditary groups, segregation and interdependence. In fact, in caste hierarchy, discreteness, segregation, ordering and interdependence coexist as elements of the same theory and practice. Thus, caste hierarchy has mutually entailed "principles" along with the principle of opposition between the pure and the impure. But, then, the problem arises when Dumont calls it (the pure and the impure divide) as "a single true principle". This opposition, according to Dumont, is a characteristic feature of men and women, food and clothes, occupations and division of labour, etc. Now, the question is : To what extent, historically and even today, the principle of opposition between the pure and the impure pervades Indian society ?

A clear exposition of the concept of hierarchy is given by Chris Smaje. Smaje refers to "ranking hierarchies" and "encompassing hierarchies". The first one implies where a universe of discourse is completely divided into two or more non-overlapping classes as superior and inferior entities. Thus, this becomes a "transitive hierarchization". Broadly, such a schema applies to Euro-American ideologies of racial hierarchy, and gender and class inequality. The second one implies that the ranked units are coextensive with the universe of discourse; in other words, the superior entity encompasses the inferior one. There is a sort of "unity" of the pure and the impure, for example, this is so in India's caste system. In a very different context, Karl Marx talked about "the unity of opposites", in the context of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat working together in industry, though for different aims and pursuits. In the second context, complementariness or contradiction is contained in a unity of superior order. Hence, it is necessary to define the level of hierarchy at which it is situated.

Here, we may mention about C. Levi-Strauss' idea of "dual organizations", which has some resemblance with Dumont's analysis of hierarchy. The hierarchy of ranking roughly corresponds with Levi-Strauss' concept of "diametric" organization, and the notion of the encompassing hierarchy is in tune with the idea of "concentric" organization of Levi-Strauss. Diametric structures may evince equality insofar as their two elements are viewed as complementary, but remain unequal. On the contrary, the concentric structures are always unequal because they are arranged around, or emanate from, a superior central point. The question is : How relevant are the ideas or frameworks given by Dumont and Levi-Strauss to understand and explain India's hierarchy of castes ? Smaje hints at the limitations of both the models, and talks of the "radial" model of caste relations, which denies any single, central point of hierarchical preeminence. A "triadism" or a third or a mediating element may be required to link the hierarchically arranged groups/units. The "radial" model of caste refers to a multiple set of context - specific centre-periphery relations or sacred-profane dichotomy.

Thus, Dumont stands out as an exponent of the concept of hierarchy. Dumont writes : "A hierarchical relation is a relation between larger and smaller, or more precisely between that which encompasses and that which is encompassed." This is what Smaje calls "concentric hierarchies". The encompassing and the encompassed bear both complementariness and opposition under the principle of caste hierarchy. Pure and impure remain static as the basis on which this dichotomy exists/persists on a permanent basis.

T.N. Madan has praised Dumont for making most profound and important contributions to the study of Indian society. He has clarity of thought, erudity of scholarship and lucidity in writing. Madan writes : "*Homo Hierarchicus* is an unusual work in its conception, design and execution".

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Madan remarks that the principle of ranking by which the elements of a whole (society) are ranked in relation to the whole help us to obtain a holistic view of the system and to overcome the dualism of opposition. As such, Dumont seems to follow the functionalist approach to social stratification as propounded by Talcott Parsons and Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore.

Another, a somewhat surprising admirer of Dumont, is Dipankar Gupta. He considers Dumont, the author of *Homo Hierarchicus* "as the most advanced and sophisticated proponent of the social anthropological mainline view of the caste system". Further, Gupta writes :

Dumont is not only the most systematic exponent of the dominant conceptual view of the caste system but he attained this distinction by undermining almost all the known conceptual views on the subject, either in terms of detail - in the case of those whose overall conclusions match his - or, in terms of conception and methodology in the case of those whose conclusions that could perhaps be extended to refute his, to wit, those of Senart and Bougie. When he refutes Bougie, Senart or even Ghurye and Karve, he takes them on, not so much for what they say, but more for what they imply. As we find ourselves in sympathy with these implications, it is to Dumont that we must necessarily pay greater attention.

Gupta also advises even critics of Dumont must accept his singular contribution that to this subject. In our view, the so-called singular contribution of Dumont is conceptualization of "hierarchy" as a rigid and static system of stratification, opposite to the egalitarian and equalitarian system of social relations in France and the rest of the western world. Somewhere Dumont is haunted by the superiority of the western world in general and its intellectual superiority in particular. His inhospitable comments and observations on the views of some of the Indian scholars like A.K. Saran, Iravati Karve, A.R. Desai, etc., testify his preconceived inferiority of the Indian society and its intellectuals. Since T.N. Madan has gone out of his way to admire Dumont's understanding of the caste system, it is necessary to see the implications of Dumont's viewpoint as emanating from his own perspective of the idea of 'Homo Acqualis'.

Let us now see what Gupta says after speaking in defence of Dumont's idea of caste system as "a true hierarchy". The questions raised by Gupta in lieu of "Facts Against Theory" (given by Dumont) are quite eclectical, and refer to disconnected contexts, situations, issues, regions and people. As such there cannot be a "true hierarchy" of the caste system.

Caste Hierarchy

The idea of caste elaboration or of a scale of rigidity-flexibility of caste ranking, suggested by McKim Marriott, is quite relevant to know the different regions of India. Gupta seems to agree to this view. He writes : "A true hierarchy, according to us, is an unambiguous linear ranking on a single variable. Besides such criteria as wealth in cash, women, cattle, or land, authority can also be a valid criterion for a true and continuous hierarchy." Relative positions of status and authority would change by effecting transformation of a given organization/system. Gupta further writes : "Continuous hierarchies are built around a single criterion, which is shared to a greater or lesser extent by all those who occupy that hierarchy." There are discrete classes that separate units into exclusive categories, incommensurable and qualitative. A person is, for example, a Brahmin or a Vaishya or a Rajasthani/Bengali/Punjabi, etc. He cannot be anything else except one in a given context. "A continuous hierarchy, on the other hand, is made up on the basis of a quantitative variation of a single attribute across levels or strata." Thus, there are continuous hierarchies and discrete classes. This distinction largely corresponds with the classifications proposed by Smaje and Levi-Strauss.

Dumont has mainly relied on indological sources on India's caste system. Independent India shows vast differences, differential interests, conflicts, exploitation, upward and downward mobilities, and internal and overseas migrations, which, in fact, should become the basis of understanding of Indian social formation. Dumont has played down the importance of social

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change. There is no unilinear hierarchy of castes. Multiple hierarchies characterize today's Indian society. Intercaste and intracaste relations are no more the bedrock of organic ties between the castes and within the castes. Family and individual matter in attaining honour and social prestige more than their castes and communities. "Increasingly, caste is becoming a desideratum, a state of mind, a plastic and malleable institution. No more hypersymbolisation is manifest to express caste differences and typifications on a continuing basis."



What do you understand by "concentric hierarchies " ?

Social Exclusion

Though the word 'exclusion' has been in vogue in writings on social stratification, caste, class and race, however, as a concept, "exclusion", particularly "social exclusion", has come in currency in the 1970s in the western studies on social stratification and race. The basis of caste system is the principle of inclusion and exclusion or pure and impure to define superior and inferior positions and access to power and privilege. Since "exclusion" implies social relations, we may like to use the concept as "social exclusion" rather than mere exclusion.

In Western Europe, the concept is used to indicate different forms of social disadvantage, such as economic, social, political, cultural, etc. Social exclusion is found in different ways and intensity. Whenever social integration is under stress, it is assumed that social exclusion has surfaced. In the 1970s Europe witnessed an alarming magnitude of unemployment, and it was taken as a situation of disturbed cohesion. In America, the concept of "relative deprivation" is used to distinguish between the advantaged and the disadvantaged sections of society. In India, generally minorities and particularly poor from amongst them are considered as "marginalized". Karl Marx perceived poverty, unemployment and deprivation, disengagement, withdrawal, underclass and alienation as the main elements of social exclusion. Herbert Marcuse thought lack of freedom for an individual as the main diversion of his exclusion.

The concept of "social exclusion" is often used in the studies relating to electoral participation, access to societal resources and opportunities, unemployment, poverty, education, health care, etc. It is widening today. Whether social exclusion is, for example, a cause of poverty or poverty causes social exclusion is a vexed issue. Despite such ambiguities, social exclusion is referred to as the rupture of social bonds. It is a powerful concept to explain social inequality.

Dimensions of Social Exclusion

There are different forms of social exclusion. India is an apt example of social exclusion. Caste, jajmani system, untouchability, religion, gender, disability, customs and practices, etc., have been used for social exclusion of lower castes and communities. According to the International Institute of Labour Studies (IILS)/UNDP, the criteria of social exclusion are as follows :

1. Social exclusion is a negative state of process - in resource allocation mechanisms, including power relations, agency, culture and social identity.
2. Social exclusion is also a subjective or objective feature of the people's lives expressed - a sense of inferiority or as being materially deprived, respectively.
3. It can be considered as an individual's disadvantage.
4. Social exclusion also means denial to goods, services and resources to individuals.

No one liked to be excluded from his environs and social situations. Social exclusion is thus an involuntary condition, imposed by the state society, and particularly by the privileged few. Social exclusion causes conflict and dissension, and certainly it disturbs social harmony and cohesion.

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However, it is not static and unidimensional. Its four dimensions are :

1. Civic integration
2. Labour market
3. Welfare state provision
4. Family and community

Social exclusion adversely affects these aspects of society.

Poverty and Social Exclusion

Except the civic integration, the dimensions of labour market, welfare state and family and community refer to *poverty* of the deprived people. The fact is that social exclusion amounts to disadvantage and deprivation. While, on the one hand, it is related to marginality, closure, disaffiliation, dispossession, deprivation and destitution, on the other hand, it implies insertion, integration, citizenship and solidarity.

In the Indian context, social exclusion is reflected in lack of distributive justice, caste-based distances and discrimination, unequal access to opportunities, and weak policies of the state. In other words, society and state create ground for social inequalities in terms of caste hierarchy and poor welfare policies, respectively. We may pose the following questions in this context :

1. How social exclusion is related to poverty ?
2. Is it because of the lack of distributive justice ?
3. What is wrong with policy making relating to the poor, backward and marginalized ?
4. What are the social impediments in social inclusion ?

The poor are excluded everywhere from access to life chances and dignity. They are dehumanized in all walks of life. Thus, the concept of social exclusion overlaps with poverty and marginalization, and it also embraces the relational as well as distributive aspects of poverty. How to identify social inclusion? What are its indicators ? One can make out the condition of social exclusion based on the following indicators :

1. Multidimensional nature of poverty
2. The problem of multiple disadvantage
3. Psycho-social elements of disadvantage
4. Importance of agency and participation
5. Violence and personal insecurity
6. Comparisons of poverty and social exclusion
7. Programmes to combat poverty and social exclusion
8. Access
9. Personal security
10. Vulnerability
11. Self-esteem

Since we can understand and analyse the entire gamut of inequalitarian social relationships with the framework of social exclusion, the institutions and actors which cause exclusion, alienation and deprivation can be made accountable and amended/reformed as per the requirements of social justice. We may put forward the following questions for an agenda of the study of social exclusion :

1. Who decides on the parameters of social exclusion ?
2. Do the poor consider themselves to be an "excluded" lot ?

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3. Who are the self-excluded groups ?
4. Who have rejected the authority of the state or society ?
5. Are there socially excluded people but not poor ?
6. Is it that there are poor people, but not socially excluded ?
7. What about the position of indigenous groups, women, and others who might find themselves marginalized in a society where the conditions for inclusion were set by others ?

State and Social Exclusion

The state is responsible for exclusion of the people from participation in its economic, political and social activities. Veiled rationalizations of persistence of inequality could be seen in the Constitution of India and also in the institutional structures and practices. The poor remain excluded from the mainstream activities, and today due to social and political awakening, they have attained a sense of realization about their low standing in the society. No one gets self-excluded except those who are truly saints and renounced the world. Such people are a rare entity. History shows that there have been movements and protests against the exploiters and the privileged. Our view is that poor remain socially excluded, and only exceptionally rich are socially excluded. Those who are socially excluded are not because of their volition, but are because of the hegemony and supremacy of the dominant section of society.

Thus, social exclusion is an evocative, ambiguous, multidimensional and expansive concept. It explains who are denigrated, alienated, isolated, "outsiders" in a given society. Since society is not a static entity, not only the concept of social exclusion needs to be amended corresponding to structural and cultural changes, the nature of social exclusion and inclusion also undergoes a change.

Nutrition, elementary education, basic health care, access to housing, water supply, sanitation and social security are the main issues of social exclusion in India today. Let us admit that exclusion-inclusion is an age-old reality in Indian society. Hierarchy of castes is rooted in the principle of distance and inclusion-exclusion. The principle of pure-impure is nothing but that of excluding the people by declaring them as "impure", and including others by calling them as "pure". The socially excluded groups, namely, lower castes, have been addressed as exterior castes, dalits, untouchables, etc. The dynamics of the concept and process of social exclusion are evident in the changing matrix of India's lower castes.

Tribal people and indigenous communities have been alienated from land and forest resources. Several movements and agitations launched against the exploiters testify the exclusion and struggle of the excluded for their insertion and inclusion. Women are alienated and excluded in their homes. Recent attempts for "feminification" are against women's exploitation and subjugation. Patriarchy has been a cruel tool in the hands of male-dominated society. Poor are deprived of proper nutrition, education, healthcare, employment, participation in decision-making, and other related activates. Who is responsible for this malady ? We may have to see carefully the dynamics of the state since independence. Why the rich remain rich or become richer ?

2.3 Poverty and Deprivation to Stratification

Poverty and Level of Living

Poverty and inequality go together and coexist, though in different measures, in different societies. Poverty is generally caused by the same set of factors which account for persistence of inequality. However, social impediments in achieving equality or in alleviation of poverty may vary from society to society. Caste, ethnicity and race may be found as pronounced hurdles in some given societies, whereas lack of economic opportunities and resources and persisting economic and

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political inequalities may be found as stumbling blocks in other societies. The fact is that the poor are denied access to opportunities for their betterment or because the people are poor, they remain incapable to compete with those who are not poor and are capable to have successful access to opportunities and resources.

The Constitution of India, in the Directive Principles of State Policy states : "The State shall strive to promote ... a social order in which justice social, economic, and political, shall inform all the institutions, and in particular, shall secure "that the citizens, men and women equally have right to an adequate means of livelihood", and "that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriments." The question is : What is a nationally desirable "minimum level of living" ? Generally, the state is supposed to provide facilities for education and health of the people, particularly for those who cannot manage by themselves. For private consumption on food, clothes, shelter, water, electricity and other such basic requirements, an individual is required to manage how to determine such a minimum level of living and income for the same in rural and urban settings ?

Understanding the Poverty Line

V.M. Dandekar and Nilakantha Rath used *energy* requirement as a criterion for defining poverty. The poverty line was defined as that expenditure level where the households, on an average, met the requirement of 2,250 calories per capita per day. Based on this, Dandekar and Rath, in 1960-61, suggested an annual per capita consumer expenditure of Rs. 170 for a diet adequate at least in respect of calories. An annual per capita urban expenditure of Rs. 271 was considered equivalent to an annual per capita rural expenditure of Rs. 170. An expenditure level came to be called as the *Poverty Line*.

Besides economic standing or income level as the basis of poverty, there is also poverty caused by given institutions. People are poor and suffer various social and economic handicaps/impediments. In India, certain castes, communities, families and individuals are victims of institutional barriers and handicaps. Landless agricultural workers and marginal peasants have suffered at the hands of the big landowners and monied people.

Amartya Sen has dealt with the concept of poverty in varied situations and from different standpoints. While realizing the value of the conventional measure of poverty in terms of levels of income and "head count" of people, Sen observes that measurement of poverty can be done in two distinct though in interrelated ways : (1) *identification* of the poor, and (2) *aggregation* of statistics regarding the identified poor to derive an overall index of poverty. In these two exercises, *deprivation* is seen in terms of low income of the people. Sen finds fault with both the "head count" and "aggregation" exercises for measuring poverty. The example given by Sen makes his point quite clear. He says : "Consider two persons 1 and 2 - person 1 has an income level somewhat lower than that of 2. But 2 has a kidney problem and needs to use a dialysis machine which costs him a lot, and he has also a much more impoverished life than person 1. Who is the poorer of the two, person 1, because his income is lower, or person 2, because his capability set is more restricted."

Descriptive and Policy Forms of Poverty

Based on this, poverty can be seen in both *descriptive* and *policy* forms. In the first view, the identification of poverty is an acknowledgement of deprivation. We can know who are truly deprived in society. In the second view, poverty is identified with a policy recommendation for its alleviation. The first view makes the description primary and the policy conclusion derivative. The second view simply identifies poverty with a policy recommendation, that is, something needs to be done for poverty alleviation. A public action is brought in focus, and here the first view becomes derivative. Sen, however, opines that the descriptive view should precede the policy choice. Diagnose deprivation first, and then opt for alleviation ways and means thereupon.

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Sen sees poverty better in terms of capability failure than in terms of the failure to meet the "basic needs" of specified commodities.

In a more recent book, *Development as Freedom*, Amartya Sen clearly exposes "poverty as capability deprivation". He observes as follows :

1. Poverty can be sensibly identified in terms of deprivation; the approach concentrates on deprivations that are intrinsically important (unlike low income, which is only *instrumentally* significant).
2. There are influences on capability deprivation - and thus on real poverty - other than lowness of income (income is not only instrument in generating capabilities).
3. The instrumental relation between low income and low capability is variable between different communities and even between different families and different individuals (the impact of income on capabilities is contingent and conditional).

The third issue is particularly important in considering and evaluating public action in reducing inequality or poverty or depreciation. The real poverty is seen through capability deprivation. Age, sex, illness or some disability can impediment capability building of a person. Preference for a boy, rather than for a girl, is quite common in Indian families. Some castes and communities, are not allowed to participate in some functions and activities. According to Sen, the capability perspective enhances the understanding of the nature and causes of poverty and deprivation by shifting primary attention away from *means* to *ends*, and to the freedoms to satisfy these ends.

Poverty in India

In rural India, caste hierarchy and landholdings intersected before Green Revolution. More or less similar was association between caste and occupation. In other words, higher the position of a caste, greater was its control on land and hold on lucrative occupations. Macro-structural changes, including Green Revolution, have benefited rural people in general, although in an unequal measure. During the last six decades since independence, several secular or non-caste occupations have come up, on which caste-based access does not exist. Some of the new occupations, being quite lucrative, are grabbed by the resourceful sections of society.

Marginal peasants and landless agricultural and manual workers suffered a lot in the past. However, due to several employment schemes and enhanced daily wages, there is perceptible improvement in the magnitude of alleviation of poverty. Migration to towns and cities has also reduced the incidence of poverty.

The main cause of poverty is unemployment, including underemployment. Low wages and dependence of members of a family on one or two earners also cause poverty. There are ever-increasing and changing inequalities in both rural and urban settings. The rural poor have a tendency to migrate to the urban centres, and thereby adds to urban unemployment or underemployment, and to the problems of housing, electricity, water and sanitation. Squatters, chawls, jhuggi-jhonpadis and jhonpadpatis are the common names for dwellings of the urban poor. Mumbai and Kolkata inhabit nearly 30 per cent of its population in squatter settlements. The growth of slums is quite rapid and enormous in metropolises and other big towns.

Oscar Lewis observes that cities, slums poverty and a specific culture are intertwined phenomena. "Culture of poverty" is not just a matter of deprivation or disorganization, but a way of living with given solutions for human problems. He has observed this in urban Latin America and New York. Culture of poverty is a sub-culture in urban slums. He writes :

The lack of effective participation and integration in the major institutions of the larger society is one of the crucial characteristics of the culture of poverty. Poverty itself is the root cause of the culture of poverty. Uprootedness and isolation, meager wages, underemployment, lack of intimate social life, personal insecurity, lack of access to civic amenities, etc., are some of the characteristic

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features of urban poverty. In our context, rural-urban nexus persists to a considerably extent, hence the urban poor, who have migrated form villages, do not suffer from isolation and uprootedness.

Lastly, the poor - rural or urban - are not a monolith. They are a differentiated lot, working as manual and construction workers, masons, agricultural labourers, artisans in tiny industries, and as domestic servants, etc. There are some who are working in formal and organized sectors of our economy. The poor also come from different castes, communities, regions and religions. Access to jobs and opportunities and their own preferences are influenced by the social-cultural background of both rural and urban poor.

In general, incidence of poverty, both from the points of income and capability, has come down. Various development programmes, employment schemes, plans for slum clearance, means of transport and communication, etc., have contributed to reduction in social inequality and poverty.

Self-Assessment

Choose the correct options

1. The Slogan "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity given in
   (*a*) 1789 (*b*) 1785 (*c*) 1855 (*d*) 1775
2. The American Revolution of ..... boosted up the idea and practice of equality by emphasizing upon universalistic social participation.
   (*a*) 1765 (*b*) 1775 (*c*) 1789 (*d*) 1791
3. The framework regulates excessive accumulations of property and wealth and equal opportunities of ..... for all.
   (*a*) Job (*b*) Education (*c*) Both *a* and *b* (*d*) None of these
4. The author of Homo Hierarchicus is
   (*a*) Wilbert Moore (*b*) Davis (*c*) Dumont (*d*) None of these
5. The theory "Facts Against Theory" was given by
   (*a*) Dumont (*b*) Gupta (*c*) Desai (*d*) Davis

2.4 Summary

- The concepts of "equality" and "inequality" are basic to modern social sciences and the capitalist system. Politically speaking, equality may be a genuine expression, but economically, differential access to societal resources seems to be a stark reality. Such an inequality is rationalized and justified as an essential and inevitable phenomenon. Dichotomy between equality and inequality is quite obvious in almost all walks of life, however, the two are not absolute.
- When privileges based on status and birth decline, equality and citizenship flourish. However, genuine equality can be achieved only if capitalistic institutions such as the market, private property, family inheritance and class system are mitigated. Revival of individualism, competition and achievement as dominant values should normally encourage equality in life, but in effect, it does not happen. No society can achieve equality among its citizens without the state support and welfare measures for the weak and poor.
- Equality undermines traditional distinctions of social status and hierarchy. The principle of equality also obliterates individual differences and liberties. True equality would not coexist with caste-based hierarchy and feudalism. No ascriptive differences or birth-based considerations would be allowed to determine opportunities and accesses in real life. Such a principle and pattern of equality could emerge through revolutionary movements and

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practice of egalitarianism. True equality would not be antithetical to personal liberty and cultural individuality.

- Rawls explains equality as an egalitarian conception of justice. The principle of difference, being an inevitable phenomenon, is related to redressal of disadvantages of the deserving members of society. Inequalities are there because the distribution of natural talents and contingencies of social circumstance are unjust.
- The ideas of absolute equality, justice and fairness are simply utopia. However, human history shows that efforts have always been made to eradicate, remove or weaken social and economic inequalities with a view to have equality among men to the maximum extent possible in a given society.
- Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* tells us : "Historical or social man, because of the very conditions of social living, is inevitably evil - that is, he is impelled to selfish actions that will hurt others. The more civilized, the society, the more evil he will be." Further, Rousseau's "natural man" is happy and unchanged. "The imposition of society on this natural man created a situation of conflict, inequality, distorted values, and misery."
- There could be several modes of status determination, including birth, ethnicity, race, and the above mentioned criteria. A given pattern of stratification would determine the nature and functioning of a society.
- Inequalities are both distributive and non-distributive. Wealth and prestige belong to the area of stratification, hence distributive. Property and charisma are non-distributive. The "distributive" and the "non-distributive" could also be termed as "intransitive" and "transitive" inequalities. Aristotle was also concerned like Rousseau with the origin of social stratification (inequality).
- According to Dahrendorf, social stratification is a very real element of our everyday lives. It is a system of distributive system, i.e., a system of differential distribution of desired and scarce things. Besides honour and wealth, prestige and income, legitimate power, patronage or the distribution of power as a reward for certain deeds or virtues could be considered as criteria of differential ranks.
- The term 'hierarchy' is used for ordering of social units as superior and inferior or higher and lower. Race and caste are considered as natural hierarchies as both imply an ordering of endogamous groups having unchanging hereditary membership. On the basis of endogamy caste and race have some similarities, but the two are based on distinct and different principles, and the actual functioning of the two is also not similar.
- Caste hierarchy has mutually entailed "principles" along with the principle of opposition between the pure and the impure. But, then, the problem arises when Dumont calls it (the pure and the impure divide) as "a single true principle".
- A "triadism" or a third or a mediating element may be required to link the hierarchically arranged groups/units. The "radial" model of caste refers to a multiple set of context - specific centre-periphery relations or sacred-profane dichotomy.
- "A hierarchical relation is a relation between larger and smaller, or more precisely between that which encompasses and that which is encompassed." This is what Smaje calls "concentric hierarchies".
- "A continuous hierarchy, on the other hand, is made up on the basis of a quantitative variation of a single attribute across levels or strata."
- There is no unilinear hierarchy of castes. Multiple hierarchies characterize today's Indian society. Intercaste and intracaste relations are no more the bedrock of organic ties between the castes and within the castes. Family and individual matter in attaining honour and social

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prestige more than their castes and communities. "Increasingly, caste is becoming a desideratum, a state of mind, a plastic and malleable institution. No more hypersymbolisation is manifest to express caste differences and typifications on a continuing basis."

- The basis of caste system is the principle of inclusion and exclusion or pure and impure to define superior and inferior positions and access to power and privilege. Since "exclusion" implies social relations, we may like to use the concept as "social exclusion" rather than mere exclusion.
- The concept of "social exclusion" is often used in the studies relating to electoral participation, access to societal resources and opportunities, unemployment, poverty, education, health care, etc. It is widening today. Whether social exclusion is, for example, a cause of poverty or poverty causes social exclusion - is a vexed issue.
- Social exclusion is a negative state of process - in resource allocation mechanisms, including power relations, agency, culture and social identity.
- The poor are excluded everywhere from access to life chances and dignity. They are dehumanized in all walks of life. Thus, the concept of social exclusion overlaps with poverty and marginalization, and it also embraces the relational as well as distributive aspects of poverty.
- The state is responsible for exclusion of the people from participation in its economic, political and social activities. Veiled rationalizations of persistence of inequality could be seen in the Constitution of India and also in the institutional structures and practices.
- Thus, social exclusion is an evocative, ambiguous, multidimensional and expansive concept. It explains who are denigrated, alienated, isolated, "outsiders" in a given society. Since society is not a static entity, not only the concept of social exclusion needs to be amended corresponding to structural and cultural changes, the nature of social exclusion and inclusion also undergoes a change.
- Caste, ethnicity and race may be found as pronounced hurdles in some given societies, whereas lack of economic opportunities and resources and persisting economic and political inequalities may be found as stumbling blocks in other societies. The fact is that the poor are denied access to opportunities for their betterment or because the people are poor, they remain incapable to compete with those who are not poor and are capable to have successful access to opportunities and resources.
- The Constitution of India, in the Directive Principles of State Policy "states : "The State shall strive to promote ... a social order in which justice social, economic, and political, shall inform all the institutions, and in particular, shall secure "that the citizens, men and women equally have right to an adequate means of livelihood", and "that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriments."
- The poverty line was defined as that expenditure level where the households, on an average, met the requirement of 2,250 calories per capita per day.
- According to Sen, the capability perspective enhances the understanding of the nature and causes of poverty and deprivation by shifting primary attention away from *means* to *ends*, and to the freedoms to satisfy these ends.
- Marginal peasants and landless agricultural and manual workers suffered a lot in the past. However, due to several employment schemes and enhanced daily wages, there is perceptible improvement in the magnitude of alleviation of poverty. Migration to towns and cities has also reduced the incidence of poverty.

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- The rural poor have a tendency to migrate to the urban centres, and thereby adds to urban unemployment or underemployment, and to the problems of housing, electricity, water and sanitation. Squatters, chawls, jhuggi-jhonpadis and jhonpadpatis are the common names for dwellings of the urban poor.

2.5 Key-Words

1. Dichotomy : If there is a dichotomy between two things there is a very great difference between them.
2. Ubiquity : If you talk about the ubiquity of something, you mean that it seems to be everywhere.

2.6 Review Questions

1. Discuss the basic concepts of stratification.
2. Write a short note on equality and inequality to stratification.
3. Explain the hierarchy and social exclusions to stratification.
4. Discuss the views of Louis Dumont on Hierarchy

Answers: Self–Assessment

1. (*a*) 2. (*a*) 3. (*b*) 4. (*c*) 5. (*a*)

2.7 Further Readings



1. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Perspectives on Social Stratification, Rawat Publication.
2. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Social Stratification & Mobility, Rawat Publication.
3. Hasnain, Nadeem, 2011 : Indian Society and Culture Continuity and Change, Jawahar Publishers and Distributors.

Unit 3: Theories of Social Stratification–I

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Objectives
Introduction
3.1 Theoretical Formulations of Davis and Moore
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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Explain the Theoretical Formulations of Davis and Moore.
- Discuss the Theoretical Formulations of Parsons.

Introduction

Functionalist theories start with the assumption that all societies want stability, orders and peace. They assume that there are certain basic needs which must be met if society is to survive. They therefore, look to social stratification to see how far it meets these basic needs what they called functional pre-requisite. Functionalists treat society as an organism consisting of different part and assume that these facts of society form an integrated whole. This approach maintains that every component of the social structure performs specific functions which are necessary for the survival of that society.

Thus functionalists are primarily concerned with the function of social stratification, with its contribution to the maintenance and well-being of society. The functionalists believe that all the functions carried out by the various parts of the society are functional for its survival some functions are superior to the others. So the people who perform superior functions are highly ranked in the hierarchy. The functionalists are primarily concerned with discovering the basis of this hierarchy and the reasons for its acceptance in society.

3.1 Theoretical Formulations of Davis and Moore

American sociologist Davis and Moore gave their famous theory of stratification in an article entitled 'Some principles of stratification' in 1945 in American Journal of Sociology. They argued that all social systems share certain functional prerequisites which must be met if the system is to survive and operate efficiently. One such important functional prerequisite is effective role allocation and performance. There are four aspects of this prerquisite. Firstly, all roles must be filled, secondly, they will be filled by those best able to perform those roles, thirdly, that the necessary training for them be undertaken and fourthly, that the roles be performed conscientiously means with dedication towards the duty. They argued that all societies need some mechanism for insuring effective role allocation and performance. This mechanism is social stratification which they see as a system which attaches unequal rewards and privileges to the different positions in society.

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Functions of Stratification

People differ in terms of their innate ability and talent positions, differ in terms of their importance for the survival and maintenance of society. Certain positions are more functionally important than others. A major function of stratification is to match the most able people with the functionally most important positions. It does this by attaching high rewards to those positions. The aim for such rewards motivates people to compete for them and in theory the most talented will win through. Davis and Moore concluded that social stratification is a device by which societies insure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons. Unequal reward are beneficial for societies in two ways. Firstly, it motivates people to fill certain position and secondly, the rewards must be unequal even after fulfilling the position so that the persons who are appointed are motivated to improve their performance further. In modern societies people occupy positions according to their skills and qualifications. In traditional societies ascription was the basis of filling up the positions. In such a system, the unequal rewards would not have any effect in improving the efficiency of the system. Davis and Moore argued that even though the son of labourer will remain a labour in such a system, if he performs his duties well he will be rewarded through other means.

The Functional Prerequisites of Davis and Moore

Davis and Moore argued that all social systems share certain functional prerequisites which must be met if the system is to survive and operate efficiently the first functional prerequisite is effective role allocation and performance. This will ensure that the right people are placed in proper positions. There are four aspects of this prerequisite :

(*i*) All roles in society must be filled,

(*ii*) The most able people must fill these positions,

(*iii*) Training for them be undertaken,

(*iv*) Roles to be performed conscientiously.

They believed that stratification is the mechanism to ensure effective role allocation by providing unequal rewards of different positions.

The Measures Suggested by Davis and Moore for Measuring the Importance of a Position

Davis and Moore suggested that the functional importance of a position can be measured in two ways. Firstly, by the degree to which a position is functionally unique being no other positions that can perform the same function satisfactorily. The second measure of importance is the degree to which other positions are dependent on the one in question.

Criticism of Davis and Moore's Theory

Davis and Moore's views provoked a long debate. On the face of it their theory appear rational and realistic. But it is contrast to traditional ascriptive societies where mobility in occupation is strictly restricted. Tumin, their famous intellectual opponent has criticised their theory on several grounds. There is no objective way of measuring the functional importance of position which was treated by Davis and Moore as the basis of distribution of rewards. Tumin argues that Davis and Moore have ignored the influences of power on the unequal distribution of rewards. For example, the difference between the wages of farm labourers and coal mines can be interpreted as a result of the bargaining power of the two groups. Secondly, there is no proof that exceptional talents are required for those positions which Davis and Moore consider important. Tumin also questions the view that the training required for important position would be regarded as a sacrifice and therefore in need of compensation. He sees no reason for continuing this compensation for the rest of an individual's working life.

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Tumin rejects the view that unequal rewards motivate talented individuals to fill the important positions. He argued that in reality they act as barriers to the motivation and recruitment of talent. Closed stratification systems operate in exactly the opposite way to Davis and Moore's theory. Tumin further argued that Davis and Moore have failed to consider the possibility that those who occupy highly rewarded position will erect barriers to recruitment. Tumin claims that the American Medical Association is restricting the entry of more people into the profession. It artificially creates the shortage of doctors and ensures high rewards for medical services. Tumin claimed that stratification is a divisive rather than an integrating force because differential reward encourage hostility, suspicion and distrust among the various segments of a society.


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Social discrimination is present in every society and that act as a barrier. Thus the ascribed status of untouchables prevent even the most talented from becoming Brahmins.

T.B. Bottomore in his study 'elites and societies' shows that even in developed countries such as Britain and France where the stratification system is more open an overwhelming majority of the civil servants are children of civil servants. There is also another fact that the access to improve knowledge and skill matters a lot to fulfil the position with efficient people.

Tumin concluded that stratification, by its very nature, can never adequately perform the functions which Davis and Moore assign to it. He maintains that, 'It is only when there is a genuinely equal access to recruitment and training for all potentially talented persons that differential rewards can conceivably be justified as functional. And stratification systems are apparently inherently antagonistic to the development of such full equality of opportunity.'

The Davis-Moore Theory of Stratification : The Life Course of a Socially Constructed Classic

In 1945 Davis and Moore, following an earlier formulation by Davis, proposed a functional theory of stratification that was intended to account for what they contended was the "universal necessity" for social inequality in any social order. Beginning with an article by Tumin in 1953, the Davis-Moore theory elicited regular analysis, commentary, criticism, and debate through the 1970s. Although professional work on the theory has largely ceased since the late 1980s, the Davis-Moore theory remains perhaps the single most widely cited paper in American introductory sociology and stratification textbooks and constitutes "required reading" in hundreds, if not thousands, of undergraduate and graduate courses throughout the United States. The present paper traces the history of the debate and attempts to explain the theory's longevity and vitality in the face of what has amounted to largely negative assessments by other sociologists over the preceding fifty years.

In 1945, two young Harvard-trained sociologists, Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore, published a short, seven-page article on social and economic inequality in the younger of the discipline's two most prestigious journals, the *American Sociological Review*. Titled "Some Principles of Stratification," the article elicited no published commentary for a number of years. However, beginning in 1953 with the publication of Melvin Tumin's article entitled "Some Principles of Stratification : A Critical Analysis," the Davis and Moore article began to receive regular public treatment and attention within the discipline. No doubt Davis and Moore's willingness (and, one may say, eagerness) to join issue with Tumin contributed to the original article's increasing notoriety. Over time, "Some Principles of Stratification" became one of the most frequently cited—and negatively evaluated—papers within American sociology. Yet, although widely discredited on both logical and empirical grounds, the article remains a mainstay of conventional sociology and is even considered a "classic." How did this happen ?

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A Biographical Sketch

Kingsley Davis (1908-1997), a student of Pitirim Sorokin and Talcott Parsons, received his Ph. D. from Harvard's Department of Sociology in 1936. Parsons, at the time, was gathering around him the faculty and students who would assist him in developing functional theory, including Davis and Moore. In the late 1930s Davis held a position at Pennsylvania State College (now Pennsylvania State University), followed by positions at Princeton University during the 1940s; Columbia University during the 1950s; and the University of California at Berkeley from the late 1950s until his retirement in the 1980s. Davis' primary academic interest eventually centered on demography.

Wilbert E. Moore (1914-1987) received his Ph.D. from Harvard's Department of Sociology in 1940. While Moore was also a student of Parsons, Davis—along with Robert Merton and John Riley—was part of Parsons' first graduate student cohort and Davis maintained a closer intellectual and collegial connection with Parsons early in his career. In 1945, at the time "Some Principles of Stratification" was written, both Davis and Moore were teaching at Princeton University (as was their first published critic, Melvin Tumin). Moore remained at Princeton University until the mid-1960s. He left for the Russell Sage Foundation for a few years before joining the faculty at the University of Denver, where he completed his career. In addition to receiving their doctoral degrees from a prestigious department, and teaching at several highly regarded universities, both Davis and Moore were elected to terms as president of the American Sociological Association.

The "Some Principles" Debate in Historical Context

In 1953 Melvin Tumin published the first public commentary on the Davis-Moore article. Tumin carefully critiqued their thesis and later engaged in a series of published exchanges with Davis and Moore regarding the theory.

The visibility, and perhaps the tenor, of the debate with Tumin, as well as its location within the pages of the *ASR,* engendered wide attention and led to more published responses to the original article. Indeed, the Davis and Moore article is now recognized as "one of the most widely cited and debated pieces to ever appear in a sociology journal," a rather remarkable feat for an argument consisting of fewer than 5,000 words. No fewer than thirty substantive articles and commentaries have appeared addressing the Davis-Moore article in professional journals in the United States over the years, many written by prominent members of the profession. Moreover, most of these papers appeared in the major journals : the majority of the articles during the 1950s and 1960s appeared in the pages of the *American Sociological Review*, with nearly two-thirds appearing in either the *ASR* or the *American Journal of Sociology*. In this regard, one may almost say that the stature of the *ASR*—only in its tenth year when the original article was published—and the prominence of the Davis-Moore controversy grew symbiotically, each feeding off the other.

While primarily an American thesis advanced and debated by American, academic sociologists, papers, books, and course syllabi addressing the article and ensuing controversy have been written by foreign authors and appeared in languages other than English, a further indicator of the reach, if not influence, of the article. Given the immediate postwar insularity of American sociology, the diffusion of the Davis-Moore article into European sociology circles was not immediate. Most foreign references are within the last twenty-five years, not the first twenty-five years, after publication of the 1945 paper.

Throughout the long debate there was—as Broom and Cushing observed twenty-five years ago—"a sense that the writers were dealing with matters worthy of argument," although addressing a topic and theory "susceptible to diverse interpretations." More than fifty years later, this sense of "worthiness" permeates the entire debate.

3.2 Theoretical Formulations of Parsons

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Parsons, an American thinker has earned fame as a serious social thinker, who has tried to give new original thought to the contemporary social thought. He has expounded the theory of social action. For him society embraced the entire social field of man. He has also given the theory of social action and also that of social control. He was in favour of individualism. For him institutions are most important mechanism of social control. He has given views about social system and social organisation. He believed that sociology operated both in broad and narrow fields.

Talcott Parsons believed that order and stability in society are based on value consensus. Value consensus means a general agreement by members of society concurring what is good and worth-while. He argued that stratification systems derive from common values. In Parsons word, "Stratification, in its valuation aspect, then, the ranking of units in a social system in accordance with the common value system" the ranking, according to Parsons, depends on what the values of that society define as superior. For example, if a society places a high value on bravery, as in the case of Sioux Indians, those who excel in terms of this quality will receive a high rank in the stratification system. Since different societies have different value systems, the ways of attaining a high position will vary form society to society.

Value Consensus and Stratification

To Parsons stratification is an inevitable part of all human societies because he believes that stratification system are just, right and proper, since they are basically an expression of shared values. He called these shared value as social values and actions which results from these values are norms. Each society devises its own values and norms which are best suited for maintaining order and stability. Shared values are a necessary part of all social systems. He believed that power and prestige differentials are essential for the co-ordination and integration of a social system. It serves to further collective goods which are based on social values. But this is not to say that there is no conflict between the haves and have-nots. Conflict does exist between the highly rewarded and those who receive little reward. However, he argued that this conflict is kept in check by the common value system which justifies the unequal distribution of rewards if these values are challenged this would lead to instability in that society.

Role of Value Consensus

Social values are the shared belief of a society. These values arise out of the need of every society to maintain order and stability. Each society develops its own values which are best suited for maintenance of stability. They emerge out of consensus of the member of that society. Any person who performs according to the values is better rewarded. If a person violates the consensus he or she is punished. On the basis of values, individuals are evaluated and placed in the hierarchy. Differences in the strata or the rank are justified by the value system. So stratification is defined by Parsons as the ranking of units in a social system in accordance with the common values system. Hence, it is the value consensus which creates stratification in a society. They believed that stratification is the mechanism to ensure effective role allocation by providing unequal rewards of different positions.

Criticism of Parsonian Theory of Social Stratification

According to Parsons, stratification is the ranking of units in the social system in accordance with the common value system. Hence, it is the value system which creates stratification in society. His basic effort in the analysis of stratification was the problem of socials order. In Parsons word stratification is a valuation aspect. The ranking, according to Parsons, depends on what the values of that society define as superior. For example, if a society places a high value on bravery, as in the case of Sioux Indians, those who excel in terms of this quality will receive a high rank in the stratification system. Since different societies have different value systems, the ways of attaining

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a high position will vary from society to society. Further he argued that stratification is an inevitable part of all human societies because he believes that stratification system are just, right and proper, since they are basically an expression of shared values. He called these shared value as social values norms. He believed that power and prestige differentials are essential for the co-ordination and integration of a social system. It serves to further collective goods which are based on social values. But this is not to say that there is no conflict between the haves and have-nots. Conflict does exist between the highly rewarded and those who receive little reward. However, he argued that this conflict is kept in check by the common value system which justifies the unequal distribution of rewards if these values are challenged this would lead to instability in that society.

The functionalists believe that all the functions carried out by various parts of the society are functional for its survival. But they are not equal in importance. The people who perform higher functions are ranked higher. People differ in terms of their innate ability and talent. Positions differ in terms of their importance for the survival and maintenance of society. Certain positions are more functionally important than others. A most important function of stratification as believed by the functionalists, is to match the most able people with the functionally most important positions. It does this by attaching high rewards to those positions. The aim for such rewards motivates people to compete for them and in theory the mall talented will win through. Functionalists like Davis and Moore argued that social stratification is a device by which societies insurance that the most important positions are honestly filled by the most qualified persons. Parsons believes that stratification system are just, right and proper, since they are basically an expression of shared values. He called these shared value as social values norms. Each society devices its own values and norms which are best suited for maintaining order and stability. Shared values are a necessary part of all social systems. He argued that power and prestige differentials are essential for the coordination and integration of a social system. It serves to further collective goods which are based on social values. But Parsons did not neglected the conflict aspect here because he further said that there will be conflict when the social values are challenged.

Theory of Social Action

As the time passed his interest in Institutional Economics considerably developed for which credit goes to Prof. Hamilton. He was keen student of German social thinkers, including Max Weber. He also translated his work 'Protestants Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism'. He also drew inspiration from Pareto's theory of residue and non logical actions. Durkheim also inspired him in so far as his ideas about Non Natural Normative Elements of Social Action are concerned. Max Weber's ideas about capitalism and subjective meaning went a long way in formulating his ideas.



Did u know? Parsons was born in the year 1902 and graduated from London School of Economics in the year 1924. In 1927 he got his Doctorate from Hiedelberg University.

He started his career as a teacher in Emerist College and subsequently joined Harvard University. In 1944 he was appointed as Professor of Sociology. With his ideas and writings he has very much influenced contemporary social thought.

His Important Works : Though Parsons has written a lot, yet some of his important works are 'Structure of Social Action ; Theory of Social and Economic Organisations'; Essays in Sociological Theory ; The Social System and Towards a General Theory of Social Action. As already mentioned he translated Max Weber's famous work, 'Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism'.

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His Theory of Social Action : According to parsons "*The society may be defined as the total complex of relationships in so far as they grow out of actions in terms of means end relationship, intrinsic and symbolic.*" Society he believes is an element in the complete whole of human social life. The society is also effected by environments, heredity and culture on the one hand and religious, metaphysical and political systems on the other. Society is so complex that it covers and touches all relationships of man with man. Society comprises of only complex of social relationship He characterised society as sum total of all human relationship. In this regard he was much influenced by Pareto, Max Weber and many other social thinkers.



Notes Parsons is known as the chief exponent of Theory of Social Action. For him society embraced the entire social field of man.

Definition of Social Action : Before we define Social Action', a point worth noting is that his ideas in this regard developed with passage of time. It was in his book 'Structure of Social Action' that he tried to analyse the nature and implications of social action. He also gave his ideas in this regard in another volume 'The Social System' which came out in 1951. Parsons has defined social action by saying that, "*It is a process in the actor-situation system which has motivational significance to the individual actor or in the case of collectivity, its component individuals".* In other words all social actions proceed from mechanism. Social actions, according to Parsons are concerned with organism actor's relations with other persons and social institutions.

Elements of Social Action : Parson's social action has four elements. The first element is actor, who is the medium of action and through him all actions are performed. The next characteristic is the end or the object with which that action is performed. It is believed that each action must have some end to achieve. Situation is his next characteristic. Each action is performed under certain situations and not in isolation. Some situations can be within the control of the actors whereas there might be other situations which would not he under his control. Selection of Alternative Means is still another characteristic of social action. Each actor has several ends and also several means of achieving those ends. In other words there are alternative means and alternative ends. These conditions help in expediting social actions, but are not unavoidable.

Systems of Social Action : After elements, Parsons takes up systems of social actions. These are also called aspects of social action. The systems are personality, cultural and social. Personality System is responsible for meeting individual's needs for which actions are taken. But efforts cannot be made without completing certain conditions, which are distinguished by various symbols and symptoms. As the time passes these symbols acquire general meaning and ultimately different social actors under a particular cultural system perform various social inter-actions. This is cultural system. As regards social system, in the words of Parsons himself, "*A Social System consists in a plurity of individual actors inter action with each other in a situation which has at least a physical or environmental aspect, actors are motivated in terms of tendency to be optimization of gratification and whose relations to the situation including each other, is defined and motivated in terms of system of culturally structured and shaped symbols.*" But all the three systems act as three units of social action. All the three are related to each other and in fact these are complementary rather than contradictory to each other.

Though Parsons was influenced by many of his predecessors and contemporaries, yet it cannot be denied that he presented his ideas in such a way that whole theory became original. It appears that the ideas were his own and are being presented for the first time.

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Parson's Theory of Social Control

Parson's Theory of Social action was his original contribution to the field of social thought. Along with that he has also given the theory of social control. He has started with the idea that by nature and necessity every human being is a social animal and that he preserves his interests than the interests of any other person. In other words his best interests lie in himself. If he is not checked in achieving his personal interests, he is so selfish that he will not mind disturbing the whole social system. It is with the help of social controls that individual is checked so that he does not become too selfish and does not disturb social order or social stability.These controls and mechanisms must go hand in hand. Social stability can be possible only when tendencies to have selfish interests first and foremost are fully checked. In his opinion mechanism of social control is nothing else, but checking of such tendencies and habits among the human beings by which they are prepared to even disturb social stability and equilibrium, so that their selfish interests are *fully met. In his own words, "The most fundamental mechanisms of social control are to be found in the normal process of interactions in an institutional integrated social system."*


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Stability and social equilibrium is maintained with the help of some mechanisms, which the society devices and which suit best to his conditions.

Institutions : In social control institutions play a big role. In fact without institutions there can be no social control. Institutions help in integration and without that there will be divergency. Institutions help in correlating activities of various individuals and groups. These also help in minimising conflicts at social level. Thus it is with the help of institutions that some order and equilibrium is maintained.

Forms of Order : The order which helps in maintaining social equilibrium and stability is of two kinds : namely Time Schedule and Institutional Priorities. According to Time schedule order for completing an activity some schedule is fixed. In other words if there are different activities these are to be performed at different times and to be completed according to different time schedules. In this way no activity or group interferes with the other and social stability and equilibrium is maintained. But in every society there are certain actions which are given priority over other actions. These help in avoiding conflicts because every social system clearly knows about them. In the words of Parsons, there is priority scale then "in chosing one obligation above the other the individual can in general be backed by the sentiments of common value system."

Institutionalised System of Priorities : Priority can be fixed by taking individual or immediate needs. But it is always desirable that priorities should be institutionalised. Without that the individuals may get involved into conflicting demands and might not be in a position to either systematise or order behaviour. Since institutionalised priorities determine the behaviour of a person therefore these are helpful in maintaining social control. He believed that the process of social control is a continuous one and mechanisms are used only when under certain pressures normal system either completely breaks down or tends to break down. He has also said that mechanisms of social control have their own limitations. Each mechanism is responsive to certain system and does not break down under certain situations and to some extent. Mechanisms will break down when more pressure is exerted on them, with the result that new mechanism will have to be devised.

Fundamental Mechanisms : Obviously whole social control cannot be observed with the help of time schedule and institutionalised priorities, because individual is being interacted by various means and also by various groups, persons and situations. Other means of social control or

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mechanisms thus become un-avoidable. These can be rituals, secondary institutions, isolation etc. Rituals can break down under heavy social pressure, but as long as these function these perform very useful social control. These control and balance human behaviour on the basis of values of the community and society. Then there are secondary institutions which help in maintaining social control. With their help behaviour of an individual is made to conform to social standards and values accepted by the society. These institutions go a long way in reducing social conflicts.

According to Parsons insulation and isolation are two other means of social control. Parsons has interpreted insulation mechanism "*as having the function of preventing potential conflicting elements in the culture and social structure from coming into the kind of conflict which would be likely to lead to open conflict.*" With the help of this mechanism, it becomes possible to check powerful conflicting forces from coming into open conflict with each other. In so far as isolation mechanism is concerned, it tries to keep the cultural pattern separate from other aspects of social structure. This helps in preserving cultural patterns on the one hand and harmonious social structure on the other.

Other mechanisms of social control can be rewards, punishment for those who help maintaining social order or in violating well established social systems and controls. There are many unplanned mechanisms which are largely unconscious but serve to counter-act divergent tendencies. According to him these may be divided into three categories or classes, "*(a) those which tend to nip in the bud tendencies to the development of compulsively deviant motivation before they reach the vicious circle stages; (b) those which insolate the bearer of such motivation from influence on others; and (c) secondary defences which are able to varying degrees, to the worse ambitious process.*" Though these are other mechanisms but their importance or significance cannot be under-estimated in any way. These help in maintaining social order and control, particularly at times when well established mechanisms are under heavy pressure and have either bowed down or are on the verge of complete break down.

Parsons's theory of social control is another contribution to the field of social thought. He has rightly pointed out that without controls there will be social disharmony and disorder. He also rightly pointed out that in maintaining social control institutions play a very big and important role. He has also very rightly stated that priorities should also be institutionalised or otherwise the individuals would get involved in many conflicting demands. Without social control, no individual will remain under checks is yet his another realistic approach to the problem of social control.

Parsons's Positive and Negative Aspects of Social Systems

Alongwith social controls, Parsons has also developed his theory about social systems. His ideas in this regard are available to us in his volume entitled 'Social System'. According to him there are five elements of social systems; namely individual actors, interaction of actors, motivation of the inter-actions ; situations and environments connected with inter-actions and cultural relations. All these elements are closely connected and inter-linked with each other and in fact social system is net work of interpretative relationship.

Aspects of Social Systems : Parsons is of the view that social systems have both negative and positive aspects. Social systems develop as a result of situations and interaction between various individuals. As a result of interaction actors are motivated to do certain things with the result that a particular system develops. It is known as positive aspect of social system. On the other hand in societies there are certain activities which people wish to avoid, which usually are as a result of some sort of interaction. Such an aspect is known as negative aspect of social system.

Parsons believed that no society could meet all the needs of the people. It is expected of every society to at least meet basic needs of its members. As long as these basic needs are met there is no social problem. But once these are not met then most of the people use even negative aspects of social system. These can also be called destructive forces and exist in every society. In fact it is more or less impossible to eliminate them.

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Social Systems and Institutions : Social controls can best be observed when such measures which are against these systems are fully well checked. This will help in maintaining equilibrium for this it is essential that certain institutional priorities should be fixed—an institution being, understood as a well established norm of behaviour. The institutions can be Rational, Regulative, Cultural and Rational Regulative. Rational institutions come to stay when because of certain situations and inter-actions certain relations emerge, which give birth to certain institutions. In such institutions there are certain offices and situations which also divide the actors. Regulative institutions regulate and guide the actions of individuals. In case there is no proper regulation, there is every possibility that social structure might come under heavy strains and interests of weaker sections of society might be ignored. Thus institutions which regulate social behaviour are called regulative institutions.

There are certain institutions which are responsible for our cultural pattern and help promoting as well as accelerating our cultural behaviour. These help in maintaining our values and behaviour and are called cultural institutions. Relational-Regulative institutions are those which perform the functions of establishing relationship and regulating behaviours.

Structural Components of Social System : According to Parsons structural components of social system are kinship, stratification, power system, religion and value integration. Every social system recognises blood relationship because relationship, even assumed once keeps the people together. In the social system role of kinship assumes significance because it makes the task of socialisation easy, keeps sex relationship under control and introduces many taboos. It also regulates some of our social behaviours and puts certain institutions like marriage, family system etc. on sound footing. In addition it helps us in knowing the relationship of one individual with the other and also the status which every one occupies in the family and society.

Then comes stratification which is also useful. As we know that there is no society in which there is no heirarchy. It is with the help of stratification that one gets the idea as to what is the place of each individual in the social heirarchy, which in turn helps in knowing the job of each and every individual in the society. It is again with the help of stratification that we come to know who is performing what quality of job and to what extent the job needs rewards and incentives. The rewards can be economic, aesthetic i.e., which can provide one recreation and also satisfy one's ego.

In the study of social system then comes the role of power system. Such a system becomes essential for checking and controlling the behaviour of both the individuals as well as groups. This system also helps checking social disorganisation, which otherwise would create many social problems. This however dose not include physical power. In social system, religion plays a big role. It is religion which helps preserving social values and norms and upholds such moral values which keep the people closer and together. Religion and social values also bring the people closer and nearer to each-other. Religion and values even govern internal attitudes and make the whole system dynamic. It also helps in ensuring that norms and values do not get disintegrated.

From the ideas of Parsons, it appears that he was an original thinker. His ideas about social system and social control were quite unique and new. These provided a sort of mechanism by which society could remain organised and disorganisation which otherwise would have come in it would have been checked. He drew the attention of the sociologists that each society was always under heavy strains and if it was desired that there should be smooth working, these strains should be checked. Similarly his views about social action were also quite original. In fact by his views and ideas he very much made society think in new direction. His views were thus very useful in the field of social thought.

Notes

Self-Assessment

Choose the correct options

1. Davis and Moore formulated a functional theory of stratification in
   (*a*) 1945 (*b*) 1942 (*c*) 1940 (*d*) 1943
2. In 1945, two young Harvard-trained sociologists, published a short and seven page article on social and economic inequality.
   (*a*) Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore (*b*) Merton and Parsons
   (*c*) Mark and Davis (*d*) None of these
3. "Some Principles of Stratification" was written in
   (*a*) 1945 (*b*) 1944 (*c*) 1950 (*d*) None of these
4. Persons was born in the year ..... and graduated from London school of Economics in the year ..... .
5. Kingsley Davis was the student of .....

3.3 Summary

- Functionalist theories start with the assumption that all societies want stability, orders and peace. They assume that there are certain basic needs which must be met if society is to survive. They therefore, look to social stratification to see how far it meets these basic needs what they called functional pre-requisite. Functionalists treat society as an organism consisting of different part and assume that these facts of society form an integrated whole. This approach maintains that every component of the social structure performs specific functions which are necessary for the survival of that society.
- American sociologist Davis and Moore gave their famous theory of stratification in an article entitled 'Some principles of stratification' in 1945 in American Journal of Sociology. They argued that all social systems share certain functional prerequisites which must be met if the system is to survive and operate efficiently. One such important functional prerequisite is effective role allocation and performance. There are four aspects of this prerquisite. Firstly, all roles must be filled, secondly, they will be filled by those best able to perform those roles, thirdly, that the necessary training for them be undertaken and fourthly, that the roles be performed conscientiously means with dedication towards the duty.
- Davis and Moore concluded that social stratification is a device by which societies insure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons. Unequal reward are beneficial for societies in two ways. Firstly, it motivates people to fill certain position and secondly, the rewards must be unequal even after fulfilling the position so that the persons who are appointed are motivated to improve their performance further. In modern societies people occupy positions according to their skills and qualifications. In traditional societies ascription was the basis of filling up the positions. In such a system, the unequal rewards would not have any effect in improving the efficiency of the system. Davis and Moore argued that even though the son of labourer will remain a labour in such a system, if he performs his duties well he will be rewarded through other means.
- Davis and Moore argued that all social systems share certain functional prerequisites which must be met if the system is to survive and operate efficiently the first functional prerequisite is effective role allocation and performance. This will ensure that the right people are placed in proper positions. There are four aspects of this prerequisite :
- Davis and Moore's views provoked a long debate. On the face of it their theory appear rational and realistic. But it is contrast to traditional ascriptive societies where mobility in

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occupation is strictly restricted. Tumin, their famous intellectual opponent has criticised their theory on several grounds. There is no objective way of measuring the functional importance of position which was treated by Davis and Moore as the basis of distribution of rewards. Tumin argues that Davis and Moore have ignored the influences of power on the unequal distribution of rewards.

- Tumin also questions the view that the training required for important position would be regarded as a sacrifice and therefore in need of compensation. He sees no reason for continuing this compensation for the rest of an individual's working life.
- Tumin rejects the view that unequal rewards motivate talented individuals to fill the important positions. He argued that in reality they act as barriers to the motivation and recruitment of talent. Closed stratification systems operate in exactly the opposite way to Davis and Moore's theory. Social discrimination is present in every society and that act as a barrier. Thus the ascribed status of untouchables prevent even the most talented from becoming Brahmins.
- T.B. Bottomore in his study 'elites and societies' shows that even in developed countries such as Britain and France where the stratification system is more open an overwhelming majority of the civil servants are children of civil servants. There is also another fact that the access to improve knowledge and skill matters a lot to fulfil the position with efficient people.
- Functionalists view, society as a system that is a set of interconnected parts which together form a whole. The basic unit of analysis is society and its various parts are understood primarily in terms of their relationship to the whole. They took society as an organism they tried to explain how a society is able to survive. The underlying assumption here is that all societies want stability, order and peace. They presume that there are certain basic needs of every society which they called functional prerequisites these needs have to be met for the stability of society. Thus functionalist theory explains how stratification contribute for the maintenance of stability and order in society.
- Kingsley Davis (1908-1997), a student of Pitirim Sorokin and Talcott Parsons, received his Ph. D. from Harvard's Department of Sociology in 1936. Parsons, at the time, was gathering around him the faculty and students who would assist him in developing functional theory, including Davis and Moore. In the late 1930s Davis held a position at Pennsylvania State College (now Pennsylvania State University), followed by positions at Princeton University during the 1940s; Columbia University during the 1950s; and the University of California at Berkeley from the late 1950s until his retirement in the 1980s. Davis' primary academic interest eventually centered on demography.
- In 1953 Melvin Tumin published the first public commentary on the Davis-Moore article. Tumin carefully critiqued their thesis and later engaged in a series of published exchanges with Davis and Moore regarding the theory.
- The visibility, and perhaps the tenor, of the debate with Tumin, as well as its location within the pages of the *ASR,* engendered wide attention and led to more published responses to the original article. Indeed, the Davis and Moore article is now recognized as "one of the most widely cited and debated pieces to ever appear in a sociology journal," a rather remarkable feat for an argument consisting of fewer than 5,000 words. No fewer than thirty substantive articles and commentaries have appeared addressing the Davis-Moore article in professional journals in the United States over the years, many written by prominent members of the profession.
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- Social values are the shared belief of a society. These values arise out of the need of every society to maintain order and stability. Each society develops its own values which are best suited for maintenance of stability. They emerge out of consensus of the member of that society. Any person who performs according to the values is better rewarded. If a person violates the consensus he or she is punished. On the basis of values, individuals are evaluated and placed in the hierarchy. Differences in the strata or the rank are justified by the value system.
- According to Parsons, stratification is the ranking of units in the social system in accordance with the common value system. Hence, it is the value system which creates stratification in society. His basic effort in the analysis of stratification was the problem of socials order. In Parsons word stratification is a valuation aspect. The ranking, according to Parsons, depends on what the values of that society define as superior.
- Conflict does exist between the highly rewarded and those who receive little reward. However, he argued that this conflict is kept in check by the common value system which justifies the unequal distribution of rewards if these values are challenged this would lead to instability in that society.
- The functionalists believe that all the functions carried out by various parts of the society are functional for its survival. But they are not equal in importance. The people who perform higher functions are ranked higher. People differ in terms of their innate ability and talent. Positions differ in terms of their importance for the survival and maintenance of society. Certain positions are more functionally important than others. A most important function of stratification as believed by the functionalists, is to match the most able people with the functionally most important positions.
- Each society devices its own values and norms which are best suited for maintaining order and stability. Shared values are a necessary part of all social systems. He argued that power and prestige differentials are essential for the coordination and integration of a social system. It serves to further collective goods which are based on social values. But Parsons did not neglected the conflict aspect here because he further said that there will be conflict when the social values are challenged.
- Parsons has defined social action by saying that, "*It is a process in the actor-situation system which has motivational significance to the individual actor or in the case of collectivity, its component individuals*". In other words all social actions proceed from mechanism. Social actions,

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according to Parsons are concerned with organism actor's relations with other persons and social institutions.

- Parson's social action has four elements. The first element is actor, who is the medium of action and through him all actions are performed. The next characteristic is the end or the object with which that action is performed. It is believed that each action must have some end to achieve. Situation is his next characteristic. Each action is performed under certain situations and not in isolation. Some situations can be within the control of the actors whereas there might be other situations which would not he under his control. Selection of Alternative Means is still another characteristic of social action. Each actor has several ends and also several means of achieving those ends. In other words there are alternative means and alternative ends. These conditions help in expediting social actions, but are not unavoidable.
- "*A Social System consists in a plurity of individual actors inter action with each other in a situation which has at least a physical or environmental aspect, actors are motivated in terms of tendency to be optimization of gratification and whose relations to the situation including each other, is defined and motivated in terms of system of culturally structured and shaped symbols.*"
- Parson's Theory of Social action was his original contribution to the field of social thought. Along with that he has also given the theory of social control. He has started with the idea that by nature and necessity every human being is a social animal and that he preserves his interests than the interests of any other person.
- Social stability can be possible only when tendencies to have selfish interests first and foremost are fully checked. In his opinion mechanism of social control is nothing else, but checking of such tendencies and habits among the human beings by which they are prepared to even disturb social stability and equilibrium, so that their selfish interests are *fully met. In his own words, "The most fundamental mechanisms of social control are to be found in the normal process of interactions in an institutional integrated social system."*
- The order which helps in maintaining social equilibrium and stability is of two kinds : namely Time Schedule and Institutional Priorities. According to Time schedule order for completing an activity some schedule is fixed. In other words if there are different activities these are to be performed at different times and to be completed according to different time schedules. In this way no activity or group interferes with the other and social stability and equilibrium is maintained. But in every society there are certain actions which are given priority over other actions.
- Priority can be fixed by taking individual or immediate needs. But it is always desirable that priorities should be institutionalised. Without that the individuals may get involved into conflicting demands and might not be in a position to either systematise or order behaviour. Since institutionalised priorities determine the behaviour of a person therefore these are helpful in maintaining social control. He believed that the process of social control is a continuous one and mechanisms are used only when under certain pressures normal system either completely breaks down or tends to break down.
- Other means of social control or mechanisms thus become un-avoidable. These can be rituals, secondary institutions, isolation etc. Rituals can break down under heavy social pressure, but as long as these function these perform very useful social control. These control and balance human behaviour on the basis of values of the community and society. Then there are secondary institutions which help in maintaining social control. With their help behaviour of an individual is made to conform to social standards and values accepted by the society. These institutions go a long way in reducing social conflicts.
- Parsons's theory of social control is another contribution to the field of social thought. He has rightly pointed out that without controls there will be social dis-harmony and disorder.

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He also rightly pointed out that in maintaining social control institutions play a very big and important role. He has also very rightly stated that priorities should also be institutionalised or otherwise the individuals would get involved in many conflicting demands. Without social control, no individual will remain under checks is yet his another realistic approach to the problem of social control.

- Parsons has also developed his theory about social systems. His ideas in this regard are available to us in his volume entitled 'Social System'. According to him there are five elements of social systems ; namely individual actors, interaction of actors, motivation of the inter-actions ; situations and environments connected with inter-actions and cultural relations. All these elements are closely connected and inter-linked with each other and in fact social system is net work of interpretative relationship.
- Social controls can best be observed when such measures which are against these systems are fully well checked. This will help in maintaining equilibrium for this it is essential that certain institutional priorities should be fixed—an institution being, understood as a well established norm of behaviour. The institutions can be Rational, Regulative, Cultural and Rational Regulative. Rational institutions come to stay when because of certain situations and inter-actions certain relations emerge, which give birth to certain institutions. In such institutions there are certain offices and situations which also divide the actors.
- There are certain institutions which are responsible for our cultural pattern and help promoting as well as accelerating our cultural behaviour. These help in maintaining our values and behaviour and are called cultural institutions. Relational-Regulative institutions are those which perform the functions of establishing relationship and regulating behaviours.
- In the social system role of kinship assumes significance because it makes the task of socialisation easy, keeps sex relationship under control and introduces many taboos. It also regulates some of our social behaviours and puts certain institutions like marriage, family system etc. on sound footing. In addition it helps us in knowing the relationship of one individual with the other and also the status which every one occupies in the family and society.
- In the study of social system then comes the role of power system. Such a system becomes essential for checking and controlling the behaviour of both the individuals as well as groups. This system also helps checking social disorganisation, which otherwise would create many social problems. This however dose not include physical power. In social system, religion plays a big role. It is religion which helps preserving social values and norms and upholds such moral values which keep the people closer and together. Religion and social values also bring the people closer and nearer to each-other. Religion and values even govern internal attitudes and make the whole system dynamic. It also helps in ensuring that norms and values do not get disintegrated.
- From the ideas of Parsons, it appears that he was an original thinker. His ideas about social system and social control were quite unique and new. These provided a sort of mechanism by which society could remain organised and disorganisation which otherwise would have come in it would have, been checked. He drew the attention of the sociologists that each society was always under heavy strains and if it was desired that there should be smooth working, these strains should be checked.

3.4 Key–Words

1. Social Mobility : It is the movement of individuals or groups in serial position overtime
2. Isolation : It is the state of feeling alone and without friends or help

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3.5 Review Questions

1. Discuss the Theoretical Formulations of Davis and Moore.
2. Write a note on the Theoretical Formulations of Parsons.
3. Explain the Parsons positive and negative aspects of social systems.

Answers: Self–Assessment

1. (*a*) 2. (*a*) 3. (*a*)
4. (1902, 1924)
5. (Pitirim Sorokin and Talcott Parsons)

3.6 Further Readings



1. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Perspectives on Social Stratification, Rawat Publication.
2. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Social Stratification & Mobility, Rawat Publication.
3. Hasnain, Nadeem, 2011 : Indian Society and Culture Continuity and Change, Jawahar Publishers and Distributors.

Unit 4: Theories of Social Stratification-II

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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Know the Theories of Social Stratification.
- Explain the Theoretical Formulations of Karl Marx.
- Describe the Theoretical Formulation of Max Weber.
- Understand the Structural–Functional Theory.

Introduction

With heightened socio-political awakening, emergence of civil society and demand for human rights, notions of equality and inequality and approaches to the study of social stratification need a relook and redefining. Social stratification today is not just there in terms of industrialization or agricultural transformation, it is being reshaped by means of transport and communication, education, mobility, and new and modern occupations. However, the point remains : How resources of society are appropriated/distributed ? Who have easy access to the available opportunities and who face social impediments and remain deprived ? The dichotomy between the owning/managing families, individuals and groups and the propertyless people persists in all human societies. Karl Marx is the main exponent of such a divide between the rich and the poor. The Marxian perspective is quite broad and all-encompassing, granting, however, primacy to economic relations as the base of hierarchy and stratification.

Several other explanations could be listed. We would mention a few here, and discuss only the Marxian, Weberian and structural-functional perspectives in detail.

4.1 Theories of Social Stratification

Class and occupations are closely intertwined and social class has the style of life as an important aspect. Occupation is an important aspect of membership of a class. The style of life aspect of occupation is noted as a significant phenomenon in all societies. Class stabilizes life chances — for the recruitment process and for the inner structure of the class. George Simmel emphasizes on hierarchical structure of the society, by explaining the pattern of super- and sub-ordination and

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social relationships thereupon. Simmel also analyses non-hierarchical bases of hierarchy. Close to the considerations of occupation, class and domination or hierarchy are the dichotomy of elite and non-elite in society. Complex political processes determine selective recruitment of elite groups of different sorts. Another explanation is T. Veblen's theory of the leisure class. Veblen brings out interrelations between the analysis of conflicting economic interest and the symbolic significance of patterns of style of life for a fruitful comparative understanding. Veblen challenges exclusive economic predominance in social relations. Pareto has also emphasized on the mismatch between a rising business-oriented bourgeoisie and the controllers of political organization.

Besides Marx's theory of class and class struggle, Max Weber's theory of social stratification, in terms of distinction between class, status and power, attained acceptance in academia in general. Weber considered economic interest as a relative phenomenon. Lastly, the structural-functional approach to social stratification has been quite popular and logically acceptable, particularly among American sociologists. Talcott Parsons, K. Davis and W. Moore are its main exponents.

According to this approach, social stratification is universal, necessary and inevitable.

4.2 Theoretical Formulations of Karl Marx

Philosophy and Ideology of Karl Marx

Karl Marx is the principal architech of the historical dialectical approach to the study of society, class and social stratification. Marxian theory is not a simple explanation of technological or economic determinism. Marx propounded a grand theory of society. According to him, stratification is determined by the system of relations of production, and "status" of a man is determined by his position in this very system in terms of ownership and non-ownership of the means of production. Marx does not make a distinction between "class" and "social stratification". For him, "production" is by social "individuals", and therefore, it should be understood in "social context". As such, Marx's theory of class could be understood as a system of social stratification in terms of "domination" and "subjection" of "effective superiority-inferiority relationships".

Marx tried to understand and analyse objective laws of the development of nature, society and human thought to know the world and also to revolutionize it. The main points in his philosophy and ideology were :

1. End of capitalism
2. The victory of communist society
3. A dream into science of society
4. Emancipation from oppression and exploitation of prole-tariat – a revolutionary class
5. Dictatorship of proletariat
6. The ideology of the working class
7. Revolutionary class struggle

Marx as a Person and his Humane Concern

Marx was born on May 5, 1818 in Germany. His father was a lawyer, and Marx also studied jurisprudence. In early 19th century, feudalism had ended, and capitalism was in the offing. Peasants and artisans were being ruined under the new system. Hence, class struggle, development of the bourgeoisie democratic and national liberation movement were there in the wake of the proletariat. Marx drew from Hegal, particularly from the Left Hegelians. In 1841, Marx received doctorate. Thereafter, he started a movement against political reaction and obscurantism. He also became the editor of a paper in 1842. His paper was banned in 1843. Marx married in 1843. At this point, he started a critical study of Hegel's philosophy of right. Before this he met Engels in 1842, and again they met in Paris in 1984. Based on his understanding of the Hegelian philosophy, Marx

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emphasized on the question of the links and interdependence between the state and the material conditions of the life of society.

Marx spent time with the destitute masses of France, particularly in Paris, and he became interested in the study of English and French masses. Such an experience and understanding resulted into his transition from idealism to materialism and from revolutionary wave to communism.

German, English and French experiences prompted Marx to think of "civil society" in the context of political economy. He then rejected Hegelian dialectics (dialectics of human mind), and undertook a critical revision. In a non-mechanistic form, he adopted Feuerbach's materialism, and with the mix of ideology and materialism, developed an understanding of history, social relations and politics. Marx preferred to call his theory "scientific socialism".

Concepts of Class and Class Struggle

Marx has articulated his views in his writings such as the *Communist Manifesto,* three volumes of *Capital, German Ideology,* etc. In volume III of *Capital,* Marx writes : "The owners merely of labour power, owners of capital and landowners, whose respective sources of income are wages, profit and ground-rent, in other words, wage labourers, capitalists and landowners constitute the three big classes of modern society based on the capitalist mode of production". This is how Marx describes the proletariat and the bourgeois as two major classes, the first one as the have-nots and the second one as the haves. Marx further observes in support of his two classes theory that middle and intermediate strata obliterate lines of demarcation everywhere. The tendency is toward more and more in the development of the capitalist mode of production, transforming labour into. *wage labour* and the means of production into *capital.* Landed property tends to transform into the capitalist mode of production as well. Now, the questions are :

1. What constitutes a class ?
2. What makes wage labourers, capitalists, and landlords to constitute the three great social classes ?

In fact, Marx refers to only two classes – proletariat and bourgeoisie. The second and the third classes, as mentioned earlier, ultimately merge and become one and the same class. However, no coherent conception of the theory of class is found in Marx. He emphasized more on empirical referents of his general formulation of class and class struggle. The main features of the Marxian theory of class and stratification are as follows :

1. Economic interests are the basis for all other types of relationships – social cultural, political, etc.
2. There are two classes : (a) owners of the means of production (bourgeoisie), and (b) workers (proletariat).
3. The interest of these two classes clash with each other, as the bourgeoisie exploit the proletariat, and therefore, there exists a class struggle.
4. The bourgeoisie get more than their due share, which Marx names as the "theory of surplus value". Such a situation accelerates class struggle, which finally leads to revolution and radical transformation of the stratification system of society.

In this way, in the Marxian theory, classes are basic features of social organization. Classes emanate from the processes of the system of production. The bourgeoisie own the means of production, and the proletariat provide the necessary human labour and related services. As such, the basis of the stratification system is economic relations, and from this system, two classes are formed – the bourgeoisie and the proletariat or the haves and the have-nots.

Class as a real group has a developed sense and consciousness of its existence, its position and goals. Through the lens of class, one can see the totality of relations in society.

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The two classes clash with each other because of their conflicting interests. In other words, the whole society remains divided into two classes, as two great hostile camps. The two classes clash and also unite to defend their respective interests. There is also a certain degree of cooperation between the two classes, which Marx mentions as "unity of opposites". Such a unity between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is required for functioning of the system of production on which survival of the two depends upon. However, Marx gave a call to the workers to unite as a political organization to fight against the bourgeoisie. According to Marx, the ideas of the ruling classes have been the "ruling ideas" in every epoch of history and society. Marx believes that the conception of political power is an adjunct to class power and political struggle as a special form of class struggle. The state functions for the bourgeoisie. Thus, the material existence of men determines their life situation and consciousness. Class is, therefore, a social reality which mirrors the entire social structure.



Did u know? For Marx, class is "social", a social reality, an existing fact of life. It is not a statistical or an aggregated or a constructed phenomenon.

The Marxist Method of Study

Marx describes history in terms of three periods, namely, ancient, feudalism, and capitalism. Each period is characterized by a predominant mode of production, and based upon it, a class structure, consisting of a *ruling* class and an *oppressed* class, emerges. As we have mentioned earlier that the struggle between these classes determines the social relations between men. The social relations become the *base* of all other relations. These relations determine control over the means of production, and thereby control the whole moral and intellectual life of the people. Law and government, art and literature, science and philosophy – all serve more or less directly interests of the ruling class, hence, these aspects are *superstructures* of society.

In the period of its revolutionary ascendance each class is "progressive" in two ways : (1) its economic interests are identical with technical progress and hence with increased human welfare; and (2) its efforts to pursue these interests align this class on the side of liberating ideas and institutions against all who retard technical progress and human welfare. An ascending class can also become a ruling class. But then it may play a different role. The same path of revolution against such a class would follow. Thus, it is an ongoing process leading to revolutionary reorganization of society. Thus, in Marxian theory, a social class is an aggregate of persons who perform the same function in the organization of production. In the *Communist Manifesto,* Marx begins with characterization that in different periods of history there are freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, or in a word, oppressor and oppressed, as classes.

Tom Bottomore and others observe that the concept of class has a central importance in Marxist theory, though Marx did not expound it in a systematic form. The class structure of early capitalism, and the class struggles in this form of society, constituted the main reference point for the Marxist theory. The other two ideas crucial in Marx's theory were that of class conflict and class consciousness. In the *Communist Manifesto,* Marx mentions that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles". But class was more pronounced in the capitalist societies. In the *German Ideology,* Marx observes that "class itself is a product of the bourgeoisie". Though Marx has studied extensively capitalism, he wanted to assert the existence of a major class division in all forms of society. He writes : "It is always the direct relation between the owners of the conditions of production and the direct producers which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden foundation, of the entire social edifice."

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The distinction drawn by Marx between a "class in itself" and a "class for itself" is also significant to know the basis of class formation and class consciousness. In his well-known work, *The Poverty of Philosophy,* Marx observes : "Economic conditions had in the first place transformed the mass of the people into workers. The domination of capital created the common situation and common interests of this class. Thus, this mass is already a class in relation to capital, but *not yet a class for itself.* In the struggle, of which we have only indicated a few phases, this mass unites and forms itself into *a class for itself.* The interests which it defends become class interests." Thus, Marx makes a distinction between "class in itself" and "class for itself".

The Marxist Theory of Class and Stratification

Now, let us have a critical view of the Marxist theory of class and stratification. Many of the class conflicts mentioned in the *Communist Manifesto* by Marx are in fact conflicts between status groups. Both Marx and Engels were quite aware that everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, or a manifold gradation of social ranks, existed. Later Marxists realized the "complications" of social ranking or stratification in relation to the basic classes. Both Marx and Engels felt that in England intermediate and transitional strata obscured the class boundaries. In the *Theories of Surplus Value,* Marx refers explicitly to the growth of the middle class as a phenomenon of the development of capitalism. A continual increase in the members of the middle classes was felt due to growth of capitalism. The middle classes have taken a significant political space in the wake of modern economic development.

Later Marxists, including Nicos Poulantzas and Georg Lukacs, have rejected some of the orthodox Marxist ideas. Poulantzas rejects the distinction between "class in itself" and "class for itself". Because classes have sprung up into existence fully equipped with class consciousness and a political organization. Lukacs, on the contrary, attributes crucial importance to the development of class consciousness among the proletariat from outside by a revolutionary party. In a divided world, what would be the nature of consciousness – "socialist" or "revolutionary" or "capitalist" – is not clear.

With the disintegration of the USSR and the East European countries class consciousness has acquired a new form and contents. "Globalization" has also created a sort of uniform class consciousness. With a decline in a distinctive class interest and class consciousness, Marxist theory of class and class conflict has become less enchanting and appealing. Radical political movements, including women's movement and diverse ethnic and national movements, have not been class-based. Coalitions and alliances in social life have blurred class consciousness in terms of the Marxist theory. The place of the peasantry in the class structure and its political role in different types of society were not given due significance in the Marxist theory. The peasants in France, for example, were not regarded as a class in the full sense, still less a revolutionary class. In many Third World countries, peasants have played important part in revolutionary movements.

In the erstwhile socialist countries, there were hardly *class* conflicts, as there were distinct *social* forces at work. A new class structure emerged, for example, in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland. National movements in these countries involved not only classes, but also national, ethnic or religious groups, and protagonists of feminist, ecological, anti-nuclear movement. Today, confrontation is not simply restricted to bourgeoisie and proletariat, but alliances between various social groups have also emerged. On one side there are groups which dominate and direct economic and social life, on the other side, there are subordinated groups.

Marx and the Study of Indian Society

The Indian academia have been actively debating on Marxism as an ideology and as a practice since 1940s. In fact, Marx was quite sensitive to the nature of India's caste system and traditional ethos of village community. In 1853, he wrote two articles in the *New York Daily Tribune* on India. Marx described India as an example of "Asiatic Despotism", or "Asiatic Mode of Production".

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Under such a system Marx imagined absence of private property in land. However, he also mentioned that later on private property in land emerged.

India has also been viewed as a pre-capitalist economic formation. But it was neither classless nor static. The view is that the Asiatic mode does not deny the role of class contradictions and class structures. Karl A. Wittfogel, Eric Hobsbawm and D.D. Kosambi have upheld the view that India was never a static formation. According to Kosambi, caste and class-based stratification and exploitation existed side by side in India. Similarly, different forms of slavery and bondage, feudal relations have also existed in different combinations in the same areas and at the same time.

Two questions may be asked here :

1. How to analyse India's class structure ?
2. What is caste-class nexus, its ramifications and interactions in different regions ?

Now caste-class nexus is an accepted reality of India's social formation. The two cannot be seen and studied without relating to each other. Even kinship, according to Kosambi, is a principal basis of primogeniture, inheritance, division of property, dissensions, factions and bifurcation. V.M. Dandekar, while appreciating the usefulness of the Marxist theory and method, makes the following observations :

1. Marx did not see that capitalism would change due to trade unions and collective bargaining power of workers.
2. Marx talked of two antagonistic classes, having "unity of opposites", but these classes have not been undifferentiated. Several groups exist in between the two classes. Today, civil society and voluntary groups have impinged upon the state to change its character and functioning.
3. With burgeoning of middle classes as a global phenomenon, class antagonism is no more a significant reality.
4. There has been embourgeoisiement of the proletariat in industrial societies.

We have also witnessed basic structural change and vertical mobility in Indian society, particularly after independence.

Dandekar enlists five classes in India as follows :

1. Pre-capitalist class (cultivators, agricultural labourers and household workers)
2. Independent workers in capitalist society
3. Employers
4. White-collar employees
5. Blue-collar workers.

Besides such a multiple class structure, there are millions of workers in small-scale and tiny industries and family-owned concerns, and there are no class conflicts and strikes in these domains of Indian economy.

In India, in spite of globalization and privatization, the state remains the largest employer today. In view of the recent recession in the world economy, particularly in America, professionals are again looking for government jobs for reasons of security and guaranteed pay package, And even, then the organized workforce is about one-fifth of the total earners. In such a situation division of society in terms of bourgeoisie and proletariat and implicit class conflict between the two seem to be a presumptuous phenomenon. What we see in India is quite different from the Marxist perception. There is a simultaneous existence of class cleavages, exploitation, patronhood or false consciousness in Indian society. More than class conflict, we can see elite conflict, pressure groups, factions and caste lobbies. Today, middle classes are more pronounced than the upper and the lower classes. One can also see "mixed classes", for example, in the form of "gentlemen farmers", having "composite status", with multiple affinities and access to resources and opportunities.

4.3 Theoretical Formulations of Max Weber

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The Shaping of Max Weber as a Scholar

Max Weber was born on April 21, 1864, in Germany. Like Karl Marx, Weber was also the founding fathers of social sciences, particularly of sociology, in Germany and Europe. His father was a textile manufacturer, a lawyer, and a parliamentarian. His mother was a woman of culture and pity having humanitarian and religious values, which were not liked by his father. Weber had education in law and legal history. In his doctoral thesis *A Contribution to the History of Medieval Business Organizations* (1889), Weber studied the cost, risk or profit of an enterprise. After this, he started training at the German bench/or bar. At this point of time, he got acquainted with the social and political problems of agrarian society. He joined as an instructor in law at the University of Berlin. Weber also studied social, political and economic developments of Roman society.

Being a full-time lecturer, consultant to government agencies, and researcher, Weber carried a heavy load of work. In 1894, he became full professor of economics at Freiburg University, and in 1896, accepted a position at the University of Hiedelburg. At the age of 33 years, Weber fell ill and was forced to suspend his regular academic work. For four years he suffered from an acute state of exhaustion and anxiety. During this personal turmoil, for which his family ambience was largely responsible, he spent time in Rome. Weber was an omnivorous reader. He had interest in history, religious organizations and economic activities. In 1901, Weber resumed his academic work, but he could not have the earlier vigour and zeal. Till his death in 1920, at the age of fifty-six, Weber accepted several part-time and full-time responsibilities.

Weber's extraordinary scholarship and family life are a strange mix. Withdrawal and forceful participation had become inseparable parts of his life. His life was full of contradictions, partly because of a liberal, middle-class family background, and in that conflicting values of his father and mother. Weber saw the decline of liberalism in an emerging power state and the threat to the individual in the bureaucratization of modern society. He became convinced that one could achieve one's goals only by power politics.

Weber belonged to a generation of universal scholars. The intellectual traditions and the accumulated scholarship of Germany, especially in history, the classics, psychology, theology, comparative literature, philology and philosophy, provided Weber a great incentive to establish his own scholarship. Weber argued against historical materialism unlike Marx. He called himself an "economic nationalist". We are, however, concerned here with Weber's intellectual orientations. Weber has published extensively on economy and society, capitalism, religion, formal organizations and bureaucracy, law, methodology of social sciences, power and leadership, typology of human action, etc.

Since Weber was born after Marx, he had advantage of reacting to the Marxist ideas and conceptualizations. He tried to "round out" Marx's economic materialism by a political and military materialism. "Weber looks for the disposition over wapons and over means of administration." He makes a clear and rational distinction between economic, social and political orders of society, and considers power as a key to all the domains of society.

Weber makes out a clear distinction between class, status and power. Power is the key to the Weberian theory of social stratification. Class is an economic category, a product of the "market situation". Status is determined by "honour". "Status groups" constitute the social order based on honour. The way in which "status honour" is distributed is important in the understanding of social stratification. Weber makes it clear that classes and status groups are not necessarily independent phenomena. His theory of "class, status and party" corresponds with the three orders in society, namely, economic, social and political. However, the three orders are not identical or independent, one can be influenced by the other. Thus, striving for power is not always for economic prosperity. It may be for its own sake or for social honour. All power does not provide

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social honour, and power is not the only source of social honour. Thus, status is determined by the social honour one enjoys, and the latter is expressed through different "styles of life". After this quintessential introduction to the Weberian theory of social stratification, we may work on details based on his classical essay "Class, Status, Party".

Economically Determined Power and the Social Order

The structure of every legal order directly influences the distribution of power, economic or otherwise, within its respective community. This is true of all legal orders and not only that of the state. Weber writes : "In general, we understand by 'power' the chance of a man or of a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others, who are participating in action."

"Economically conditioned" power is not, of course, identical with "power" as such. On the contrary, the emergence of economic power may be the consequence of power existing on other grounds. Man does not strive for power only in order to enrich himself economically. Power, including economic power, may be valued "for its own sake".

Very frequently, the striving for power is also conditioned by the "social honour" it entails. Not all power, however, entails social honour. Mere economic power or naked money power is by no means a recognized basis of social honour. Nor is power the only basis of social honour. Indeed, social honour, or prestige, may even be the basis of political or economic power.

Power as well as honour may be guaranteed by the legal order, but normally it is not their primary source. The legal order is an additional source, and it cannot always serve them.

"Social order" is defined by the way in which social honour is distributed in a society. The social order and the economic, order are related to the legal order. However, the two are not identical. The way in which economic goods and services are distributed and used determines the economic order.


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The social order is determined by the economic order to a high degree and in turn reacts upon it. Thus, "classes", "status groups" and "parties" are phenomena of the distribution of power within a community.

Determination of Class Situation by Market Situation

Classes are not communities. They merely represent possible and frequent communal (collective/ communitarian) action. According to Weber, we may speak of class when :

1. a number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances;
2. in so far as, this component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income; and
3. further, it is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labour markets.

These three points refer to a "class situation". It implies the following points :

1. The typical chance for supply of goods.
2. External living conditions.
3. Personal life experiences.

Further, this chance is determined by the amount and the kind of power or lack of such, to dispose of goods or skills for the sake of income in a given economic order.

Thus, "the term 'class' refers to any group of people that is found in the same class situation". Competition eliminates some and patronizes others. Monopoly occurs either due to absence or weak competition or when the rival is ousted from competition.

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"Property" and "lack of property" are, therefore, the basic categories of all class situations. Price wars and competitive struggles exhibit both. The kind of property and the kind of services further differentiate class situations, for example, in terms of class of *rentiers* and class of *entrepreneurs,* etc. The kind of chance in the market is the decisive factor in determining class position of a given actor. In fact, the "class situation" is ultimately the "market situation". But "possession" could be a decisive factor initially. The *creditor-debtor relation* becomes the basis of class situations. Monopoly and plutocracy (rich class government) emerge from class struggles. "Slaves" are a status group.

Communal Action Flowing from Class Interest

Though "class" is created by economic interest involving "market", yet the concept of "class interest" is ambiguous. Because an individual's ability may be *high, average* and low to qualify for an action. And then "trade union" also may come in affecting the "class situation". Such a situation is of communal action.

Communal action refers to that action which is oriented to the feeling of the actors that they belong together. *Social action,* on the other hand, is oriented to a rationally motivated adjustment of interests. The rise of societal or even of communal action from a common class situation is by no means a universal phenomenon. The class situation may be restricted to in its effects to the generation of essentially similar reactions of "mass actions". Amorphous communal action may also emerge — murmuring on a given issue, or moral disapproval, or "slow down". The class situation implies :

1. the given distribution of property, and
2. the structure of the concrete recognizable economic order to ascertain a class situation. These make a class situation transparent.

Types of Class Struggle

A class in itself does not entail a community. Nevertheless, class situations emerge only on the basis of communalization (mobilization for common economic interests). The labour market and the capitalist enterprise determine the class situation of the worker and the entrepreneurs. Thus, the communal action is not basically action between members of the identical class. The existence of a capitalist enterprise is pre-conditioned by a specific kind of "legal order". Each kind of class situation rests upon the *power of property.* "Status groups" hinder the strict carrying of the sheer market principle. The examples of class struggle are : class struggles by peasants, artisans, etc., in ancient times; and today competitive struggles, price wars, etc.

Status Honour

According to Weber, in contrast to classes, *status groups* are normally communities, generally of an amorphous kind. Like a "class situation", there is a "status situation", characterizing social *estimation* of honour, shared by a plurality. It may be knit to a class situation and vice versa. But status honour need not necessarily be linked with a class situation. It normally stands in sharp opposition to the pretensions of sheer property. Both propertied and propertyless people can belong to the same status group, and frequently they do with very tangible consequences. In the long run, such an equality may run quite precarious.

Guarantees of Status Stratification

Status honour is normally expressed by a specific style of life. Linked with this are restrictions on social intercourse, which is not subservient to economic status. *Status circle* is evident through marriages. Visits to streets, neighbourhoods, groups, etc., are examples of encircling of status groups. Further, Weber observes that the development of status is essentially a question of stratification resting upon usurpation. Such usurpation is the normal origin of almost all status honour. Stability of a system of status stratification comes from legally sanctioned social order.

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Weber cites example of "caste" as a status group. Status distinctions are guaranteed not merely by conventions and laws, but also by *rituals.* Castes are status groups, and there is a combination of *ideal* and *material* factors in caste. Each caste has a style of life of its own. Weber says that the decisive role of a "style of life" in "status honour" means that status groups are the specific fearers of all "conventions". "Stylization" of life originates from status groups.

"Classes" are stratified according to the principles of their *consumption* of goods as represented by special "styles of life". An "occupational group" is also a status group. For example, Brahmins are a status group as they perform priestly functions. However, technological change and economic transformation threaten stratification by status pushing the class situation into the foreground.



What do you mean by Status Circle ?

Power (Parties)

"Classes" are found in economic order, "status groups" are seen in the sphere of the distribution of honour, and these two influence each other, and also the legal order, and are influenced by it. But "parties" live in a house of power. Thus, Weber asserts autonomy and interdependence of class, status and power.

Action by "parties" is oriented toward acquisition of social "power", that is to say, toward influencing a communal action, no matter what its contents may be. In principle, "parties" may exist in a social club, as well as in a "state". The communal actions of "parties" always mean a *socialization.* They are directed to a goal. A goal may be cause of action. It may also be due to a personal reason. "Parties" are thus possible within communities.

"Class situation"/"status situation" may determine "parties". But parties may not be either "classes" or "status groups". They are partly *class parties* and partly *status parties.* But sometimes they are neither. They have staff, rules of the game. "Parties" may represent ephemeral or enduring structures. Means of attaining power vary from naked violence to canvassing for votes with money, social influence, the force of speech, suggestion, clumsy hoax, etc. Parties differ in terms of the nature of communal action. They also differ based on the community stratification by status or by classes. They vary according to the structure of domination within the community. History of parties can be seen vis-a-vis history of society.

H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills observe that much of Weber's method is informed by a skilful application of Marx's historical method. Weber used this method as a "heuristic principle". Weber was not, however, in favour of a view of world history or a monocausal theory. He was against reducing the multiplicity of casual factors to a single-factor theorem. He was not for reductionism. Weber's analysis of power and political structures closely parallels the Marxian approach to class and economic structures. Marx is less careful in distinguishing between economic power and political power. Weber, as a liberal, makes there spheres clearly distinct : "economic", "economically determined" and "economically relevant".

Weber emphasizes on the struggle for the means of "political rule". State enjoys monopoly of power. Like Marx, Weber brings ideological phenomena into some correlation with the material interests of economic and political orders. Weber has a keen eye for "rationalizations", reflected in his concept of "ideal type", action, bureaucracy, capitalism, etc. Weber talks of both "interests" and "ideologies" with equal emphasis. For Weber, modern capitalism is not irrational, it is very embodiment of rationality.

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Bourdieu on "Class"

Pierre Bourdieu has published on peasants, art, unemployment, schooling, law, science, literature, kinship, classes, religion, politics, sports, language, housing, intellectuals, etc., and used ethnographic accounts, statistical models, abstract metatheoretical and philosophical arguments. Here, we would limit our observation to Bourdieu's concepts of "capital" and "class". According to Bourdieu, a given society can be seen by the distribution of different kinds of resource or "capital". Three different forms of capital are : (1) economic capital (material wealth - money, stocks and shares, property, etc.); (2) cultural capital (knowledge, skills, cultural acquisitions); and (3) symbolic capital (accumulated prestige and honour). Such a classification has resemblance with Weber's formulation of economic, social and legal/political orders or to his idea of "class, status and party". We also find that Bourdieu has modified and expanded the concept of capital as proposed by Marx.

Bourdieu relates social space and the genesis of classes. He points out that in the Marxist theory the "theoretical class" cannot be treated as a "real class". A real class is an effectively mobilized group. Bourdieu talks of the social field, he does not grant a multidimensional space to the economic field alone, to the reductions of economic production. According to Bourdieu, symbolic struggles and the very representation of the social world, and in particular *hierarchy* within each of the fields and between different fields, cannot be overlooked. "Space of positions", in a formal sense, is described by Bourdieu as "class on paper", having a theoretical existence. It is really not a class, an actual class, in the sense of becoming a group, a group mobilized for struggle; at most one could say that it is a probable class. It is a nominalist relativism. With this, one looks for classes which can be carved out of the social space as real groups, practical groups, families, clubs, associations, political outfits, etc. A space of relations in reality, an alliance of agents of distances among these constitute really or nominally a class. About Marx's distinction between "class in itself" and "class for itself", Bourdieu comments that nothing is said about a "group in struggle", as a personalized collective, a historical agent setting its own aims, arising from the objective economic conditions.

Toeing Weber's theory, in a broad sense, Bourdieu states that political phenomena are not just a manifestation of socio-economic processes or of relations and oppositions between classes. The world is not a one-dimensional space. In the multidimensional social field(s), individuals occupy positions determined by the quantities of different types of capital they possess. Weber also thought of it in this manner. There are "homologies", but not necessarily always. But fields, positions, agents based construction is essential. As such, according to Bourdieu, Marxist analysis tends to confuse theoretical classes with real social groups. Bourdieu does not define classes in terms of the ownership or non-ownership of means of production. For Bourdieu, classes are sets of agents who occupy similar positions in the social space and hence possess similar kinds and similar quantities of capital, similar life chances, similar dispositions, etc. These classes are "theoretical constructs", not identical with real social groups, but help in the observation of social groups, sets of agents in reality.

Weber's Impact on Indian Studies

Weber's theory of social stratification has influenced several scholars, including Andre Beteille, Anil Bhatt, P.C. Aggarwal, K.L. Sharma, etc. Caste was taken as a singular institution of social ranking by M.N. Srinivas, Louis Dumont and several others in the fifties and sixties. Caste was treated as coterminous with entire gamut of social relations, and thought it to be an all-inclusive basis of social stratification. As a reaction to this approach, multidimensional character of social stratification was emphasized. Class and power along with caste (status) were considered as economic and political dimensions of social inequality and hierarchy. Some scholars looked at caste from a class point of view.

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In my own study of six villages in Rajasthan, both structural and cultural perspectives were applied to analyse the multidimensional nature of social stratification, mobility and change. Caste, class, caste and class consciousness, power structure, value orientations were taken as focal points to examine the relevance of "caste model" of Indian society. Andre Beteille, following Weber's theory of "class, status and party", makes a distinction between caste, class and power in his study of a village in Tamil Nadu. He observes a perceptible "differentiation of institutional structures" and an absence of "summation of statuses" could be found due to the factors and forces which were noticed in the village. In the same vein, Anil Bhatt states that a study of caste, class and politics provides a comparative analysis of social stratification. P.C. Aggarwal's study of caste, religion and power also falls in the category of multidimensional and comparative framework.

Weber's theory of social stratification cannot be taken away from Weber's overall approach to society, economy, state, religion, etc. Weber tried to synthesize rationalism, subjectivity and objectification in his method of understanding (*verstehen*). Individual, organization and group occupied their respective space in Weber's study of human society. Weber meticulously linked theory, method and data, which the Indian followers of Weber have not been able to do as scientifically as he did.

4.4 Structural-Functional Theory

Both Marxian and Weberian theories of social stratification are generally deterministic as Marx considers "economic" factor solely responsible for class structure, and Weber puts emphasis on "power" as a key factor in social relations. As such, Marx and Weber undermine the relative significance of a plurality of factors in society. Talcott Parsons observes that a social system should meet essential prerequisites of long-term persistence from within its own resources. Personality systems and social systems must exist in harmony through the mediation of cultural systems (values and norms). Change in social system must have its functional relevance.

Multidimensional Nature

In Parsonian framework, there is an interesting parallel between the distinction between economic and political power on the one hand, and approval and esteem rewards, on the other. Approval – rewards imply universalistic – achievement values, and are functionally significant. Esteem goes with political power, hence, a hierarchical ordering in terms of esteem. Parsons writes : "The hierarchical ordering we may call *prestige,* which is the relative esteem in which an individual is held in an ordered total system, *system of differentiated evaluation."* Further, he observes : "There is, therefore, a sense in which all the elements of the relational reward system come to be integrated in terms of a ranking system in terms of esteem, just as the control of facilities is ordered in a political power system. This ranking system in terms of esteem is what we may call the system of *stratification* of the society."

Stratification is a comprehensive phenomenon as it includes caste, race, ethnicity, class, occupation, etc. W. Lloyd Warner observes that the behaviour examined and the parts of the society studied range from social class systems, castes, occupations, occupational and social mobility, age and sex divisions, political, economic, educational and ecclesiastical and other institutional hierarchies to the relations of these institutions to the general social structure. Certainly, this is a multidimensional approach to the study of social stratification in contrast to the Marxist "deterministic" or "mono-dimensional" approach. The structural-functional theory falls in the category of multidimensional approach despite the fact that its key concern is with "integration" of society as a whole.

According to the advocates of the structural-functional theory, functional differentiation is an inevitable phenomenon. The logic is that a given person cannot perform all or most of the functions in a society. For different functions, persons of different intent and ability are required. The persons are rewarded according to the value attached to the functions they perform. This differential reward pattern gives rise to stratification and hierarchy.

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The Davis-Moore Approach

Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore are the chief advocates of the structural-functional theory of social stratification. Before we take up a detailed discussion, some salient features of this theory may be mentioned here :

1. Inevitability of functional differentiation.
2. Need for differential intent and ability for different functions.
3. Differential evaluation of different social positions and duties.
4. Reward on the basis of differential value attached with the different functions.
5. Values and rewards constituting the social differentiation and differentiation.

That quintessence of the structural-functional theory of stratification is that social hierarchy is the result of the inevitability of differentiation of roles and duties. Different duties and roles carry differential power and prestige. The differentiation of roles and duties is inevitable for the survival of mankind. As such, stratification becomes an inevitable phenomenon of social life.

A slightly different view may be stated here as expressed by Joseph Schumpeter. He observes that classes emerge from varying historical conditions. The formation, nature and basic laws of classes depend upon two criteria : (i) on the significance that is attributed to the function performed by class, and (ii) the degree to which the class successfully performs the function. Schumpeter states that the criterion that functions are "socially necessary," however, cannot alone decides relative evaluation. The importance of an individual class member in a given situation is particularly a decisive factor. Schumpeter's above two criteria, however, are almost synonymous with the "functional necessities" of Davis and Moore. His added historical significance given to the class stratification is certainly a valuable contribution.

Davis and Moore thus show the relationship between stratification and the rest of the social order. The assumption, as explained earlier, is that no society is "classless" or unstratified, hence universal necessity of social stratification. Another point is that roughly there is uniform distribution of prestige in every society. However, there are great differences in the degree and kind of stratification. We need to study the varieties of social inequality and the variable factors that give rise to them. To understand the universal and the variable vis-a-vis social stratification is the main consideration. Davis and Moore refer to the analysis of the system of positions, not to the individuals occupying those positions. Why different positions carry different degrees of prestige ? How certain individuals get into these positions ? These questions are core of the debate of the structural-functional theory of social stratification. Let us discuss some important points of the Davis-Moore approach in detail.

Functional Necessity of Stratification

Every society requires individuals who can be placed and motivated for specific tasks. There are social positions and duties attached to them. Individual members in a society are assigned work in specific positions based on their eligibility and ability. People are motivated at two levels : (1) to instil in the proper individuals the desire to fill certain positions, and (2) the desire to perform the duties attached to them. This is true of all systems, whether they are relatively static or somewhat dynamic. This goes on as a process. This is also there in competitive or non-competitive system. Motivation may vary depending upon the nature of the system.

If all positions are equal in their significance for the society, then people may not bother about their preferential choice for particular positions. But, the reality is : who gets into which positions? This question is often raised. Since positions are not the same, some require special talents of training and some are functionally more important than others. Duties attached to given positions must be performed with the diligence required for given tasks. Based on such a functionalist logic, a society must have not only some kinds of rewards as inducements, and but also some way of

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distributing these rewards differentially according to positions. The rewards and their distribution become a part of the social order, and thus give rise to stratification.

Rewards in a society are distributed to its members for securing essential services for things that contribute to :

1. sustenance and comfort;
2. honour and diversion; and
3. self-respect and ego-expansion.

In any social system three kinds of rewards are generally given according to positions. In a sense, the rewards are built into the positions. They consist in the rights associated with the position, accomplishments or prerequisites.

''If the rights and prerequisites of different positions in a society must be unequal, then the society must be stratified, because that is precisely what stratification means. Social inequality is thus an unconsciously evolved device by which societies insure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons. Hence, every society, no matter how simple or complex, must differentiate persons in terms of both prestige and esteem, and must therefore possess a certain amount of institutionalized inequality."

The amount or type of inequality need not be the same in all societies. The explanation given by Davis and Moore seems to be logically sound and apparently quite convincing. However, issues such as the inevitability of social stratification, unconsciously evolved stratification as a device, universality of stratification, etc., are debatable as they tend to support persistence of inequality. We will take these later on.

Two Determinants of Positional Rank

The positions which carry the best reward and the highest rank are those that (a) have the greatest importance for the society, and (b) require the greatest training or talent. The first factor concerns *function* and is a matter of relative significance; and second concerns with *means* and is a matter of scarcity.

Differential Functional Importance

Actually, less essential positions do not compete successfully with more essential ones. If a position is easily filled, it need not be heavily rewarded, even though important. If a position 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. If a position is functionally unique, it is highly rewarded. This position may be such that other positions are dependent on it.

Differential Scarcity of Personnel

All positions require some form of skill or capacity for performance. The incumbent of a given position must accomplish certain things. For some positions, which require innate talents, the persons who fill them are bound to be rare. In other case, talent is in abundance, but the training process is long, costly and elaborate that relatively a few can qualify. Medical education is a fit case of the long-drawn training and of its high cost. In case of abundance of talents and easy training, not much reward would be there, and vice versa.


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In two ways a person gets qualified – either through *inherent capacity* or through *training*. Both are always necessary. The scarcity may lie primarily in one or the other a well as in both.

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What factors affect differential reward or functional importance and scarcity of personnel ? Response to this question would determine the nature of stratification and difference between two or more stratification systems.

Positions important in one society may not be important in another, because their conditions or their degree of internal development may be different. The same applies to scarcity of personnel or the necessity of certain kinds of skill or talent.

The major societal functions of stratification are :

1. Religion
2. Government
3. Wealth, property and labour
4. Technical knowledge

Religion

Religion is necessary in human society because its members have unity by sharing certain ultimate values and ends in common. The values and ends may be subjective, but they influence behaviour of the people to unite them as members of a system. Values and ends evolve as a part of culture by communication and moral pressure. Religious beliefs and rituals seem to be apparently real. Beliefs and rituals are connected with the common ends and values which are further connected with an imaginary world of symbols and concrete sacred objects. Such a symbolic system is related in a meaningful way to the facts and trials of an individual's life. The sacred objects are worshipped as they symbolize certain given things in social life. Super-natural prescriptions as codes of behaviour are at work in practice of religion. Thus, religion creates an institutional structure conforming to the ultimate ends and values.

The particular persons, who guide such a religious system, enjoy greater rewards than the ordinary members. The highest, religious functionaries enjoy special rewards and privileges. Such persons are keepers of sacred tradition, they are skilled performers of rituals and interpreters of lore and myth. They are God's representatives, hence enjoy sacredness.

Religious functionaries have generally been associated with the highest positions of power. However, they do not get entire control over the societies, because religious duties do not require high level of technical competence. Religious ritual is often elaborate and religious lore abstruse, hence require tact more than intelligence. The criteria for genuine contact with the supernatural are never strictly clear. Priestly acclaim is normally free from competition. Such a set of criteria do not stand valid in the fields of law, administration, science and other profane activities.

In modern societies, priesthood tends to loose status because it does not stand that test of scientific validation. Brahmin as a priest is loosing his status in Indian society due to socio-political awakening and scientific thinking among the people, particularly those who were at the receiving end of the Brahmin-dominated Indian society. But, no society has become completely secularized, including India. Transcendentalism and supernaturalism persist partly for integration of the ultimate values, and partly for emotional adjustments in situations of crises caused by natural calamities, chronic illnesses, death, etc.

Government

The government organizes society in terms of law and authority. Unlike religion, it orients the society to the actual rather than the unseen world. Internally, the government enforces norms, arbiters conflicting claims and interests, and provides planning and directions to society. Externally, it handles war and diplomacy. The government acts as the agent of the entire people to carry out these functions. It enjoys a monopoly of force and controls all individuals within its territory. Authority (official) and citizens have command-compliance relationships, hence stratification based on political relationships. Political inequality becomes at times an all-encompassing inequality.

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However, political authority cannot have an absolute character as it represents people and their interests and welfare.

Wealth, Property and Labour

Besides religious and political dimensions of stratification, economic rewards are also an important criterion. Unequal economic returns are a principal means of controlling the entrance of persons into positions and stimulating the performance of their duties. The amount of the economic return therefore becomes one of the main indices of social status. As Max Weber has said that it is not necessary that a position does bring power and prestige because it draws a high income. Rather, it draws a high income because it is functionally important and the available personnel is for one reason or another scarce.

The primary source of power and prestige is not income, but the ownership of capital goods (including patents, goodwill and professional reputation). Consumer goods are not a cause of social standing. The ownership of goods for production is a source of income, and the latter is thus only an index, and not a determinant. However, income induces people to compete for the position. Income made from one position may be transformed into making another position. But even then, the initial economically advantageous status remains the key factor.

It cannot be denied that income beyond one's needs may give rise to possession of capital wealth. Such a possession becomes a reward for better management of one's finances.

This can also give rise to inheritance, pure ownership and reward for the same. Stratification emerges/evolves out of such a process of income generation and its management.

One kind of ownership of production goods consists in rights over the labour of others. Slavery, serfdom, peonage, encomienda and indenture are examples of such an ownership of production goods. This is also an example of an extreme nature of stratification, an unequal relationship. Contrary to this may be contractual relationships. In between these two are traditional reciprocities, which used to be a characteristic feature of India's caste system and its jajmani relations.

Technical Knowledge

The positions which require great technical skill receive fairly high reward. This is to draw talent and motivate training for highly skilled positions. However, technical position is subordinate to religious, political and economic positions because it is concerned solely with means, and it is not so great for integration of societal goods. Nevertheless, the distinction between expert and layman in any social order is fundamental, and not reducible to other terms. Methods of recruitment and reward acquire importance in all societies based on technical know-how. The opportunity for acquisition of knowledge and skill/training may inhere as a sort of property right in certain families and classes, given them power and prestige in consequence. Oversupply of trained manpower may create unemployment. The monied classes may not allow surfacing of potentially talented people. Artificial scarcity versus natural scarcity of skills and talents also may be seen at times in the changing social order.

There is always a wide range of technical positions and persons. Specialization is the key to such a differentiation.

There are also specialists with short-duration training and native capacity. However, the true experts are scientists, engineers, and administrators, who have control over functionally important positions. But, there are also limitations of knowledge and skills as a basis for performing social functions. It is the society that grants prestige to the technical person.

The Davis-Moore theory, despite its generalized character, clearly states that there are many types of stratified systems. These can be delineated according to certain modes of variation. These are :

(*a*) The degree of specialization

(*b*) The nature of functional emphasis

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(*c*) The magnitude of invidious differences

(*d*) The degree of stratum solidarity

The degree of specialization affects the fineness and multiplicity of the gradations in power and prestige. A particular function is emphasized in specific terms in relation to other functions. The amount of specialization influences the bases of selection. The polar types are : *specialized* and *unspecialized.*

The nature of the functional emphasis depends upon the nature of society – whether it is gripped with sacred strings or is having secular preoccupations. Social mobility and specialization would be determined by the nature of society. In the first case, the society would be *undifferentiated, familistic, authoritarian* (theocratic or sacred) and in the second case, it could be *totalitarian* or *secular capitalistic.*

The *degree of opportunity* may be seen in terms of an advanced society and a primitive society. It is not a question of comparative equality/inequality, but of access to opportunity. The polar types are : *mobile* (open) and *immobile* (closed).

Finally, the degree of *class* solidarity may vary to some extent independently of the other criteria. As such, the polar types would be : *class organized* and *class unorganized.*

The external conditions that may affect the system of stratification are :

(*a*) The stage of cultural development

(*b*) Situation with respect to other societies

(*c*) Size of the society

The enhancement of mobility, a decline of stratum solidarity, and a change of functional emphasis characterize the stage of cultural development of a society. Free trade relations or cultural diffusion, warfare, etc., explain the situation with respect to other societies. A small size of the society restricts specialization, differentiation and mobility.

A rigid dichotomy of societies is almost unworkable in today's fast changing world. Internal differentiation also makes it difficult to segregate different strata in clear terms. One needs to think of *composite types.*

A Critique of the Davis-Moore Theory

The basic assumption of the Davis-Moore theory, that stratification is an inherent feature of social organization, has been challenged by Melvin M. Tumin. He doubts the historical validity of the criterion of functional importance for the necessity of stratification. The idea of positions with greater and lesser power and prestige, as explained by Davis and Moore, is considered by Tumin as a "tautology and unsound procedure". Tumin observes that true inequality takes place when persons are rewarded according to their assignments and performances. The distinction between "less functional" and "more functional" is also misleading. There is a necessity for different types of functions, and one function becomes infructuous without the other.

Walter Buckley, another critic of the theory, accuses Davis and Moore of confusing social differentiation, the existence of specialized roles or a division of labour with social stratification. Buckley defines social stratification as "a system of unequally privileged groups", the membership in which is determined by the intergenerational transmission of roles, or of opportunities to attain them through kinship affiliation. However, Davis considers this as "a terminological question" only. Dennis H. Wrong, who is also a functionalist like Tumin and Buckley, criticizes the Davis-Moore theory for being too general. It says nothing whatsoever about the range of inequality and the determinants of the rank in concrete societies. It "ignores the possible disruptive consequences of mobility and inequality of opportunity – a theme notably neglected by American sociologists".

As we have mentioned earlier, Ralph Dahrendorf considers that the control of social behaviour based on positive and negative sanctions creates "a rank order of distributive status". Conformity

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is rewarded; deviance is penalized. Thus, stratification lies in certain features of all human societies which are necessary to them. The authority structure of the society sustains its system of norms and sanctions. The structural-functional theory of stratification does not take note of the crucial issue of historical reality of the society and its existence as observed by Dahrendorf.

However, the structural-functional theory is particularly useful in understanding the present ongoing social systems. The parts can be related to the whole, and one part to another. A comparison of parts with each other and with the whole can be made. Thus, the structural-functional theory, besides its insistence on universality of functional roles and importance of differential positions, has contributed to a comprehensive and deeper understanding of social inequality.

Impact on Indian Studies

Most of the studies on the caste system were conducted from the functionalist perspective in the first half of the 20th century, and even after this, in the decades of sixties and seventies. From H.H. Risley to J.H. Hutton, and then to G.S. Ghurye, M.N. Srinivas, Louis Dumont – all enumerated positive functions of the caste system by praising its organic character, jajmani system, intercaste relations, intracaste solidarity, etc. The functional ethos of "integration" overwhelmed most of the scholars of this period. Congruence between caste, class and power was emphasized. Division of labour among various castes was considered desirable. Intracaste and intercaste relations were seen as positive bases of Indian society. In all these studies, "caste model" was accepted without an iota of doubt. The British proclaimed caste as a useful institution for Hindus in particular. Even some of our scholars claimed secular credentials of the caste system, and considered it "the democratic incarnation".

Yogendra Singh observes that the basic premises of structural-functional studies of social stratification have implied a systematic teleology based on the Brahminic or "hierarchical" model of caste society, harmony or consensus. "Historicity" was casuality in the structural-functional approach to the study of caste. However, the structural-functional approach showed two tendencies in the 1970s : (1) deeper substantive and theoretical concerns in respect of processes of change, and (2) increased diagnostic orientation.

Self-Assessment

Choose the correct options

1. Marx was born on
   (*a*) May 5,1818 (*b*) May 5, 1819 (*c*) May 5, 1895 (*d*) None of these
2. Marx became the Editor of Paper in
   (*a*) 1842 (*b*) 1840 (*c*) 1853 (*d*) 1845
3. The Communist Manifesto' was written by
   (*a*) Talcott Parsons (*b*) Davis Moore (*c*) Marx (*d*) None of these
4. Which two class referred by Marx?

4.5 Summary

- Class and occupations are closely intertwined and social class has the style of life as an important aspect. Occupation is an important aspect of membership of a class. The style of life aspect of occupation is noted as a significant phenomenon in all societies. Class stabilizes life chances — for the recruitment process and for the inner structure of the class.
- The structural-functional approach to social stratification has been quite popular and logically acceptable, particularly among American sociologists. Talcott Parsons, K. Davis and W. Moore are its main exponents.

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- Karl Marx is the principal architech of the historical dialectical approach to the study of society, class and social stratification. Marxian theory is not a simple explanation of technological or economic determinism. Marx propounded a grand theory of society. According to him, stratification is determined by the system of relations of production, and "status" of a man is determined by his position in this very system in terms of ownership and non-ownership of the means of production. Marx's theory of class could be understood as a system of social stratification in terms of "domination" and "subjection" of "effective superiority-inferiority relationships".
- "The owners merely of labour power, owners of capital and landowners, whose respective sources of income are wages, profit and ground-rent, in other words, wage labourers, capitalists and landowners constitute the three big classes of modern society based on the capitalist mode of production". Marx further observes in support of his two classes theory that middle and intermediate strata obliterate lines of demarcation everywhere. The tendency is toward more and more in the development of the capitalist mode of production, transforming labour into. *wage labour* and the means of production into *capital.* Landed property tends to transform into the capitalist mode of production as well.
- The bourgeoisie get more than their due share, which Marx names as the "theory of surplus value". Such a situation accelerates class struggle, which finally leads to revolution and radical transformation of the stratification system of society.
- The two classes clash with each other because of their conflicting interests. In other words, the whole society remains divided into two classes, as two great hostile camps. The two classes clash and also unite to defend their respective interests. There is also a certain degree of cooperation between the two classes, which Marx mentions as "unity of opposites". Marx believes that the conception of political power is an adjunct to class power and political struggle as a special form of class struggle. The state functions for the bourgeoisie. Thus, the material existence of men determines their life situation and consciousness. Class is, therefore, a social reality which mirrors the entire social structure.
- For Marx, class is "social", a social reality, an existing fact of life. It is not a statistical or an aggregated or a constructed phenomenon.
- The social relations become the *base* of all other relations. These relations determine control over the means of production, and thereby control the whole moral and intellectual life of the people. Law and government, art and literature, science and philosophy – all serve more or less directly interests of the ruling class, hence, these aspects are *superstructures* of society.
- Thus, in Marxian theory, a social class is an aggregate of persons who perform the same function in the organization of production. In the *Communist Manifesto,* Marx begins with characterization that in different periods of history there are freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, or in a word, oppressor and oppressed, as classes.
- The distinction drawn by Marx between a "class in itself" and a "class for itself" is also significant to know the basis of class formation and class consciousness. In his well-known work, *The Poverty of Philosophy,* Marx observes : "Economic conditions had in the first place transformed the mass of the people into workers. The domination of capital created the common situation and common interests of this class. Thus, this mass is already a class in relation to capital, but *not yet a class for itself.* In the struggle, of which we have only indicated a few phases, this mass unites and forms itself into *a class for itself.* The interests which it defends become class interests."
- Marxists realized the "complications" of social ranking or stratification in relation to the basic classes. Both Marx and Engels felt that in England intermediate and transitional strata

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obscured the class boundaries. In the *Theories of Surplus Value,* Marx refers explicitly to the growth of the middle class as a phenomenon of the development of capitalism. A continual increase in the members of the middle classes was felt due to growth of capitalism.

- Radical political movements, including women's movement and diverse ethnic and national movements, have not been class-based. Coalitions and alliances in social life have blurred class consciousness in terms of the Marxist theory. The place of the peasantry in the class structure and its political role in different types of society were not given due significance in the Marxist theory.
- According to Kosambi, caste and class-based stratification and exploitation existed side by side in India. Similarly, different forms of slavery and bondage, feudal relations have also existed in different combinations in the same areas and at the same time.
- Marx talked of two antagonistic classes, having "unity of opposites", but these classes have not been undifferentiated. Several groups exist in between the two classes. Today, civil society and voluntary groups have impinged upon the state to change its character and functioning.
- In India, in spite of globalization and privatization, the state remains the largest employer today. In view of the recent recession in the world economy, particularly in America, professionals are again looking for government jobs for reasons of security and guaranteed pay package, And even, then the organized workforce is about one-fifth of the total earners. In such a situation division of society in terms of bourgeoisie and proletariat and implicit class conflict between the two seem to be a presumptuous phenomenon.
- In his doctoral thesis *A Contribution to the History of Medieval Business Organizations* (1889), Weber studied the cost, risk or profit of an enterprise. After this, he started training at the German bench/or bar. At this point of time, he got acquainted with the social and political problems of agrarian society. He joined as an instructor in law at the University of Berlin. Weber also studied social, political and economic developments of Roman society.
- Since Weber was born after Marx, he had advantage of reacting to the Marxist ideas and conceptualizations. He tried to "round out" Marx's economic materialism by a political and military materialism. "Weber looks for the disposition over wapons and over means of administration." He makes a clear and rational distinction between economic, social and political orders of society, and considers power as a key to all the domains of society.
- Weber writes : "In general, we understand by 'power' the chance of a man or of a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others, who are participating in action."
- "Economically conditioned" power is not, of course, identical with "power" as such. On the contrary, the emergence of economic power may be the consequence of power existing on other grounds. Man does not strive for power only in order to enrich himself economically. Power, including economic power, may be valued "for its own sake".
- "Social order" is defined by the way in which social honour is distributed in a society. The social order and the economic, order are related to the legal order. However, the two are not identical. The way in which economic goods and services are distributed and used determines the economic order.
- The social order is determined by the economic order to a high degree and in turn reacts upon it. Thus, "classes", "status groups" and "parties" are phenomena of the distribution of power within a community.
- "The term 'class' refers to any group of people that is found in the same class situation". Competition eliminates some and patronizes others. Monopoly occurs either due to absence or weak competition or when the rival is ousted from competition.
- "Property" and "lack of property" are, therefore, the basic categories of all class situations.

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Price wars and competitive struggles exhibit both. The kind of property and the kind of services further differentiate class situations, for example, in terms of class of *rentiers* and class of *entrepreneurs,* etc.

- *Communal action* refers to that action which is oriented to the feeling of the actors that they belong together. *Social action,* on the other hand, is oriented to a rationally motivated adjustment of interests. The rise of societal or even of communal action from a common class situation is by no means a universal phenomenon.
- A class in itself does not entail a community. Nevertheless, class situations emerge only on the basis of communalization (mobilization for common economic interests). The labour market and the capitalist enterprise determine the class situation of the worker and the entrepreneurs. Thus, the communal action is not basically action between members of the identical class. The existence of a capitalist enterprise is pre-conditioned by a specific kind of "legal order".
- "Classes" are stratified according to the principles of their *consumption* of goods as represented by special "styles of life". An "occupational group" is also a status group. For example, Brahmins are a status group as they perform priestly functions. However, technological change and economic transformation threaten stratification by status pushing the class situation into the foreground.
- "Classes" are found in economic order, "status groups" are seen in the sphere of the distribution of honour, and these two influence each other, and also the legal order, and are influenced by it. But "parties" live in a house of power. Thus, Weber asserts autonomy and interdependence of class, status and power.
- "Class situation"/"status situation" may determine "parties". But parties may not be either "classes" or "status groups". They are partly *class parties* and partly *status parties.* But sometimes they are neither. They have staff, rules of the game. "Parties" may represent ephemeral or enduring structures. Means of attaining power vary from naked violence to canvassing for votes with money, social influence, the force of speech, suggestion, clumsy hoax, etc.
- Marx is less careful in distinguishing between economic power and political power. Weber, as a liberal, makes there spheres clearly distinct : "economic", "economically determined" and "economically relevant".
- Bourdieu relates social space and the genesis of classes. He points out that in the Marxist theory the "theoretical class" cannot be treated as a "real class". A real class is an effectively mobilized group. Bourdieu talks of the social field, he does not grant a multidimensional space to the economic field alone, to the reductions of economic production.
- Class and power along with caste (status) were considered as economic and political dimensions of social inequality and hierarchy. Some scholars looked at caste from a class point of view.
- Weber's theory of social stratification cannot be taken away from Weber's overall approach to society, economy, state, religion, etc. Weber tried to synthesize rationalism, subjectivity and objectification in his method of understanding (*verstehen*). Individual, organization and group occupied their respective space in Weber's study of human society. Weber meticulously linked theory, method and data, which the Indian followers of Weber have not been able to do as scientifically as he did.
- That quintessence of the structural-functional theory of stratification is that social hierarchy is the result of the inevitability of differentiation of roles and duties. Different duties and roles carry differential power and prestige. The differentiation of roles and duties is inevitable

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for the survival of mankind. As such, stratification becomes an inevitable phenomenon of social life.

- Davis and Moore thus show the relationship between stratification and the rest of the social order. The assumption, as explained earlier, is that no society is "classless" or unstratified, hence universal necessity of social stratification. Another point is that roughly there is uniform distribution of prestige in every society. However, there are great differences in the degree and kind of stratification. We need to study the varieties of social inequality and the variable factors that give rise to them.
- ''If the rights and prerequisites of different positions in a society must be unequal, then the society must be stratified, because that is precisely what stratification means. Social inequality is thus an unconsciously evolved device by which societies insure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons. Hence, every society, no matter how simple or complex, must differentiate persons in terms of both prestige and esteem, and must therefore possess a certain amount of institutionalized inequality."
- The particular persons, who guide such a religious system, enjoy greater rewards than the ordinary members. The highest, religious functionaries enjoy special rewards and privileges. Such persons are keepers of sacred tradition, they are skilled performers of rituals and interpreters of lore and myth. They are God's representatives, hence enjoy sacredness.
- In modern societies, priesthood tends to loose status because it does not stand that test of scientific validation. Brahmin as a priest is loosing his status in Indian society due to socio-political awakening and scientific thinking among the people, particularly those who were at the receiving end of the Brahmin-dominated Indian society. But, no society has become completely secularized, including India. Transcendentalism and supernaturalism persist partly for integration of the ultimate values, and partly for emotional adjustments in situations of crises caused by natural calamities, chronic illnesses, death, etc.
- The opportunity for acquisition of knowledge and skill/training may inhere as a sort of property right in certain families and classes, given them power and prestige in consequence. Oversupply of trained manpower may create unemployment.
- The degree of specialization affects the fineness and multiplicity of the gradations in power and prestige. A particular function is emphasized in specific terms in relation to other functions. The amount of specialization influences the bases of selection. The polar types are : *specialized* and *unspecialized.*
- The enhancement of mobility, a decline of stratum solidarity, and a change of functional emphasis characterize the stage of cultural development of a society. Free trade relations or cultural diffusion, warfare, etc., explain the situation with respect to other societies. A small size of the society restricts specialization, differentiation and mobility.
- The structural-functional theory is particularly useful in understanding the present ongoing social systems. The parts can be related to the whole, and one part to another. A comparison of parts with each other and with the whole can be made. Thus, the structural-functional theory, besides its insistence on universality of functional roles and importance of differential positions, has contributed to a comprehensive and deeper understanding of social inequality.

4.6 Key–Words

1. Bourgeoisie : Means of production
2. Proletariat : Workers

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4.7 Review Questions

1. Discuss the theories of Social Stratification.
2. Briefly describe the theoretical formulations of Karl Marx.
3. Explain theoretical formulations of Max Weber.
4. Write a note on the structural and functional theory of Max Weber.

Answers: Self–Assessment

1. (*a*) 2. (*a*) 3. (*c*)
4. Proletariat and bourgeoisie

4.8 Further Readings



1. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Perspectives on Social Stratification, Rawat Publication.
2. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Social Stratification & Mobility, Rawat Publication.
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Unit 5: Forms of Social Stratification

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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Understand the Caste, Class and Gender as a Forms of Social Stratification.
- Explain the Social Stratification in Urban and Industrial Settings.

Introduction

Social stratification as a field of study and research occupies important place in disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, political science, economics and psychology. Further, the most appealing of all utopias is (total) equality and hence study of social stratification has been and still is one of the most fascinating fields of study in different social sciences.

The term 'social stratification' has been borrowed from geology and it refers to the division of people into layers of strata which may be thought of as being vertically arranged in the same way that layers of the earth are arranged above or below other layers. But this geological metaphor has its own limitation. As rightly pointed out by Andre Beitelle (1985), "the arrangement of persons in a society is enormously more complex than the arrangement of layers of the earth; and social strata are not visible, to the naked eyes in the way that geological strata are". When we talk of social stratification we draw attention to the unequal positions occupied by individuals in society. Broadly speaking, social stratification refers to the division of society into a number of strata, heirarchically arranged groupings. These groupings have assumed numerously historical and cultural variations, of which castes, estates and classes are the most familiar. From 1960s onwards attention also turned to Ethnic and Gender stratification.

Though there is no unanimity on this issue, the dominant opinion among sociologists and social anthropologists definitely believes in the universality of social stratification yet the bases of inequalities vary from time to time and society to society. David Jary and Julia Jary in their *Dictionary of Sociology* (1991) write that "since there are very many bases on which human inequalities may be understood and upon which exploitation and oppression may be produced and reproduced, it is important to recognize that these variables are not mutually exclusive; in the pre-industrial world religious and military strata often co-existed along with those based on gender and ethnicity". In simpler terms, social differences become social stratification when people are ranked hierarchically along some dimension of inequality, whether this be income, wealth, power, prestige, age ethnicity or some other characteristics.

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Explaining the mechanism and dynamics of social stratification Andre Beitelle (ibid) tells us that everywhere power plays an important part in the maintenance and reproduction of social stratification. First, there is the use of the apparatus of state for enforcing the privileges and disabilities of superior and inferior strata, as in South Africa (till recently). But violence may also be used for the same end outside the framework of the state as in the case of lynching, whether of Blacks by Whites in the United States or of untouchables by 'caste Hindus' in India. Whereas power is important in upholding the existing order, the extent to which force is openly used to the advantage of superior strata against inferior strata varies.

5.1 Caste, Class and Gender as Forms of Social Stratification

Caste

'Caste' has come to be associated with a social science concept. The phenomenon which we now call 'caste' was named by western observers of India at an early stage in the colonial period. The phenomenon of caste has probably aroused more controversy than any other aspect of Indian life and thought. Some scholars see India's caste system as the defining feature of 'Indian culture'. Caste is such a complex phenomenon that it is difficult to define and the definitions pose lot of problems. Yet, in order to use it for practical purposes, some of the following definitions may be used :

"Caste is a collection of families, bearing a common name, claiming a common descent, from a nythical ancester, human or divine, professing to follow the same hereditary calling and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogenous community."

... Herbert Risley

"When a class is somewhat strictly hereditary, we may call it a caste."

.... C.H. Cooley

"When status is wholly predetermined so that men are born to their lot without any hope of changing it, then the class takes the extreme form of caste."

... Maclver and Page

"Caste is a closed class."

... D.N. Majumdar

"Caste system is a form of social stratification in which castes are hierarchically organized and separated from each other by rules of ritual purity."

... Penguin's Dictionary of Sociology

On the basis of these and dozens of other definitions caste may be understood and explained as a form of social stratification which involves :

(*i*) a system of hierarchically ranked

(*ii*) closed

(*iii*) endogamous strata

(*iv*) ascribed membership

(*v*) restriction of contact between castes

(*vi*) mobility theoretically impossible.

Although, "it reflects economic inequalities, by virtue of the occupations typically followed by, or permitted to members, caste stratification is ultimately rooted in non-economic criteria. In its' purest form, in Hindu India, the caste principle is religious : castes are ranked in accordance with the degree of 'ritual purity' ascribed to members and to their activities" (David Jary and Julia Jary, 1991). Historically, the most developed form, and some would argue the only true form, of caste stratification has occurred in India in association with Hinduism. The origins of this system are

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obscure. They probably lie in the twin bases of ethnicity and occupational specialization. The system which the Brahmins perfected was founded on five main divisions, four caste groups (*Varna*) and an out caste group (*Pancham Varna*), the untouchables. The four caste groups were the Brahmis, the priestly class having religious authority, the *Kshatriyas*, the secular and military ruler and landlord caste, the *Vaishyas* the mercantile middle class and the *Shudra* - the servants and slaves class. The untouchables performed only the most degrading and ritually impure/polluting tasks.

Caste has been described as the fundamental social institution of India. As Andre Beitelle (1996) points out, "sometimes the term is used metaphorically to refer to rigid social distinctions or extreme social exclusiveness wherever found. But it is among the Hindus in India that we find the system in it's most fully developed form, although analogous forms exist among Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and other religious groups in South Asia".

Class

Class, commonly known as social class, is one of the major forms of social stratification along with *estate* and *caste*. In the course of the first three decades of the nineteenth century the term class gradually replaced 'estates', 'ranks' and 'orders' as the major word used to denote divisions within society. In *The Social Science Encyclopaedia*, Zygmunt Bauman (1984), in a brilliant analysis, tells us that "the change of vocabulary reflected the diminishing significance of rank and ascribed or inherited qualities in general and the growing importance of possessions and income among the determinants of social position. Class now came to refer to large categories of population, (1) distinct from other categories in respect of wealth and related social position, (2) deriving their distinctive status mainly from their location in the production and distribution of social wealth, (3) sharing accordingly in distinctive interests either opposing or complimenting other group interests, and (4) consequently displaying a tendency to a group - distinctive political, cultural and social attitudes and behaviour.



Did u know? Class status is determined by property, achievement and capacity of an individual.

In simpler terms, a class is a category or group of persons having a definite status in society which permanently determines the relation to other groups. The relative position of the class in the social scale arises from the degree of prestige attached to it.

The major theoretical tradition within class analysis is derived from the works of Karl Marx and Max Weber on the newly emerging class structure of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century. Marx analysed class in relation to the ownership of capital and the means of production. A class is formed by an aggregate of persons who play the same role in the production mechanism. Marx divided the entire human population into those who owned property or means of production and those who did not - the capitalist class and the proletariat. Marx saw classes as tangible collectivities and as real social forces with the capacity to change society. The never ending drive of capitalists to create profit led to the exploitation of proletariat and so Marx believed that it would result into it's pauperization. In these circumstances the workers would develop class consciousness and the proletariat would grow from being a class in itself, that is an economically defined category with no self-awareness, to become a class 'for itself' made up of workers with a class-conscious view of the world and ready to pursue class conflict against the capitalists. Thus, Marx distinguished classes in objective terms : that is, in terms of their position in the productive system.

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While Marx discusses classes in connection with production, Weber emphasizes the market, distribution and consumption. In Weber's analysis all people with similar economic interests and with similar economic power belonged to the same class. By economic factor, Weber meant not simply the relations of production but also the relations that develop in the market. Weber divided the population into classes according to economic differences of market capacity that give rise to different life chances. Capital was one source of market capacity, but skill and education formed another. While property owners and owners of means of production were a class, as Marx had emphasized, those whose skills were scarce in the market and commanded high salaries also constituted a separate class. Thus Weber distinguished four classes : the propertied class, the intellectual, the administrative and managerial class, the traditional petty bourgeosis class of small businessmen and shopkeepers, and the working class. Thus differential power, not economic exploitation, is the point of origin of weber's analysis of class.

Gender

Gender is a socially constructed definition of women and men. It is not the same as sex (biological characteristics of women and men) and it is not the same as women. Gender is determined by the conception of tasks, functions and roles attributed to women and men in society and in public and private life.

These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context / time-specific and changeable.

Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities.

The gender approach is distinct in that it focuses on women and men and not on women in isolation. It highlights

- The differences between women's and men's interest even within the same household and how these interact and are expressed.
- The conventions and hierarchies which determine women's and men's position in the family, community and society at large, whereby women are usually dominated by men.
- The differences among women and among men, based on age, wealth, ethnic background and other factors.
- The way gender roles and relations change, often quite rapidly, as a result of social, economic and technological trends.

Gender equity requires equal enjoyment by women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Gender equity does not mean, that women and men become the same, but that their opportunities and life chances are equal.

Gender Analysis takes into account social and economical differences between women and men at each stage of policy development for the purpose of :

- Revealing potential different impact of policy, programme and law on women and men;
- Ensuring equal results for women and men, boys and girls, in measures design and implementation.

1. **Gender and Sex :** "Sex marks the distinction between women and men as a result of their biological' physical and genetic differences...Gender roles are sex by convention and other social, economic, political and cultural forces."

   Sex and gender distinction is a concept in feministing theory, political feminism, and sociology which distinguishes sex, a natural or biological feature, from gender, the cultural or learned significance of sex.

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The distinction is strategically important for some strands of feminist theory and politics, particularly second wave feminism, because on it is premised the argument that gender is not biological destiny, and that the patriarchal oppression of women is a cultural phenomenon which need not necessarily follow from biological sexual differentiation. The distinction allows feminists to accept some form of natural sexual difference while criticizing gender inequality. Some third-wave feminists like Judith Butler, French feminists like Monique Wittig, and social constructionists within sociology have disputed the biological-natural status the distinction imputes to sex, arguing instead that both sex and gender are culturally constructed and structurally complicit. Some feminist philosophers maintain that gender is totally undetermined by sex.

As popularly used, sex and gender are not defined in this fashion. There has been increased usage of the word "gender" to refer to sexual differences, because of the dual meaning of the word "sex" as a biological feature as well as meaning the act of sexual intercourse.

Difference between Sex and Gender

Margaret Mead, an American anthropologist, was one of the first to empirically ground the distinction between the biological and social characteristics of men and women. She did this rather dramatically through her study of the conceptions of masculinity and femininity among the Arapesh, Mundugamor and Tchambuli, three societies in the New Guinea Islands (Mead 1935). On the basis of this study, she argued that the Western equation between masculinity and aggression on the one hand and femininity and nurturance on the other is but one among a number of possible permutations of traits which have no intrinsic relation with biological sex. Between them, the three non-Western societies studied by Mead displayed other possible combinations of these variables. Mead's study, though contestable on several grounds, contributed significantly to the shaping of the concept of gender in the latter half of the twentieth century.

The functionalist notion of 'sex role' was also a crude precursor of the concept of gender. It suggested that men and women are socialized into sex-specific roles, namely 'instrumental' and 'expressive'. These roles were regarded as the basis of a complementary relation between men and women, which along with the sexual division of labour, contributed to a stable social order. Scholars have questioned the focus of this conceptualization upon 'individual' men and women who are socialized into sex-specific roles. They suggest that gender is something more than roles performed by men and women just as economy is something more than jobs performed by individuals (Lorber, 1984). Critics have also pointed out that socialization is always a precarious achievement and that agency, interpretation and negotiation are a part and parcel of how gender identities are actually constituted. The distinction between 'sex' and 'gender', which came to dominate theorization in the sociology of gender in the 1970s, is premised upon the idea of universality of'sex' and variability of'gender'. Ann Oakley's Sex, Gender and Society (1972) made the sex-gender distinction very popular in sociology. For Oakley, sex is 'a word that refers to the biological differences between male and female : the visible differences in genitalia, the related difference in procreative function. "Gender", however is a matter of culture, it refers to the social classification into "masculine" and "feminine". The terms (i.e. sex and gender) can be traced back to Robert Staler, an American Psychiatrist, who used them to deal with cases of individuals whose biological 'sex' did not match their 'gender'.

2. **Social Construction of Gender :** A social construction (social construct) is a concept or practice that is the creation (or artifact) of a particular group. When we say that something is socially constructed, we are focusing on its dependence on contingent variables of our social selves. The underlying assumptions on which social constructivism is typically seen to be based are reality, knowledge, and learning.

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Social constructs are generally understood to be the by products of countless human choices rather than laws resulting from divine will or nature.

The social construction of meaning applies to various values, norms and beliefs that are created by the dominant economic and most powerful groups in American society. These values, norms and beliefs are perpetuated and reinforced by social institutions like the workplace, the media, education, religion and others. These values, norms and beliefs primarily dictate access to upward mobility as well as shaping identity, personality, and gender roles. Gender roles and norms often result as the outcome of a socialization process based on the dominant values, norms and beliefs of society. From birth on, infants, of both sexes are conditioned by parental and other adult responses to behave, think, act, and interact in gender-specific role manifestations.

There are many examples of the different traits and attributes that males and females are socialized to accept as their own in society. Female children, for the most part are encouraged to be cooperative, compassionate, caring, and nurturing; largely in preparation for roles as wife and mother. Male children, in contrast, are socialized toward independence, assertiveness, competition, and achievement; they are often expected to suppress their emotions and feelings.

We are born male or female, but not masculine or feminine. Femininity is an artifice, an achievement, 'a mode of enacting and reenacting received gender norms, which surface as so many styles of the flesh. There are significant differences in gesture, posture, movement, and general bodily comportment : women are far more restricted than men in their manner of movement and in their spatiality. In her classic paper on the subject, Iris Young observes that a space seems to surround women in imagination that they are hesitant to move beyond : this manifests itself both in a reluctance to reach, stretch, and extend the body to meet resistances of matter in motion—as in sport or in the performance of physical tasks—and in a typically constricted posture and general style of movement. Woman's space is not a field in which her bodily intentionality can be freely realized but an enclosure in which she feels herself positioned and by which she is confined. The "loose woman" violates these norms : her looseness is manifest not only in her morals, but in her manner of speech and quite literally in the free and easy way she moves.

Gender and Caste

Caste permeates all aspects of Indian life. However, gender is one of the primary axis on which caste stratification rests, particularly in modern India with hierarchies of caste often articulated through gender. Using unique data collected by the authors for 40,000 households all over India, this chapter distinguishes between public and private performance of gender to show that belonging to a Brahmin caste has a substantial effect on the public behaviour of women but little impact on their behaviour inside the household. Brahmin families are far more likely to show a nod of deference to the dictums of obedience and chastity in their public behaviours by insisting on limiting premarital contact between the bride and the groom, limiting women's visits to their natal families, insisting on women not going out alone in public and following a dress code which includes veiling. However, in private, Brahmin women have as much authority in the household decision-making as women of other castes. We argue that this Brahminical code of gender performance has implications for the public discourse surrounding gender in India which is used to justify a variety of oppressive actions and institutions, particularly violence against women of lower castes.

Historically, India has been a predominantly Hindu nation, though there is a substantial degree of religious diversity. With 12 per cent of the population being Muslim, India is home to the second largest Muslim population in the world. Christians form about 3 per cent of the population and Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism and other smaller religions are followed by another 3 per cent.

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Nonetheless, the Hindu stratification system has tended to dominate the Indian society with a significant percent of Muslims, Christians and Sikhs identifying with caste groups defined by Hindu traditions.

According to the Hindu religion, as articulated in The Vedas, Hindu society is classified into four varnas or castes-Brahmin (priest and teacher), Kshatriya (ruler and warrior), Vaishya (trader), and Shudra (servant). These are further subdivided into many smaller castes or jatis. Historically caste position defined individuals' occupation, income and access to land (Beteille 1969). Additionally, reciprocal rural relations embedded in the jajmani system also defined incomes associated with various occupations (Wiser 1979). While over time, new occupations have been introduced which reduce caste barriers and the jajmani system has been slowly losing its grip, caste remains one of the more enduring Institutions in India (Gupta 1991; Srinivas 1996). In this caste hierarchy, the two groups that have been most marginalized are the Dalits and the Adivasis. The dalits, originally called "untouchables" and later renamed 'Harijan, "children of God' by Mahatma Gandhi, are also referred to as the Scheduled Caste, and adivasis or tribals, are also referred to as the Scheduled Tribe population.

In much of the anthropological discourse of the 20th century, caste is seen as having a religious rather than economic or political basis. With the publication of Homo Hierarchicus in 1966, Louis Dumont provided canonical formulation of this view (Dumont 1980). He argued that the political and social domains of Indian life were overshadowed by the religious domain with an opposition between purity and pollution with the Brahmin at the religious pinnacle representing the highest form of purity attainable by Hindus. Whether Brahmins are at the pinnacle of Hindu stratification system or not remains subject to a lively debate among anthropologists and historians.

A large body of anthropological literature has been devoted to the study of the caste system in India. Some of the debates within this literature are summarized in (Gupta 1991), however, a broader discussion of the origins of the caste system is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Though dalits are the lowest in the caste hierarchy, they have been historically excluded from the caste system, the justification offered being that they are so low that they do not deserve to be assigned a caste. They were / are therefore known as 'untouchables' as distinct from caste Hindus, the latter being those Hindus who belong to one of the castes. (Appadurai 1986; Raheja 1988; Gupta 1991), however, there seems to be a general agreement that caste structure in India rests on social differentiation between castes based on visibly recognizable symbols including rituals, dress, tonsorial styles, and host of other behavioural markers. There seems to be a general acknowledgement within society of the social markers that separate the population, and an awareness also of the crucial criterion (sometimes a set of criteria) on which such forms of differentiation are based (Beteille 1969; Gupta 1991).

Visible displays of gendered behaviour seem to be such markers—arguably the most important markers— of Brahminical or Sanskritized status. Noted Indian anthropologist M.N. Srinivas has described the role of women as custodians of family status and caste purity in great detail (Srinivas 1977). Under the canonical Hinduism, this involves a host of activities. Women are supposed to engage in rituals and religious rites which require purity and attention to the detail. They are expected to be chaste and remain virgin until marriage, and after widowhood forsake all worldly pleasures dressing in white clothes and often shaving their heads, widow remarriage is considered a marker of low status and women are expected to cleave to the husband's family and learn the customs of their husband's family, abandoning the customs of their natal families. Obedience and chastity are seen as a woman's greatest virtue with a woman expected to be obedient to her father in childhood, husband in adulthood and son in the old age.

Hindu religion is only one among many in circumscribing women's freedom and making a virtue of submission to male authority. It is seems unlikely that in itself this code of conduct would bind women any more than the Hindu code of conduct forces modern Hindu men to engage in asceticism,

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celibacy and renunciation of worldly pleasures in middle age. However, a caste based stratification system in which public adherence to these symbols and rituals confers high status on a caste may create tremendous social pressures on women to confirm (Liddle and Joshi 1989) and for men to ensure compliance from their wives (Derne 1994). As Srinivas's discussion of Sanskritization suggests, restrictions on women's sexuality, particularly injunction against remarriage of widows, confers higher status on a caste than lower castes where women may marry and divorce far more freely (Srinivas, 1977). Over time many of these ideals have so deep rooted that even, Mahatma Gandhi, one of the most feminist men who encouraged Indian women's participation in politics, once said that a woman should kill herself if she is in danger of being raped to preserve her honour.

There is considerable agreement in the literature about the association between performance of gender roles and higher caste status and the way in which hierarchies of caste are articulated through gender (Dube 1996). However, there is also considerable disagreement about whether caste in modern India retains the same significance as it did during the colonial times. There are many reasons to believe that the impact of caste may be substantially diluted in modern India. Urbanization, rising education and increasing Westernization are each hypothesized to lead to decreased importance of caste (Collins 1989, Gupta 1991). Emergence of anti-Brahmin political movement and the power of lower caste political parties may result in a decline in the emphasis on Brahminical modes of behaviour (Srinivas 1996).

India has seen a thriving women's movement over the past thirty years and middle class women from higher castes have been at the forefront of this movement (Dube 2001), potentially reducing the association between visible performance of gender and upper caste status. Most importantly, new scholarship on social construction of caste during the colonial era suggests that caste differentiation and hierarchies during the time of colonial administration in the two centuries preceding the independence in 1947, may well have been created by the colonial discourse and real caste differences in the Indian society may be fairly small (Dirks, 2001). So whether the Brahminical emphasis on gender-performance still persists in modern India remains an open question which this paper seeks to address. Although a portion of our theoretical framework draws on ethnomethodological studies, we rely on quantitative research for this analysis in order to ensure that our results are not conflated with geographic bias. We use data from a survey of 40,000 households that we designed and fielded in all 25 states and union territories of India. The sample includes both urban and rural households. For this analysis, we restrict our sample to 32,362 ever married women of age 15-49.

Gender inequality in food intake, medical care, income, access to employment and education, and control over productive resources is well recognized in the literature (Desai, 1994). Consequently empirical research on gender-performance faces a formidable methodological challenge. How do we distinguish between behaviours that occur in response to a desire to visibly perform gender and thereby differentiate one's family and caste from those below one in the hierarchy from behaviours that are rooted in economic and institutional choices facing families in a highly unequal society. For example, when parents choose to educate a son while withdrawing a daughter from school are they doing it because they want to signal their adherence to a particular code of conduct befitting their family and caste or is it simply a rational response to a labour market in which women earn far less than men ?

In order to address this question, we rely on specific markers of behaviour that mainly serve a signaling function and have far less important to issues of intra-household resource allocation. In particular we focus on two sets of behaviours : (1) Signaling behaviour which is externally visible and demonstrates to others that men and women in a household subscribe to certain codes of conduct; and, (2) Hidden behaviours which reflect construction of day-to-day gender within a household but are not easily visible to outsiders. We argue that if caste superiority is demonstrated

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through visible gendered behaviours, then we should see caste differences in these signaling behaviours but not in hidden behaviours.

Relations between Gender and Caste

Caste permeates all aspects of Indian life. However, gender is one of the primary axis on which caste stratification rests, particularly in modern India with hierarchies of caste often articulated through gender. Using unique data collected by the authors for 40,000 households all over India, this report distinguishes between public and private performance of gender to show that belonging to a Brahmin caste has a substantial effect on the public behaviour of women but little impact on their behaviour inside the household. Brahmin families are far more likely to show a nod of deference to the dictums of obedience and chastity in their public behaviours by insisting on limiting premarital contact between the bride and the groom, limiting women's visits to their natal families, insisting on women not going out alone in public and following a dress code which includes veiling. However, in private, Brahmin women have as much authority in the household decision-making as women of other castes. We argue that this Brahminical code of gender-performance has implications for the public discourse surrounding gender in India which is used to justify a variety of oppressive actions and institutions, particularly violence against women of lower castes.

Gender and Class

For a country that registers two million-cases of female infanticide and nearly 5000 dowry deaths ever year, the less spoken on the status of its women, the better. On the face of it, the current president's 'greetings and felicitations (on the occasion of International Women's Day) to all Indian women for shaping the destiny of the country rings hollow. Looking back we find an ancient Bharat set-up on the principles laid down by Manu who saw women as 'worthy of worship'. Even today most of the Hindu deities are female figures that are hailed as 'mata' or 'maa'. But that is about it. Steer away from the altars and come down to the concrete houses to find a very different reality.

The country can boast of a decade of reforms. But of what consequence ? Most of these programmes remain limited to the urban population. The rural belts as well as the unskilled urban wage workers go unnoticed and unaffected. The government has proposed and launched a number of programmes for the empowerment of women, including the observance of the year 2001 as the year of women's empowerment. It was said, "Our vision in the new century is of a nation where women are equal partners with men." Many new projects were launched like Swa Shakti and Stree Shakti for women's empowerment; Swayamsidha to benefit 100,000 women through micro-credit programmes and Balika Samridhi Yojana for the girl child. However, apart from a lot of hoopla and the accompanying verbal diarrhoea, not much was registered. There are those who point to an unfounded development in the social position of women through the achievements of the likes of Indra Nooyi. However, one swallow alone doesn't make a summer. We cannot deny that there have been changes. These changes have been limited to the upper crust of the social order. What we need to realise is that any new programme has to overcome the centuries-old hold, of subjugation and marginalisation of women.

There has been an alarming rise in the atrocities committed against women. While the constitution guarantees equal opportunity, patriarchy asserts itself through legal loopholes to consolidate the age-old domination. India has a long history of activism for women's welfare and rights. A range of government programmes have been launched to increase economic opportunity for women, although there appear to be no existing programmes to address the cultural and traditional discrimination against women. Be in education, health care, nutrition, property rights, acknowledgement of labour or life security, women find themselves at the lower rungs of the ladder.

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Gender-based violence in the form of rape, domestic violence, honour killing and trafficking in exacts a heavy toll on the mental and physical health of affected women. Increasingly, gender-based violence is being recognised as a major public health concern and a serious violation of basic human rights. According to a UN report, on an average, one rape happens every hour in India. Delhi is the sexual-crime capital. The reason for such statistics, according to many is the inefficacy of India's rape laws. Women's rights groups allege that the narrow and conservative outlook of Indian society is responsible for the lackadaisical attitude of authorities and the confidence of wrong doers. Indian families are closed to the concept of sex as a topic of discussion and hence avoid highlighting it in any way and rendering steps towards justice ineffectual. Around 60 to 70 per cent of cases of rape go unreported. The reasons are well known. To get a conviction, the victim has to prove in front of an open court that she was sexually penetrated by the rapist. Add to this the social stigma of the whole incident. In many cases, such girls/women are even unable to get husbands. They are shunned and ostracised by the society and if already married, even deserted. Of the few reported cases, convictions are rare.

United Nations Report, 2005 said that around two-thirds of married women in India were victims of domestic violence and one incident of violence translates into women losing seven working days in the country. "Discrimination against girl child is so strong in the Punjab State of India that girl child aged two to four die at twice the rate of boys," quotes a 2002 UNIFEM document.

The problem is not only external but intrinsic too. The socio-psychological makeup of most rural and many urban women has been shaped and moulded by more than a century of patriarchal beliefs and a family system where the man (in form of father or husband) is the equivalent of God. The feeling of inferiority has been embedded in their psyche so much so that far from condemning acts of violence against them they are more likely to throttle the voices in favour of them. This is part of the cliched vicious circle of illiteracy and social backwardness that accounts for all the resultant backwardness of the gender.

Regional Variations in Gender, Caste and Class

An analysis of the status of women depends on an understanding of gender relations in a specific context. Examining gender relations as power relations makes clear that these are sustained by the institutions within which gender relations occur. For women, absence of power results in the lack of access to and control over resources, a coercive gender division of labour, devaluation of their work, and a lack of control over their own labour, mobility as well as sexuality and fertility. Gender equality thus demands substantive transformation, a set of policies and conditions created by the state that facilitate the reallocation of resources, thereby increasing women's control over resources that confer power at individual, household, and societal levels.

Transformation for gender equality envisages the empowerment of women, requiring conditions that enable women to exercise their autonomy; it also envisages a process of self-empowerment, in which women regain to re-examine their lives critically and collectively. While the former involves the facilitation of women's access to and control over resources, the latter emphasizes women's agency in seeking greater access and control.

Measures of gender equality therefore require an assessment of the degree to which resources have been' redistributed; whether state policy has facilitated women's autonomy' and the extent to which unequal gender relations have been transformed. Contemporary Indians political landscape is characterized by a great deal of social upheaval. This is the result of growing democratic consciousness which is increasingly conflicting with the forces of domination, authoritarianism and hegemony.

The control of women's physical mobility, a crucial aspect of status, is also influenced by caste, class, religious, and community structures. While women's physical mobility my increase with their entry into the labour force, it also makes them vulnerable to assault, molestation, and rape.

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A major area of concern and focus in India is the remarkable degree of within regional commonalities and across region contrasts in culture, gender bias, development and demography. Several researchers have recognised a cultural divide between north and south Indian states. North Indian kinship structure with exogamous marriage system favour strong patriarchal value and lower female autonomy compared to south Indian kinship structure of endogenous marriage system (Dyson and Moore, 1983; Karve, 1965; Sopher, 1980). Though, recent studies have found some blurring of north-south disparity in gender discrimination. India's sex ratio, defined here as the number of women per 1000 men, has fallen steadily since the beginning of the 20th century. Date 1 asks the question that has mystified demographers for many a decade : why has the sex ratio fallen by nearly 1% at each decennial enumeration ?

Though the sex ratios increased for the first time this century from 1991-2001, there is little reason to be optimistic. At 933, the ratio is far behind the 972 of the 1901 census, and represents only a marginal improvement from the 927 of 1991. Regional disparities further complicate any demographic analysis: Northwestern India-including Punjab (874), Haryana (861), western Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan (922), and northern Madhya Pradesh-has the lowest sex ratios in the country even though Punjab and Haryana are among the richest states in the country in terms of per capital income. The highest rates, once again, are in the high literacy rates of the south, Kerela (the only state with a positive sex ratio of 1058) and Tamil Nadu (986).

Low infant and adult sex ratios are widely seen to be indicators of the dismal situation of women in the country. Mitra (1979) has likened the falling sex ratio to a measure of the oppression of women. Empirical evidence has shown a high correlation between low sex ratios and high female and maternal mortality rates (Coale 1991). Three popular explanations pervade academic literature-cultural explanations, discrimination in nutrition amidst falling food availability and increasing poverty, and differential access to health care amidst lowered health expenditure by the government.

Economic Contribution of Women

There is a tendency to assume that the status of women worsens as income level of the household decreases. However, several problems exist with this assumption. Sex ratios, for example, indicate a lower gender gap amongst schedule tribes and lower income classes as Sex ratios are found to be more favourable to women when monthly household expenditure and thus income level-is at its lowest. Explanations of this phenomena link higher sex ratios to the increased economic productivity of women; arguing that since women must work in poor families to earn supplemental incomes, they are considered economically productive and less "expendable". This lowers biases against them in terms of intra-household access to nutrition and resources.

Agnihotri (1998) support such a hypothesis in their findings that show that female labour participation significantly reduced prevalent masculine biases. The authors also found that increased labour force participation rate (hence LFPR) resulted in more widespread gains in North India-where the initial sex ratios were lower-than South India, though positive gains were recorded in both communities. The implication of such studies initially appears to suggest that interventions that increase income-generating employment (i.e. not including domestic labour) and empowerment of women are the most successful in actually changing systems of bias against women, and thus will effect long-term changes.

Such a hypothesis, however, comes with its own reservations. Increasing the waged work of women implies an addition to their already substantive domestic duties. The burden of working hours in addition to domestic management could have direct effects on a woman's health, her efficiency, and her status within the family should her domestic duties be neglected. In addition, such interventions continue in an established trend of devaluing women's domestic work and seeing it as inimical to their development, rather than trying to engage women's domestic productivity into their development process. It must be understood that simply increasing income

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and waged employment will not automatically eradicate gender inequality and might even have other adverse effects on women. Attempts must be made to engage the value of women's domestic labour into their development process.

Aggregate data regarding literacy disguise caste, religious and regional variations. 2001 Census data shows that in some states, e.g. Bihar, female literacy has actually worsened over the last decade.

Regional Variations

1. In Bihar, the number of female illiterates rose by 12.25% (2, 311,426 persons), while Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh recorded 13.32% and 13.37% decreases in female illiteracy respectively. Absolute numbers of illiterate females rose in a total of 10 states and union territories, including Delhi, Gujarat and Nagaland.
2. Kerela had the highest female literacy rate (87.86%), while Bihar had the lowest (33.57%) - a gap of 54.3%.
3. The overall gender gap between male and female literacy rates fell from 24.85% in 1991 to 21.68% in 2001.
4. In 1991, Rajasthan's female literacy rate stood at only 20%, implying that 1 in 5 women in Rajasthan couldn't read. In rural areas of the state, the figure dropped even further to 11%. In 2001, however, female literacy has risen to 44.34%, which though still low, represents an absolute increase of nearly 1,000,000 women.

5.2 Social Stratification in Urban–Industrial Settings

Several criteria have been used to understand urban-industrial social structure and stratification. These include the extent of closure or openness and the nature of deprivations and gratifications. Other criteria are : (i) the motivational structure, (ii) the opportunity structure, and (iii) the communication structure or the extent of 'visibility' of opportunity. Based on these sets of criteria of understanding urban-industrial social life, there are multiple references for an individual in urban-industrial milieu because a person is evaluated in terms of his/her attributes like education, income, occupation, style of life, etc. All these criteria are juxtaposed keeping in view the rural-agrarian social structure and stratification as opposite of the urban-industrial world.

It becomes difficult to draw a strict line of demarcation between 'rural' and 'urban', and 'individual' and 'corporate' rankings. The rich and the poor are the same to a large extent in both the settings; the difference is mainly a contextual one. An individual is a part of his family, and a family is linked with a group, hence individual exists as a corporate entity to a considerable extent. Similarly, a village is part of its region, and the region is linked with civilization, hence village is part of a wider society and civilization.

A lot of changes are taking place in the countryside particularly in the caste stratification, agrarian relations and power structure, but rural social stratification has not transformed itself into urban stratification system. There are several common features of social stratification in the rural-agrarian and the urban-industrial settings as the same principles determine social relations in the two. The main difference is in terms of the extent of operation of a particular principle or a set of criteria/ attributes. Caste, class and power are common to both the settings, but they differ in social life operationally because of the structural differences between the village and the town.

Defining Urban-Industrial Stratification

Urban industrial social stratification is characterized by 'professional' and 'working' classes to a large extent. Professionalism requires training to acquire skills for performing specific roles. It imparts values of rationality, objectivity and pragmatism. Professional classes reflect social and

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structural differentiation or changes from tradition to modernity in the fields of occupation, industry and economy. Emergence of professional classes becomes a measure of social mobility in the persisting social stratification. Navalkha (1971) reports that as compared to other Asian countries the professional classes in India constitute a less significant proportion of all workers. Navalkha also highlights the uneven growth of professions revealing the pattern of recruitment process heavily biased in favour of the upper castes, urban dwelling groups and the metropolitan population. It is evident from several other accounts as well that caste is not a rural phenomenon alone and class is not simply found in urban India. Both have coexisted in rural and urban-industrial formations though in different forms and proportions.

Urban-industrial social stratification consists of the following classes :

(*i*) upper class,

(*ii*) upper middle class,

(*iii*) lower middle class, and

(*iv*) working class,

These classes are generally formed on the basis of 'income' and 'occupation'. However, it may be quite difficult to know the 'real income' from the apparent occupational status. D'Souza (1968) analyzes the 'bases of social organization' in the city of Chandigarh taking into consideration kinship, caste, class, religion and displaced or non-placed condition of the inhabitants. D'Souza finds that the educational, occupational and income hierarchies are significantly correlated with each other. But the correlation of each of them with the operational caste hierarchy is not significant. In a recent study, Mishra (1991) observes that the local institutions such as caste and kinship play a significant role in recasting the relationship between man and machine without dislocating the traditional social structure and also without affecting adversely the process of industrialization.

Theoretically, an industrial society is characterized by a very open view of status, role and power allocation. Open relationship, competition, radicalism, innovation and utilitarianism-rationalism are the main features of an industrial society. Relevant points regarding social stratification in industrial society are as follows :

1. What is the social background of the entrepreneurs and managers ?
2. Does the hierarchy of the industrial elite correspond with the caste hierarchy ?
3. Do the values of the pre-industrial society coexist with those of the industrial society ?
4. What is the relationship between the internal structure of the factories and the caste and class structure of the workers ?
5. Do the industrial employers, municipal councillors, the benefactors and controllers of educational and religious institutions belong to the families which have become prominent in recent decades ?

Studies of urban-industrial social stratification in India have come up mainly as a reaction to the studies of rural-agrarian relations, migration from rural to urban areas, social mobility and increasing number of urban-industrial towns. The studies by D'Souza (1968), Navalkha (1971), Sheth (1968), Saberwal (1976), Lambert (1963), Berna (1960), Sharma (1986), Sheth and Patel (1979), Raj Bala (1986), Sheobahal Singh (1985), Krishan Lai Sharma (1981), Singer (1972), Akbar (1990), and Philips (1990) impress upon the need to go 'beyond the village', and show how urban-industrial society and its components are constituted. Studies of urban-industrial social stratification have concentrated mainly on class and caste, occupation, income, education and class, social mobility and elite formation, professionals and working classes, middle classes, processes of social change and status-crystallization, dissonance and inconsistency, professional associations and trade unions.

A detailed annotated bibliography and analysis of trends in industrial sociology in India by Sheth and Patel (1979) and Patel (1985) examine the impact of society on industrialization and the effects

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of industrialization on society. Sociology of industrialization incorporates workers, supervisors and managers as the major human components along with trade unions, informal groups and owners of industry. Industrialization has fragmented the Indian society into 'classes' by weakening the caste system. The economic fragmentation created by industrialization has brought about both vertical and horizontal change, thereby a change is being registered in the persisting criteria of status-evaluation (Panini,1986). Industrialization can transform life of the people, means of production, surplus labour, etc. Rubin (1986) writes : "And industrialization can produce the professional employments and affluent style of life to which urban middle and upper classes aspire "


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'Rural' and 'urban' are certainly two distinct patterns of life because of the distinction between population living in these two settings, but these do not imply two different principles of social stratification.

Historicity of Urban-Industrial Stratification System

The process of urbanization and industrialization though not necessarily unrelated are also not essentially concomitant in entirety. In the pre-industrial period, urbanization existed not only as an exclusive phenomenon, it was quite pronounced and was an ideal reference for a desired living. Based on the study of *Arthashastra* (C300-200 BC) and *Varna Ratnakara* (early 14th century AD), Jha (1988) finds 'urbanism' as a way of life in ancient Bihar. Besides provisions for water, roads, grounds, defence and other civic amenities, according to *Arthashastra*, there was a developed system of social ranking. The head of the city was called *nagarka* (mayor). Below the *nagarka* were *sthanikas* and the latter had *gopas* as their subordinates. There were also other functionaries and officials to look after various essential services. The administrative hierarchy was constituted independent of *varna* caste ranking. Non-agricultural occupations, formal groups and impersonal relationship were the main features of urban social life. *Varna Ratnakara* provides, however, a vivid account of the lower castes, "market activities, and artistic endeavours, ascetics along with a description of predominance of non-agricultural occupations, complexity and heterogeneity of population and preference for personalized relationship. These two valuable classical sources speak not only of the dynamics of urbanization, but also explain structural and cultural indices of urban life.

One can name several towns which had acquired a place of cultural and religious significance in ancient India (Rao, 1991). Many of these towns became known as centres of administrative and political activities. Naqvi (1968) classifies towns in medieval India into four categories : (i) capital cities (centres of administration, industry and trade), (ii) administrative centres with trading activities, (iii) pilgrimage centres, and (iv) specific-economy towns. However, our main concern here is to know about the people and the criteria on the basis of which they were ranked 'high' and 'low'. A subaltern study of a north Indian *Oasba* (small town) in the nineteenth century by Pandey (1984) shows that the community consciousness centered around the religious fraternity, class, *qasba*, and *mohalla*, and this cannot be explained in terms of today's social science vocabulary such as Muslim/Hindu, working class/rentier, urban/rural, etc. Self-respect and human dignity were the main determinants of the community consciousness.

Despite the community consciousness rooted into a certain perception of honour and dignity people were *socially* differentiated into the following classes :

1. Zamindars
2. Weavers

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3. Trader-moneylenders
4. Cultivating tenants
5. Labourers
6. Others (*halwais*, *pansaris*, beggars, etc.).

A comparative study of Bombay and Poona (1650-1900) by Meera Kosambi (1991) provides details regarding, occupational structure, ethnic composition, languages, religious composition, age-sex structure, etc. However, Kosambi's study focuses mainly on the 'functions' performed by the two cities rather than on the system of social stratification.

Lipton (1982) argues : "Inequalities *within* rural areas also owe much to the urban-biased nature of the development policy." Rural-born doctors, teachers, engineers and administrators serve the urban population. Surpluses from rural areas are extracted out for the urban populace. But, in case of India, the urban-rural balance is not as disappointing as it is implied in Lipton's formulation. Green revolution has brought about a considerable change in agrarian stratification having implications for urban social structure. Urban social stratification in terms of capital/labour relation can be characterized by capitalists, administrators, professionals, labour aristocracy and large landowners. On the contrary, there are small farmers and tenants, landless agricultural workers and members of the informal sector in the countryside (Griffin, 1977). Byres (1981), however, finds 'rural bias' as the main hindrance in industrialization.



What is called Varna Ratnakara ?

Two recent studies of sugar industry by Simon Commander and Ignatus Chithelen have thrown up enough evidence to show the emergence of a new pattern of social stratification. Commander (1985) writes about the sugar industry in North India : 'The hub of the system was clearly agricultural and the divorce from the means of production characteristic of the factory system proper was never wholly engendered. Instead, the controls exercised by the *zamindar-khandasari* over labour, land and credit, which provided the basis of the system were, in many respects, antagonistic to a model of pure capitalism."

The assimilability of the non-capitalist features of economy with the capitalist system of production has produced a system of social stratification different from both the agrarian and the urban-industrial. The growth of regional markets and the development of modern transportation networks initially provided the requisite stimulus for the development of sugar industry. But the main factors were the ample reservoir of cheap, unorganized labour and money-lending-debt-linkages which generated significantly high profit margins. However, the emergence of a rich peasant stratum in the early 1900s, and the spread of canal irrigation, coupled with financial support from a co-operative credit infrastructure, enabled the rich peasants to cultivate sugarcane in the Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra (Chithelen, 1985).

Stratification within Deccan peasantry in early 1900s contributed to the emergence of a rich peasant stratum placing them in a commanding position. By the mid-1900s, the distinction between the rich peasants and the mass of poor peasants had become distinctly clear. A rich peasant was one who had control and ownership of land as well as ownership and mastery of agricultural implements and techniques. The rich peasants also enjoyed independence and autonomy in the credit relationship. They were themselves lenders of money and suppliers of credit to others. By having control over debtors's crop as wells as lands, the rich peasants expanded their commercial links. These rich peasants belonged to the non-Brahmin upper castes of Maharashtra. They were earlier traditional cultivating elites or members of former royal families or *Inamdars* and other

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office-holders. A few low status caste groups like *mails* also rose to become rich peasants. Several factors including the spread of canal irrigation, co-operatives, legislations, favourable political milieu, etc. brought about socio-economic and political transformation of the peasantry having implications for change in the rural as well as the urban social stratification (Chithelen, 1985).

The Indian Bourgeoisie/Capitalist Class

The bourgeoisie/capitalist class is characterized by the following features (Hamilton and Hirszowicz, 1987) :

(*i*) concentration and private ownership of the means of production;

(*ii*) a free market for the sale and purchase of commodities and services;

(*iii*) formally free labour sold in the market as a commodity;

(*iv*) the pursuit of profits by entrepreneurs for wages; and

(*v*) the division of society into two opposed and antagonistic classes as a consequence of the exploitation and alienation of the labour from the means of production.

The property-owning, entrepreneurial, capitalist-employer has emerged from a variety of sources including the decline of the feudal system. Along with the bourgeoisie the capitalist system has produced a *working class*. Marx's theory of the capitalist society is the theory of the commodity-producing society. Worker is treated as a *commodity* (Bottomore,1985). Though Marx refers to bour–geoisie and the proletariat as the main antagonistic classes, he realizes the transition of society and the emergent role of the intermediate stratum situated between the workers and the industrial capitalists. He also realizes the increasing role of the managerial and ministerial classes and trade unions as a result of the transition from capitalism to socialism.

There is differentiation between and within the bourgeoisie, the petty-bourgeoisie and the working class. Class inequality is not simply 'economistic'. However, economic groupings in the form of classes and domination of one class over the other are found in all societies whether they are industrially more advanced or less advanced (Giddens,1987; Godelier, 1978). Capitalist society has undergone the following changes over a period of its long journey (Hamilton and Hirszowicz, 1987) :

1. Capital and industry are today controlled by professional salaried management due to growth of large joint-stock enterprises.
2. The class structure has diversified. Middle classes have grown enormously, particularly in the developing countries like India due to the new state apparatus.
3. The material standards of workers have improved considerably all over the world.
4. Power of the working class has enhanced greatly due to trade unions, civil liberty movements and democratization.

Planning in India, prior to her independence, aimed at over-throw of the colonial state structure and its replacement by an independent indigenous capitalist state structure (Mukherjee, 1978). The big capitalists, a large number of small traders and merchants actively supported the national movement opposing thereby the colonialist mercantilism and capitalism (Chandra etal., 1988). The Indian capitalist class had the following features :

1. The Indian capitalists had largely an independent capital base and did not act as junior partners of foreign capital or as compradors.
2. The capitalist class on the whole was not tied up in a subservient position with pro-imperialist feudal interests, either economically or politically.
3. It grew rapidly between 1914 and 1947, a period close to India's independence.

Rudolph and Rudolph (1987), among other features of the Indian State, list 'the marginality of class politics' as a major development in the post-1947 period. Capital and labour play a marginal

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role in Indian politics and policy because of the centrality of a third factor—the State. The Indian State has acquired the role of a defender and protector of the interests of the poor and the working class. There are also strong unions and organizations of the white-collar groups which in turn weaken both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Business has exercised some influence on the government but it has not been able to control it directly or indirectly.

The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956 though reasserts the constitutional position that the 'common good' of the people and 'distributive justice' would remain the central concerns; the role of larger industrial houses and multinationals remains unaffected to a large extent (Siddharthan, 1979). Associations formed by the capitalists have been used to promote economic as well as political interests (Mukherjee, 1978; Sharma, 1981). However, Desai (1984) considers the Indian State as an agent of the bourgeoisie pursuing the capitalist path of development. The state has been 'repressive' and 'oppressive' in nature.

Whether the Indian big bourgeoisie like the big landlords were a product of colonial rule or not is not a much relevant question for us. What is important here is that the Indian bourgeoisie was never a monolith, and its character was partly determined by the colonial rule and partly by the class character of the Indian National Congress, the movements launched by it and the fact of India's freedom and partition. The bourgeoisie is divided as it comprises two categories : (i) big comprador, and (ii) the small and medium national bourgeoisie (Ghosh, 1985). Because of the comprador character of the big bourgeoisie and latent tendency in the national bourgeoisie to follow suit have resulted into 'guided industrialization'. A similar historical account of the Parsi Seths regarding their roots, entrepreneurship, and comprador role is provided by Guha (1984).

The Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship

Let us now take a note of the entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship. In a situation of new social dynamics new opportunities for economic activities are perceived for enhancement of one's economic and social standing. While presenting an integrated view of entrepreneurship, Tripathi (1985) deliberates on the entrepreneurial process taking into account constellation of forces, entrepreneurial initiative, and change in constellation of forces. An entrepreneur is a person who finds a constellation of socio-political and economic forces favourable for venturing into one or other enterprise, and if he succeeds, he becomes socially and economically distinct from those who remain out of such activities and from those who prove to be a failure.

Recent studies have shown that money-lending and trading were taken even by the landlords and substantial cultivating families in many parts of the country prior to independence. Today, entrepreneurial area is wide open for castes and communities which were earlier engaged in non-merchantile pursuits. There were 'peasant entrepreneurs', and there were upper caste manual and agricultural workers. Moreover, entrepreneurship is not confined to agriculture, business and industry alone. It has spread to the do mains of medicine, science, government service, teaching, etc.

Interest in the study of entrepreneurs as a significant stratum in the scheme of social stratification is evident in some of the recent studies (Singh, 1985; Trivedi, 1991; Akbar, 1990). Singh's study shows that 39 per cent of the total entrepreneurs in an eastern Uttar Pradesh carpet manufacturing town were Muslims, whereas 56 per cent were Hindus, 3 per cent Jains and 2 per cent Sikhs. Banias, Muslims and to some extent Rajputs dominate carpet industry. A close tie is found between landownership, leadership and entrepreneurs by R.S. Singh (1985). However, about 75 per cent of the rural entrepreneurs belong to three upper castes, namely, Brahmins, Rajputs and Bhumihars. In the city of Calcutta, Mahisyas, a peasant caste, have dominated the engineering industry surpassing both Brahmins and Kayasthas, mainly due to historically contingent factors after the Second World War (Owens, 1973). Trivedi's study of 250 tribal entrepreneurs explains emergence of new criteria of status-determination. Muslim entrepreneurs find no social values obstructing entrepreneurial growth (Akbar, 1990).

Middle Classes and Professional Elites

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The pre-British middle classes comprised of the merchant, the artisan and the landed aristocracy having their roots in 'authoritarianism' . During the British period, the structure and complexion of the middle classes transformed due to a variety of factors and policy changes. The new middle classes included the businessmen and entrepreneurs, industrialists, landed people, educated groups, professionals, etc. The middle classes are basically trained 'service groups', and therefore, serve both the upper and the lower classes, though not making available their services in equal measure. The structure of the middle classes after independence has undergone a considerable change in terms of their size, functions and role mainly due to the nature and character of the Indian State. A brief sketch of some selected studies is provided below.

In the context of anti-reservation agitations in Gujarat, Shah (1987) writes : "The middle class has grown in size disproportionately with economic growth in Gujarat. While their aspirations have risen, they are unable to satisfy their needs and maintain the traditional status, and therefore, experience a strong sense of deprivation. This is specially true of the upper and middle caste members who are jealous of the new entrants from the traditionally low castes." For Shah, the middle class is a class between labour and capital.

The middle classes in India are a product of both capitalist development and the state. The anti-reservation agitations in Gujarat as understood by Shah imply a conflict-situation between the *entrenched* middle classes and the lower classes aspiring for the middle classes status by having access to lucrative white-collar occupations.

Elite formation in India (Navlakha, 1989) is largely determined by the traditional social structure (particularly caste), religion, language, networks, income, occupational background, education, family background, etc. The findings of this study show that select social positions are usually taken by persons from select social strata. This select group controls the positions of prestige, power and responsibility. Higher education is still under the grip of upper castes, hence it is 'status-stabilizer' (Jayaram, 1977) rather than an invader on status-rigidities. In four most prestigious institutions in Bangalore, despite a long history of reservations, 60 per cent Brahmin and 34 per cent Lingayat and Vokkaliga students were admitted to prepare them for higher professional and administrative careers, whereas only 4 per cent lower caste students found placement for this programme.

Navalkha's findings (1989) are quite revealing. As many as 81.3 per cent of the Hindu respondents hailed from upper caste groups (Brahmin, Kayastha, Vaishya and Kshtriya), 6.8 per cent came from the higher cultivating and other intermediate castes, and only 4.6 per cent belonged to lower castes. Further, 86.5 per cent of the respondents were of urban origin, 89.3 per cent were educated in modern educational institutions and 79 per cent of the respondents came from the highest advantaged stratum of the society.

Let us now take up a few studies of professions. A study of lawyers and law students in Pune, conducted by S.P. Sathe, Shaila Kunchur and Smita Kahikar (1982) and commented upon by H.K. Pranjape (1983) shows that the Brahmins dominate the profession both in terms of quantity and professional success. The proportion of lawyers from the backward classes is quite small, and most of them are recent entrants to the system. They also earn much less. However, women lawyers from among the backward classes are more as compared to Brahmin and other Hindus. The main reason given in the study is that it is easier to accept a backward woman lawyer as junior practitioner. Several studies in the field of sociology of law and legal profession have been conducted in the recent past. Notable among these are by J.S. Gandhi (1982), K.L. Sharma (1982, 1984, 1988), Upendra Baxi (1982), S.L. Sharma (1985), S.K. Lal (1988), Yogendra Singh (1989), and T.K. Oommen (1983). These studies provide sketches of stratification among lawyers and relations between lawyers, judges, *munshis*, touts and clients.

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There are not many studies of technocrats, scientists and managers partly because of their considerable distance from administrative-political setup and partly because of their style of work and way of life. Technocrat/engineer today combines management expertise with scientific know-how. An engineer with a degree of Master of Business Administration (MBA) has made a place of 'high status' in Indian society. Even an MBA without an engineering degree has much more job opportunity than those having skills in several other fields. Higher technical education provides a passport for a high-status lucrative job. The graduates of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) enjoy more prestige, and they are more in demand than the graduates of ordinary engineering colleges. A large number of graduates of IIT, Bombay have gone abroad for better career prospects and work conditions (Sukhatme and Mahadevan, 1988).

The industrialists, technocrats and managers have to work in India under the politicians in particular, and to a considerable extent under the administrators (Bhattacharya, 1984). Managers and officers are organizing themselves through trade unions and associations (Ramaswamy, 1985). Hardly any literature is available on Indian scientists. Three articles in Lal et al. (1988), namely, by Sri Chandra (1988), Ramanama and Bambawale (1978) and Srivastava and Toha (1988) on India's scientists as professionals do not list any notable studies of scientists in India. Articles by Sri Chandra and Srivastava and Toha are in the form of preliminary notes without having any empirical bearing. However, Ramanama and Bambawale, based on their study of 780 scientists working in thirteen organisations, including universities, public sector and private sector undertakings in Bombay and Pune, report ambivalence and role-conflict as the main problems of the scientists working in all the three sectors.

The initial studies of medical profession have particularly emphasized social-structural and organizational aspects of the profession. Some of the recent studies too put more emphasis on the pattern of relationship between different segments of hospital as a social organization. Advani (1980), Chandani (1985,1988), Mehta (1988) and Nagla (1988) have substantiated the exercise conducted in the earlier studies.

In the studies of managers, technocrats, scientists and medical doctors, high status of these professionals is taken for granted, and therefore, instead of knowing the actual social status, emphasis is put more on the formal criteria of social status.

In evaluation of formal positions like professor, reader and lecturer, non-formal criteria such as academic achievements, reputation as a teacher and scholar, cultural style of life, family back-ground, etc. matter a lot. Since academic profession is accredited with a high degree of autonomy like the legal profession, informal criteria of status evaluation are valued in good measure along with the formal criteria like rank, income and office. The recent studies by Khanna (1988) and Bhoite (1987) only casually stress upon the stratificational aspect of academic community.

Rudra (1989) considers the emergence of the intelligentia as a ruling class in India in addition to the already existing two ruling classes : one with base in agriculture, and the other with base in large industry. The intelligentia have become a member of the ruling coalition. The two traditional ruling classes have co-opted the intelligentia as a member of their fraternity. The intelligentia include the following :

1. All white-collar workers in the organized private sector, from managers and top executives down up to clerical workers.
2. All office workers in administrative services from top bureaucrats right up to lower division clerks.
3. Teachers (from the school to the university levels), doctors and nurses, lawyers and judges, engineers and architects in both private and public sectors.
4. Writers, journalists, artists and other skilled workers.
5. Professionals, politicians, trade union leaders, etc.

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One common feature of all these middle classes is that "they do not themselves produce any values in the material product sense of value" (Ibid.). "Members of this (middle) class therefore depend for their economic gains on the largesse of the other two ruling classes as well as the state" (Ibid.). However, there is no homogeneity among its members in terms of income, wealth and level of living. Very high inequality exists within the classes in respect of these criteria. Another commonalty is of 'social' nature, that is, they all can be regarded as a 'babu class', 'salaried people' or the class of people earning equivalent to the salaried class. One more point of commonalty among them is found in terms of 'culture and ideology'. The intelligentsia as a class have contradictions and conflict of interests with other classes, while the intelligentia are considered as an ally and not as an adversary by the traditional ruling class.

Beteille (1989), while generally accepting Rudra's hypothesis regarding intelligentia as a third co-opted ruling class in India, observes that intellectuals in India would not like to associate them-selves with the exploiters of the masses—the workers and the peasants. Beteille suggests for seeking more empirical evidence before we arrive at some conclusion on the status and role of the intelligentia (Ibid.). Main disagreement is expressed by Beteille about the concepts of 'class' and 'contradiction'. Beteille writes : "I maintain that contradiction is an inherent feature of all human societies whereas others believe that it is a feature of some or even most societies, but not necessarily all" (Ibid.).

Pranab Bardhan (1984) is also critical of Ashok Rudra's understanding of India's 'middle classes'. He writes : "Ashok Rudra underestimates the power of the professional class *vis-a-vis* the other two dominant classes. Compared to most western countries, the state is considerably more autonomous in India not merely in the political spheres but as a predominant *economic actor*. In some sense the state has captured the commanding heights of the economy, and sections of the professional class which run this gigantic machinery have thereby acquired powers which are not just of a junior partner in the ruling coalition. Further, because of the increasing social and economic interpretation among these classes, the conflicts among the classes in the dominant coalition are likely to decline" (1989). The public sector professionals benefit directly from all kinds of state subsidies and indirectly from the rental income earned by the state (Bardhan, 1984).

Middle classes are not direct rulers nor are they economic producers like the industrialists, workers and peasants. There is a marked lack of homogeneity among different middle classes. In Fact, structural distinctions are quite marked even between the apparently equal/homogeneous classes. Some classes are not so important in people's eyes, yet they enjoy high prestige because of the autonomy of their professions and the networks which they develop simply as a by-product of their professional obligations. These points require further probing.

Indian Working Class

For Marx the central issue was the understanding of the productive system in which the interests of the owners of the means of production and the wage-earning working class clashed. Marx always thought of ways and means for organizing the working class into a collective force to transform the capitalist system into a socialist society. Connections between social relations of production, social organization of the exploited classes and the state power formed the main basis of Marxian analysis. The growing social power of the organized working class was taken as a challenge to the authority of the state. Weber always emphasized on the problem of authority and legitimacy. 'Rational authority' was considered as key to the smooth functioning of bureaucracy and modern state.

Petras (1980), however, considers the notion of 'political legitimacy' as irrelevant issue or at best a derivative or subsidiary concern. "Different electoral regimes derive their legitimacy from different class reference groups and different balance of class forces." Power creates its own legitimacy. The organized working class itself becomes a power to reckon with, as it is embodiment of the class

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interests of the poor and the less privileged sections of society. An organized group representing its class interests becomes a 'political class' in its own right.

Studies of the Indian working class (Das, 1983) consider labour as a commodity, and the value of labour power as the basis of understanding the capitalist appropriation and exploitation of the surplus generated by the proletariat. According to Dev Nathan (1987), the working class can be divided into four broad sections :

(1) that which gets more than a family, i.e., more than the value of labour power;

(2) that which gets a wage about equal to the family wage, and can thus at a reasonable standard, cover the full cost of production and reproduction of labour power;

(3) that which is more or less able to cover the immediate costs of production of labour power, but has to depend on the non-capitalist sector in order to reproduce itself/or has to depress its standard of living in order to reproduce itself; and

(4) the pauperized section that is not even able to meet the immediate cost of production of labour power.

The composition of the working class is affected by two factors : (i) the caste, tribal or ethnic origin of the worker in the precapitalist sector; and (ii) the gender-based division of labour between male and female and the associated patriarchy. Thus, the working class is highly stratified within and in relation to the capitalist and the middle classes. The factors such as caste, ethnicity and gender create inequalities within the working class structure and therefore obstruct smooth sailing of the working class movement. The distinctions found within the working class structure ranging from the 'labour aristocracy' on the one hand and the 'pauperized labour' on the other explain the nature of economic stratification and its socio cultural consequences on the workers.

Lieten's study (1987) of workers in multinational companies shows that a segment of the working class is able to command higher wages and can thus divide the class in a distinct manner. Such a structural divide within the working class hampers uniform class consciousness. The consciousness of the jute mill workers of Bengal (Chakrabarty, 1984) could not transcend their identification as a Hindu or a Muslim to have identification as a solid working class. Thus, all collective public actions of the workers were marked by inherent duality. The working class in terms of its socio-cultural composition is constituted of the urban poor living in slums and hutments, industrial workers (both men and women), textile workers, sugar industry workers, plantation workers, railway workers, cottage industry and informal sector workers, etc. The working class, despite these differences, is comprised of urban and rural poor both in organized and informal sectors of economy. This would mean that the poor are just poor, and therefore, it would be better if we understand them as such without undermining this fact by using rural/urban, caste/class and caste/caste criteria (Joshi, 1979). Caste is not found as a major principle of social organization among industrial workers (Ramaswamy,1979).

The Special Number of *Economic and Political Weekly* (1981) on "Indian Working Class : Some Historical Perspectives" contains papers on the following themes :

(1) Structure of the labour market in colonial India by Ratan Das Gupta.

(2) Labour legislation and working class movement : The case of the Bombay Labour Officer, 1934-37 by Dick Kooiman.

(3) Kanpur textile labour : Some structural features of formative years by Chitra Joshi.

(4) Growth of trade union consciousness among jute mill workers, 1020-40 by Ira Mitra.

(5) Industrial unrest and growth of labour unions in Bengal, 1920-24 by Sanat Bose.

(6) Tea labour in Assam : Recruitment and government policy-1840-80 by Suranjan Chatterjee and Ratan Das Gupta.

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Labour market, labour legislation, caste and class background of workers, class consciousness, working class movements and their leadership are some of the issues taken up in these studies of the working class in India.

Self-Assessment

Fill in the blanks

1. In Bihar, the number of female illiterates rose by .....
2. Kerala had the highest female literacy rate of ....., while Bihar had the lowest literacy rate of
3. The overall gender gap between male and female literacy rates fell from 24.85% in 1991 to ..... in 2001.
4. In 2001, female literacy has risen to .....
5. The middle classes in India are a product of both ..... development and the state.

5.3 Summary

- "The arrangement of persons in a society is enormously more complex than the arrangement of layers of the earth; and social strata are not visible, to the naked eyes in the way that geological strata are".
- 'Caste' has come to be associated with a social science concept. The phenomenon which we now call 'caste' was named by western observers of India at an early stage in the colonial period. The phenomenon of caste has probably aroused more controversy than any other aspect of Indian life and thought. Some scholars see India's caste system as the defining feature of 'Indian culture'. Caste is such a complex phenomenon that it is difficult to define and the definitions pose lot of problems.
- The system which the Brahmins perfected was founded on five main divisions, four caste groups (*Varna*) and an out caste group (*Pancham Varna*), the untouchables. The four caste groups were the *Brahmis*, the priestly class having religious authority, the *Kshatriyas*, the secular and military ruler and landlord caste, the *Vaishyas* the mercantile middle class and the *Shudra* - the servants and slaves class. The untouchables performed only the most degrading and ritually impure/polluting tasks.
- Class, commonly known as social class, is one of the major forms of social stratification along with *estate* and *caste*. In the course of the first three decades of the nineteenth century the term class gradually replaced 'estates', 'ranks' and 'orders' as the major word used to denote divisions within society.
- In simpler terms, a class is a category or group of persons having a definite status in society which permanently determines the relation to other groups. The relative position of the class in the social scale arises from the degree of prestige attached to it.
- The major theoretical tradition within class analysis is derived from the works of Karl Marx and Max Weber on the newly emerging class structure of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century. Marx analysed class in relation to the ownership of capital and the means of production. A class is formed by an aggregate of persons who play the same role in the production mechanism. Marx divided the entire human population into those who owned property or means of production and those who did not - the capitalist class and the proletariat.
- In Weber's analysis all people with similar economic interests and with similar economic power belonged to the same class. By economic factor, Weber meant not simply the relations of production but also the relations that develop in the market. Weber divided the population

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into classes according to economic differences of market capacity that give rise to different life chances. Capital was one source of market capacity, but skill and education formed another. While property owners and owners of means of production were a class, as Marx had emphasized, those whose skills were scarce in the market and commanded high salaries also constituted a separate class.

- Gender is a socially constructed definition of women and men. It is not the same as sex (biological characteristics of women and men) and it is not the same as women. Gender is determined by the conception of tasks, functions and roles attributed to women and men in society and in public and private life.
- Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities.
- New occupations have been introduced which reduce caste barriers and the jajmani system has been slowly losing its grip, caste remains one of the more enduring Institutions in India (Gupta 1991; Srinivas 1996). In this caste hierarchy, the two groups that have been most marginalized are the Dalits and the Adivasis. The dalits, originally called "untouchables" and later renamed 'Harijan, "children of God' by Mahatma Gandhi, are also referred to as the Scheduled Caste, and adivasis or tribals, are also referred to as the Scheduled Tribe population.
- Hindu religion is only one among many in circumscribing women's freedom and making a virtue of submission to male authority. It is seems unlikely that in itself this code of conduct would bind women any more than the Hindu code of conduct forces modern Hindu men to engage in asceticism, celibacy and renunciation of worldly pleasures in middle age. However, a caste based stratification system in which public adherence to these symbols and rituals confers high status on a caste may create tremendous social pressures on women to confirm (Liddle and Joshi 1989) and for men to ensure compliance from their wives (Derne 1994).
- Gender inequality in food intake, medical care, income, access to employment and education, and control over productive resources is well recognized in the literature (Desai, 1994). Consequently empirical research on gender-performance faces a formidable methodological challenge. How do we distinguish between behaviours that occur in response to a desire to visibly perform gender and thereby differentiate one's family and caste from those below one in the hierarchy from behaviours that are rooted in economic and institutional choices facing families in a highly unequal society. For example, when parents choose to educate a son while withdrawing a daughter from school are they doing it because they want to signal their adherence to a particular code of conduct befitting their family and caste or is it simply a rational response to a labour market in which women earn far less than men ?
- Caste permeates all aspects of Indian life. However, gender is one of the primary axis on which caste stratification rests, particularly in modern India with hierarchies of caste often articulated through gender. Using unique data collected by the authors for 40,000 households all over India, this report distinguishes between public and private performance of gender to show that belonging to a Brahmin caste has a substantial effect on the public behaviour of women but little impact on their behaviour inside the household. Brahmin families are far more likely to show a nod of deference to the dictums of obedience and chastity in their public behaviours by insisting on limiting premarital contact between the bride and the groom, limiting women's visits to their natal families, insisting on women not going out alone in public and following a dress code which includes veiling.

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- The socio-psychological makeup of most rural and many urban women has been shaped and moulded by more than a century of patriarchal beliefs and a family system where the man (in form of father or husband) is the equivalent of God. The feeling of inferiority has been embedded in their psyche so much so that far from condemning acts of violence against them they are more likely to throttle the voices in favour of them. This is part of the cliched vicious circle of illiteracy and social backwardness that accounts for all the resultant backwardness of the gender.
- Measures of gender equality therefore require an assessment of the degree to which resources have been redistributed; whether state policy has facilitated women's autonomy' and the extent to which unequal gender relations have been transformed. Contemporary Indian's political landscape is characterized by a great deal of social upheaval. This is the result of growing democratic consciousness which is increasingly conflicting with the forces of domination, authoritarianism and hegemony.
- The control of women's physical mobility, a crucial aspect of status, is also influenced by caste, class, religious, and community structures. While women's physical mobility my increase with their entry into the labour force, it also makes them vulnerable to assault, molestation, and rape.
- India's sex ratio, defined here as the number of women per 1000 men, has fallen steadily since the beginning of the 20th century. Date 1 asks the question that has mystified demographers for many a decade : why has the sex ratio fallen by nearly 1% at each decennial enumeration ?
- It becomes difficult to draw a strict line of demarcation between 'rural' and 'urban', and 'individual' and 'corporate' rankings. The rich and the poor are the same to a large extent in both the settings; the difference is mainly a contextual one. An individual is a part of his family, and a family is linked with a group, hence individual exists as a corporate entity to a considerable extent.
- The main difference is in terms of the extent of operation of a particular principle or a set of criteria/attributes. Caste, class and power are common to both the settings, but they differ in social life operationally because of the structural differences between the village and the town.
- Theoretically, an industrial society is characterized by a very open view of status, role and power allocation. Open relationship, competition, radicalism, innovation and utilitarianism-rationalism are the main features of an industrial society.
- 'Rural' and 'urban' are certainly two distinct patterns of life because of the distinction between population living in these two settings, but these do not imply two different principles of social stratification.
- The process of urbanization and industrialization though not necessarily unrelated are also not essentially concomitant in entirety. In the pre-industrial period, urbanization existed not only as an exclusive phenomenon, it was quite pronounced and was an ideal reference for a desired living.
- The administrative hierarchy was constituted independent of *varna* caste ranking. Non-agricultural occupations, formal groups and impersonal relationship were the main features of urban social life. *Varna Ratnakara* provides, however, a vivid account of the lower castes, "market activities, and artistic endeavours, ascetics along with a description of predominance of non-agricultural occupations, complexity and heterogeneity of population and preference for personalized relationship. These two valuable classical sources speak not only of the dynamics of urbanization, but also explain structural and cultural indices of urban life.

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- The assimilability of the non-capitalist features of economy with the capitalist system of production has produced a system of social stratification different from both the agrarian and the urban-industrial. The growth of regional markets and the development of modern transportation networks initially provided the requisite stimulus for the development of sugar industry.
- A few low status caste groups like *mails* also rose to become rich peasants. Several factors including the spread of canal irrigation, co-operatives, legislations, favourable political milieu, etc. brought about socio-economic and political transformation of the peasantry having implications for change in the rural as well as the urban social stratification (Chithelen, 1985).
- The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956 though reasserts the constitutional position that the 'common good' of the people and 'distributive justice' would remain the central concerns; the role of larger industrial houses and multinationals remains unaffected to a large extent (Siddharthan, 1979). Associations formed by the capitalists have been used to promote economic as well as political interests (Mukherjee, 1978; Sharma, 1981).
- The pre-British middle classes comprised of the merchant, the artisan and the landed aristocracy having their roots in 'authoritarianism' . During the British period, the structure and complexion of the middle classes transformed due to a variety of factors and policy changes. The new middle classes included the businessmen and entrepreneurs, industrialists, landed people, educated groups, professionals, etc. The middle classes are basically trained 'service groups', and therefore, serve both the upper and the lower classes, though not making available their services in equal measure. The structure of the middle classes after independence has undergone a considerable change in terms of their size, functions and role mainly due to the nature and character of the Indian State.
- The middle classes in India are a product of both capitalist development and the state. The anti-reservation agitations in Gujarat as understood by Shah imply a conflict-situation between the *entrenched* middle classes and the lower classes aspiring for the middle classes status by having access to lucrative white-collar occupations.
- Middle classes are not direct rulers nor are they economic producers like the industrialists, workers and peasants. There is a marked lack of homogeneity among different middle classes. In Fact, structural distinctions are quite marked even between the apparently equal/ homogeneous classes. Some classes are not so important in people's eyes, yet they enjoy high prestige because of the autonomy of their professions and the networks which they develop simply as a by-product of their professional obligations. These points require further probing.
- The 'industrial man' is not a monolith. Holmstrom (1984) discusses at length that 'industry' is primarily an inequalitarian system in terms of organized and unorganized labour sector, contract labour, labour markets, the working class conditions, workers' social worlds, the domineering role of owners, managers, superiors and leadership of trade unions. These distinctions based on gender (Mies, 1981) and nature of industrial or semi-industrial work (Bhowmik, 1980; Prasanneswari, 1984; Behal, 1985; Thomas Issac, 1982) have been taken as the main criteria of socio-cultural and economic heterogeneity of the working class, particularly in the analysis of working class consciousness, intra and inter-working class relations and relations of the working class with the owners and managerial and supervisory cadres of industry.

Notes

5.4 Key–Words

1. Antagonistic Contradiction : It is the impossibility of a compromise between different social classes.
2. Technocrats : An expert who is a member of a highly skilled elite group

5.5 Review Questions

1. What is class? Discuss caste and gender as a forms of social stratification.
2. Distinguish between gender and caste.
3. What kind of relationship is found between gender and caste?
4. Explain social stratification in urban– industrial settings.

Answers: Self–Assessment

1. 12.25
2. 87.86%, 33.57%
3. 21.68%
4. 44.34%
5. Capitalist

5.6 Further Readings



1. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Perspectives on Social Stratification, Rawat Publication.
2. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Social Stratification & Mobility, Rawat Publication.
3. Hasnain, Nadeem, 2011 : Indian Society and Culture Continuity and Change, Jawahar Publishers and Distributors.

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Unit 6: Caste

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6.2 Features of Caste System
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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Understand the Concept of Caste.
- Discuss the Features of the Caste System.
- Explain the Caste System as a System of Stratification.

Introduction

The caste system in India has been studied with three perspectives : Indological, socio-anthropological and sociological. The Indologists have viewed caste from the scriptural point of view, social anthropologists from the cultural point of view, and sociologists from the stratificational point of view.

In the Indo-religious perspective, the Indologists take their cue from the scriptures about the origin, purpose and future of the caste system. They maintain that *varnas* have originated from Brahma—the *virat purusa*—and castes are the fissioned units within the *varna* system developed as the result of hypergamy and hypogamy practices. These units, or *jatis*, received their ranks relative to one another in the *varna* order. The rituals to be performed by the four *varnas* are status-bound and prescribed in the *Brahmanas* (written in about 800 B.C.), while the customs and the laws to be followed by each caste are prescribed in the *Smritis* (written in about 200-100 B.C.). The regional, linguistic, ethnic, and sectarian variations have gradually come to affect the ordering of *jati* relationships. The object of the origin of castes, according to them (Indologists), was the division of labour. As people came to accept the general ideology of the division of society into four groups (or say, classes or orders), they became more and more rigid, and membership, occupation, etc., became hereditary. The Brahmins were given the superior position in the social system because of the belief in the divine right of Brahmins to interprete and administer the laws. The rigidity in the caste system is, thus, the result of beliefs in *karma* (deeds) and *dharma* (duties and obligations), which means that the motive force for the caste dogmas was definitely religious. Referring to the future of castes, the Indologists maintain that since they are divine, they will continue to exist .

6.1 Concept of Caste

Notes

The word *caste* derives from the Portuguese *casta*, meaning breed, race, or kind. Among the Indian terms that are sometimes translated as caste are *varna*, *jati*, *at*, *biradri*, and *samaj*. All of these terms refer to ranked groups of various sizes and breadth. *Varna*, or colour, actually refers to large divisions that include various castes; the other terms include castes and subdivisions of castes sometimes called subcastes. Many castes are traditionally associated with an occupation, such as high-ranking Brahmans; middle-ranking farmer and artisan groups, such as potters, barbers, and carpenters; and very low-ranking "Untouchable" leatherworkers, butchers, launderers, and latrine cleaners. There is some correlation between ritual rank on the caste hierarchy and economic prosperity. Members of higher-ranking castes tend, on the whole, to be more prosperous than members of lower-ranking castes. Many lower-caste people live in conditions of great poverty and social disadvantage. According to the Rig Veda, sacred texts that date back to oral traditions of more than 3,000 years ago, progenitors of the four ranked *varna* groups sprang from various parts of the body of the primordial man, which Brahma created from clay. Each group had a function in sustaining the life of society— the social body. Brahmans, or priests, were created from the mouth. They were to provide for the intellectual and spiritual needs of the community. Kshatriyas, warriors and rulers, were derived from the arms. Their role was to rule and to protect others. Vaishyas—landowners and merchants—sprang from the thighs, and were entrusted with the care of commerce and agriculture. Shudras—artisans and servants—came from the feet. Their task was to perform all manual labour.

Later conceptualised was a fifth category, "Untouchable" menials, relegated to carrying out very menial and polluting work related to bodily decay and dirt. Since 1935 "Untouchables" have been known as Scheduled Castes, referring to their listing on government rosters, or schedules. They are also often called by Gandhi's term Harijans, or "Children of God." Although the term *Untouchable* appears in literature produced by these low-ranking castes, in the 1990s, many politically conscious members of these groups prefer to refer to themselves as Dalit, a Hindi word meaning oppressed or downtrodden. According to the 1991 census, there were 138 million Scheduled Caste members in India, approximately 16 per cent of the total population. The first four *varnas* apparently existed in the ancient Aryan society of northern India. Some, historians say that these categories were originally somewhat fluid functional groups, not castes. A greater degree of fixity gradually developed, resulting in the complex ranking systems of medieval India that essentially continue in the late twentieth century. Although a *varna* is not a caste, when directly asked for their caste affiliation, particularly when the questioner is a Westerner, many Indians will reply with a *varna* name. Pressed further, they may respond with a much more specific name of a caste, or *jati*, which falls within that *varna*. For example, a Brahman may specify that he is a member of a named caste group, such as a Jijotiya Brahman, or a Smartha Brahman, and so on. Within such castes, people may further belong to smaller sub-caste categories and to specific clans and lineages. These finer designations are particularly relevant when marriages are being arranged and often appear in newspaper matrimonial advertisements. Numerous groups usually called tribes (often referred to as Scheduled Tribes) are also integrated into the caste system to varying degrees. Some tribes live separately from others—particularly in the far northeast and in the forested center of the country, where tribes are more like ethnic groups than castes. Some tribes are themselves divided into groups similar to subcastes. In regions where members of tribes live in peasant villages with nontribal peoples, they are usually considered members of separate castes ranking low on the hierarchical scale. Inequalities among castes are considered by the Hindu faithful to be part of the divinely ordained natural order and are expressed in terms of purity and pollution. Within a village, relative rank is most graphically expressed at a wedding or death feast, when all residents of the village are invited. At the home of a high-ranking caste member, food is prepared by a member of a caste from whom all can accept cooked food (usually

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by a Brahman). Diners are seated in lines; members of a single caste sit next to each other in a row, and members of other castes sit in perpendicular or parallel rows at some distance. Members of Dalit castes, such as leatherworkers and sweepers, may be seated far from the other diners—even out in an alley. Farther away, at the edge of the feeding area, a sweeper may wait with a large basket to receive discarded leavings tossed in by other diners. Eating food contaminated by contact with the saliva of others not of the same family is considered far too polluting to be practiced by members of any other castes. Generally, feasts and ceremonies given by Dalits are not attended by higher-ranking castes. Among Muslims, although status differences prevail, brotherhood may be stressed. A Muslim feast usually includes a cloth laid either on clean ground or on a table, with all Muslims, rich and poor, dining from plates placed on the same cloth. Muslims who wish to provide hospitality to observant Hindus, however, must make separate arrangements for a high-caste Hindu cook and ritually pure foods and dining area. Castes that fall within the top four ranked *varnas* are sometimes referred to as the "clean castes," with Dalits considered "unclean." Castes of the top three ranked *varnas* are often designated "twice-born," in reference to the ritual initiation undergone by male members, in which investiture with the Hindu sacred thread constitutes a kind of ritual rebirth. Non-Hindu caste like groups generally falls outside these designations. Each caste is believed by devout Hindus to have its own dharma, or divinely ordained code of proper conduct. Accordingly, there is often a high degree of tolerance for divergent lifestyles among different castes. Brahmans are usually expected to be nonviolent and spiritual, according with 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 but expectably somewhat base in behaviour, whereas Dalits—especially Sweepers—are often regarded by others as followers of vulgar life-styles. Conversely, lower-caste people often view people of high rank as haughty and unfeeling. 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 affairs 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. Within castes explicit standards are maintained. Transgressions may be dealt with by a caste council meeting periodically to adjudicate issues relevant to the caste. Such councils are usually formed of groups of elders, almost always males. Punishments such as fines and out casting, either temporary or permanent, can be enforced. In rare cases, a person is excommunicated from the caste for gross infractions of caste rules. An example of such an infraction might be marrying or openly cohabiting with a mate of a caste lower than one's own; such behaviour would usually result in the higher-caste person dropping to the status of the lower-caste person.

Activities such as farming or trading can be carried out by anyone, but usually only member of the appropriate castes act as priests, barbers, potters, weavers, and other skilled artisans, whose occupational skills are handed down in families from one generation to another. As with other key features of Indian social structure, occupational specialisation is believed to be in accord with the divinely ordained order of the universe.

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.

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In past decades, Dalits in certain areas 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. The lowest-ranking had to jingle a little bell in warning of their polluting approach. In much of India, Dalits were prohibited from entering temples, using wells from which the "clean" castes drew their water, or even attending schools. In past centuries, dire punishments were prescribed for Dalits who read or even heard sacred texts. Such degrading discrimination was made illegal under legislation passed during British rule and was protested against by preindependence reform movements led by Mahatma Gandhi and Bhimrao Ramji (B.R.) Ambedkar, a Dalit leader. Dalits agitated for the right to enter Hindu temples and to use village wells and effectively pressed for the enactment of stronger laws opposing disabilities imposed on them. After independence, Ambedkar almost singlehundedly wrote India's constitution, including key provisions barring caste-based discrimination. Nonetheless, discriminatory treatment of Dalits remains a factor in daily life, especially in villages, as the end of the twentieth century approaches.

Caste, *Varna*, Sub-Caste and Tribe

Many people confuse caste with *varna*, sub-caste and tribe. The inter-changeability of these terms has created confusion in the sociological analysis of the institution of caste. Referring to this conceptual confusion, S.C. Dube (1958 : vi) writes that the analytical short-cuts often blur the distinction between them (that is, terms like *varna*, caste and sub-caste), and the resulting portrayal of the social system does not remain useful for the purposes of meaningful comparison. The absence of common operational definitions and generally agreed upon units of analysis in studies of caste has obscured the understanding of caste as an essential aspect of the social system of Hindu India. Though the need for clarification between these concepts has been pointed out by all scholars, including Ghurye, Srinivas, Dube, Bailey and Mayer, etc., yet nobody has succeeded in pointing out the clear-cut difference in the various concepts. Logically it may be maintained that caste is a developed form of *varna* which had started as a class in early India and gradually came to have religious sanctions. It is the accepted religious principles supporting the caste system that distinguish it from the stratification system in America and many other countries based on ascriptive status, endogamy and low-prestige status (for example, of Negroes).

Caste and Varna

Caste and *varna* are two separate concepts. It was Senart who for the first time brought to the attention of the world the fact that a caste and a *varna* are not identical. The peculiarity of the Hindu theory of social organization is its reference to *Varnashram* organization. Though the *varna* organization and the *ashram* organization are two separate organizations, yet they go together as they refer to the problems of nurture and nature of man. *Ashram* organization refers to the conduct of an individual in the world (nurture) in different stages of his life and *varna* organization refers to the work that an individual would undertake in the society according to his nature. The approach to the study of these two organizations is different. In the *ashram* organization, the problem is approached from the point of view of training or nurture of an individual through four different stages of life (Brahamcharya, Grihastashram, Vanprasth, and Sanyas), whereas in the *varna* organization, the problem is considered from the point of view of an individual's position in relation to group and with reference to his innate nature and his tendencies and dispositions.

In the Rig Veda (written in about 4000 B.C.), only two *varnas* have been mentioned : Aryavarna and Dasa varna. However, in the same Veda, there is a description of the division of society into three orders : *Brahma* (priests), *Kshatra* (warriors) and *Vis* (common people). There is no mention of the fourth order, that is, *Sudras*, though there is a reference to groups despised by the Aryans, like *Ayogya*, *Chandal* and *Nishad*, etc. These four orders ultimately became four *varnas*. Initially, the Sudras were not considered as untouchables. Srinivas (1962 : 63) has also maintained that the

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people of this fourth order were not untouchables but to this group belonged peasants, labourers and servants. Sudras were employed not only as domestic servants but also as cooks. There was nothing like higher or lower *varna* in the Vedic period. The division of society into four *varnas* (or four orders or classes) was based on the division of labour. Brahmins acted as priests, Kshatriyas as rulers and fighters, Vaishyas as traders, and Sudras as a servile class. Each *varna* worshipped different deities and followed different rituals. This difference was because each group had to achieve different object according to its occupational role. Brahmins wanted maximum holy lustre for which they worshipped *agni* (fire) and recited Gayatri *mantras*; Kshatriyas wanted physical strength (*viryam*) for which they worshipped Indra and recited Trishtubh *mantras*; and Vaishyas wanted cattle-wealth (*pasavah*) for which they worshipped Visvedevas and recited Jagati *mantras*. But there were no restrictions on the matrimonial alliances or on the commensal or social relations or even on the change of membership from one to the other *varna*. Later on, however, as we pass from the Vedic (4000-1000 B.C.) to the Brahmanic (230 B.C. to 700 A.D.) period, the four *varnas* came to be arranged hierarchically, with Brahmins at the top and Sudras at the bottom.

According to one viewpoint, this distinction and hierarchichal arrangement had probably something to do with colour difference. *Varna* means 'colour', and it was in this sense that the word seems to have been employed in contrasting the Arya and the Dasa, referring to their fair and dark colours respectively. The colour-connotation of the word was so strong that later on when the classes came to be regularly described as *varnas*, four different colours were assigned to the four classes, by which their members were supposed to be distinguished. The colour associated with the Brahmin is white, with Kshatriya red, with Vaishya yellow, and with Sudra black. Hutton (1963 : 66) believes that it is possible that this colour distinction is in some way associated with race. But according to Hocart (1950 : 46), the colour has a ritual and not a racial significance.

Though like the origin of *varnas*, the origin of castes also is explained by scholars like Risley, Ghurye, Majumdar, etc. in terms of the racial factors but it cannot be said that castes are the sub-divisions of *varnas*. The origin of castes had nothing to do with *varnas*, though in the process of development of castes, they came to be associated with *varnas*, and the hierarchy of the castes and the mobility of a caste came to be stated in *varna* terms. *Varna*, thus, provided a framework which conditioned all Indian thinking about and reaction to caste (Hsu, 1963 : 96). Srinivas (1962 : 69) also suggests that *varna* has provided a common social language which holds good or is thought to hold good for India as a whole, that is, it has enabled ordinary men and women to grasp the caste system by providing them with a simple and clear scheme which is applicable to all parts of India. He further holds that the importance of the *varna* system consists in that it furnishes an all India frame into which the *jatis*, occupying the lower rungs, have throughout tried to raise their status by taking over the customs and rituals of the top *jatis*. This has helped the spread of a uniform culture throughout the Hindu society.

However, to fit in *jatis* into the Brahmanic and the Sudra groups is easy but to fit them into the middle groups, that is, in the Kshatriya and the Vaishya groups is difficult and confusing because one *jati* in one area may be treated as a Vaishya *jati* but the same *jati* in another area may claim a Kshatriya status. The *varna* model, thus, has been the cause of misinterpretation of the realities of the caste system (Srinivas, 1962 : 67). Caste is tied to locality but *varna* functions on an all India basis. Therefore, to understand the caste system clearly and scientifically, it is necessary for a student of sociology to free himself from the hold of the *varna* model. Hsu (1963 : 96) also has said that *varna* is a mere conceptual scheme for the Hindu society as a whole, while caste is a description of a real situation in the Hindu society.

Caste and Sub-caste

It is not easy to give a clear-cut distinction between a caste and a sub-caste because both have similar attributes. However, a sub-caste is a sub-division of a caste. For example, Kayasth is a caste

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and it is divided into various sub-castes like Mathur, Saxena, Srivastava, Nigam and Bhatnagar. Similarly, Agarwal caste is divided into Dasa and Bisa sub-castes, while Oswal caste is divided into Dhaya, Pancha, Dasa and Bisa sub-castes. The marriage between a Dasa Oswal boy and a Dasa Agarwal girl will thus be an example of an inter-caste marriage. Brahmin is always erroneously designated as a caste, when it is in fact a *varna*, a constellation of many castes. The examples of Kanyakubja, Saryupari and Gaur Brahmins are the examples of castes, and Shrimali, Purohit and Pushkarna Brahmins are the examples of sub-castes, while Bhardwaj, Gautam, and Kashyap Brahmins are the examples of *gotras*. Castes and sub-castes are both endogamous groups but *gotra* is an exogamous group.

How did sub-castes originate ? There are two views : one, they have arisen out of a fission from a parent group, and two, they have emerged as independent groups (Chauhan, 1966 : 44). According to Ghurye (1957 : 34), the sub-castes came to be distinguished from castes due to territorial separateness (for example, Gujarati and Malwi weavers in Madhya Pradesh, or Mewari and Marwari barbers in Rajasthan), mixed origin (for example, Bhilala in Madhya Pradesh having emerged due to mixed origin from the Rajput and Bhil parentage), occupational distinction (for example, Kumhars who work as potters and are called Gadhede, and Kumhars who work on field and are called Kheted), some peculiarity in the technique of the occupation (for example, Mochi sub-caste among leather workers who make only new shoes), dissimilarity of custom (for example, relating to widow re-marriage), and due to nick-names.

Iravati Karve (1958 : 125) has accepted the view that sub-castes are either the fissioned divisions of castes or they have an independent origin. Referring to this, she has said (1958 : 133) : "The difference in religious practices and techniques reflects the separate existence and history of these entities than serves as cause for their separation from the larger units." Risley (1915), Hutton (1961 : 55) and Majumdar (1958 : 357) have referred to sub-castes breaking away from the main castes/ tribes to raise their status. B.R. Chauhan (1966 : 45) has maintained that the origin of sub-castes due to the process of fission may be explained in terms of mechanisms like migration, change of customs, political decisions, etc. Krickpatrick (1912) has explained that sub-castes, which are the fissioned groups of castes, were earlier formed as the result of migration and political and social factors but today they are the results of attempts by the well-to-do elements in a despised caste to cut adrift from their humbler caste brethern and raise themselves in the social scale by finding a new name and a dubious origin, and associating themselves with some higher caste.

Another question is : What activities belong to the specific fields of caste and sub-caste ? The three functions performed by sub-castes are : restricting marriages, restricting commensal relations, and regulating behaviour or communal life in terms of subsisting within the larger society.



The three functions performed by castes are : assigning status, delimiting civil and religious rights, and determining the occupation.

Referring to these characteristics, Ghurye (1957 : 19) has asserted : "We should recognize sub-castes as real castes". A.C. Mayer (1960 : 151) has also talked of recognizing the need to distinguish caste from sub-caste. He found Ghurye's reference to caste as meaningful for the society at large and reference to sub-caste as meaningful for the individual. Referring to members within a caste, he maintained that sub-caste is more meaningful to them, while referring to members of other castes, he thought that caste is the key-point of cognition. He, thus, has opined that caste and sub-caste can co-exist, neither being more real than the other.

There has been some difference of opinion among the scholars regarding the unit of the caste system. According to some, it is caste and according to others it is sub-caste. Srinivas (1952 : 24),

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for instance, believes that sub-caste is the 'real' unit of the caste system. But, in his own study of Rampura village (in Mysore), he confined himself to the study of caste. According to Mayer (1960 : 8) : "At the level of the regional study, a sub-caste may be the unit of inter-caste as well as intra-caste relations, though within the village, inter-caste relations can be seen in terms of castes rather than sub-castes." Iravati Karve (1938 : 33) considers sub-castes as 'ultimate units' of analysis. Ghurye (1950 : 20) maintains that stated generally, though it is the caste that is recognized by the society at large, it is the sub-caste that is regarded important by the particular caste and individuals. We should, therefore, recognize sub-castes as real castes to get a sociologically correct idea of the institution of caste. According to Stevenson (1954), however, because of the confusion between the concepts of caste and sub-caste, the best thing is to ignore the difference between the two. But as already stated, instead of completely forgetting the difference between the two concepts, we should treat a group as a sub-caste in the sociological literature only if it preserves its link with the parental caste, otherwise we should treat each endogamous group as a separate entity, that is, a caste. Max Weber (1960 : 31) also holds : "Today one caste frequently contains several hundred sub-castes. In such cases, these sub-castes may be related to one another exactly or almost exactly as are different castes. If this is the case, sub-castes in reality are castes; the caste name common to all of them has merely historical significance".

Caste and Tribe

There is no single and accepted criterion by which to distinguish a tribe from a caste. Andre Beteille (1977 : 7) has claimed that the concept of 'tribe' can be understood clearly not on the basis of its existing definitions but by finding out the attributes and analyzing the specific conditions in India which are distinctive of groups conventionally regarded as tribes. For example, social anthropologists like Nadel have described tribe as "a society with a political, a linguistic, and a cultural boundary."

Though many tribal societies have a clear cultural and linguistic boundaries, if not the political one, but there are several tribal societies which lack government and the centralized authority in the ordinary sense of the term. Likewise, cultural homogeneity in a tribe is also elusive because in this age no iron wall exists where one 'culture' comes to an end and another begins. A common dialect, however, is possessed by the tribes. The prevalent definition of tribe is, therefore, inadequate.



A tribe is society, the members of which have a common government, share common language, and hold a common culture or beliefs and practices.

Scholars like Ghurye, Naik, Bailey and Verrier Elwin, etc. have used different criteria for distinguishing between caste and tribe. Some of these criteria used are : religion, geographical isolation, language, economic backwardness, and political organization.

It is said that the religion of the tribal people is Animism and that of the caste people is Hinduism. Hutton (1963) and Bailey (1960 : 263) believe that tribal people are not Hindus but are animists. The basic tenets of Animism are : phenomena of sleep, dream and death, and belief in possession, in spirits and ghosts, and in magic. On the other hand, the principle characteristics of Hinduism are : *dharma*, *bhakti*, and rebirth. It will be wrong to say that the Hindus, particularly the lower castes, do not believe in spirits and ghosts or in magic, dreams, etc. Similarly, there are many tribals who worship Hindu gods and goddesses, celebrate Hindu festivals and fairs, and observe Hindu customs, traditions and rituals. It is, therefore, not easy to distinguish between Animism and Hinduism. Ahuja (1965), Verrier Elwin (1943), and Risley (1908) also maintain that the distinction between Hinduism and Animism is artificial and meaningless. This means that because

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we find admixture of Hindu religious elements and values in tribal religion and tribal values in Hindu religion, religion as a single criterion cannot be used to distinguish between a tribe and a caste. Ghurye, Naik and Bailey have also rejected this criterion.

Using geographical isolation as a criterion of distinction, it is said that the tribals live in geographically isolated regions like hills and mountains, but Hindus live in plain regions. Due to lesser contacts with the civilized neighbours, tribals are more uncivilized than the Hindus. It may be true by and large that tribals live in hills away from the lines of communication but we have examples which show that many caste Hindus also live in isolated regions and many tribals live in plains. This means that in addition to a purely geographical isolation, we demand other criteria also to distinguish a tribe from a caste.

The third criterion is language difference between a tribe and a caste. It is suggested that each tribe has its own language but not a caste; for example, Gonds speak Gondi language, Bhils speak Bhili or Vagdi language, Santhals speak Santhali language, and so on. But since there are tribes which do not have their own languages but speak a dialect of one of the main Indian languages, as in South India, therefore purely cultural criterion of language also is not a scientific criterion for distinguishing between a tribe and a caste.

Economic backwardness too is not a correct criterion for distinction between a tribe and a caste. To maintain that tribals are backward and primitive but caste Hindus are not is not a correct statement. It is true that many tribes even today are economically backward; they have low income, use primitive methods in cultivation and in some cases still use barter system in exchange, but there are many tribes (for example, Meena) which are economically advanced. At the same time, there are many castes which are as much economically backward as many tribes. Bailey (1960 : 9) also rejects this criterion by holding that in so far as the phrase 'economically backward' refers to a standard of living rather than to a type of economic relationship, it is sociologically unsatisfactory. He has suggested that instead of taking the totality of behaviour, we should narrow the enquiry (in differentiating between a tribe and a caste) by concentrating on particular fields of behaviour in a given society. He, thus, used politico-economic system or 'economic structure', as he calls it, for differentiating between a tribe and a caste in his study of Konds (tribe) and Oriyas (caste) in Orissa. In the analysis of the politico-economic organization, he concentrated on two factors : (i) control over land, and (ii) right to resources of land. He maintained that in both the tribal and caste societies, we find 'landowners' who have direct access to land, and 'dependents' who are dependent on the landowners for achieving their share of land's resources. But analyzing the economic organization of a village territory (inhabited by castes) and a clan territory (inhabited by tribes), he found that a village is divided into economically specialized interdependent castes arranged hierarchically, whereas though a clan territory is also composed of groups but these are not hierarchically arranged and nor they are interdependent through economic organization. In other words, in a tribal society, a larger proportion of people has a direct access to land while in the case of a caste-based society, the larger population of people achieves the right to land through a dependent relationship. Thus, according to Bailey (*Ibid* : 264-65), a tribe is organized on a 'segmentary system' and a caste is organized on an 'organic system'. He writes : "The only solution (to differentiate between tribe and caste) is to postulate a continuum, at one end of which is a society whose political system is entirely of the segmentary egalitarian type and which contains no dependents whatsoever, and at the other end of which is a society in which segmentary political relations exist only between a very small proportion of the total society, and most people act in the system in the role of dependents. The political system of this society can be compared with an organic system." But he holds that at what point of continuum a tribe ceases and a caste begins is impossible to say.

In India, the situation is even more complicated because there is hardly any tribe which exists as a separate society. No tribe in India has a completely separate political boundary. Big tribes like

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Bhils, Santhals, Oraon, etc. are territorially dispersed. Further, almost all tribes have been absorbed in varying degrees into the wider society. Economically too, the tribal economy is not different from the regional or national economy. Thus, tribes which answer to the anthropologists' conception of the ideal type are rarely to be found. Andre Beteille (1969) says that what we find today in India are tribes in transition. But we do regard certain communities as tribal and have included them in the recognized list of tribes, called Scheduled Tribes.

Caste and Class

Caste and class are both status groups. A status group is a collection of individuals who share a distinctive style of life and a certain consciousness of kind. However, castes are perceived as hereditary groups with a fixed ritual status while classes are defined in terms of the relations of production. The members of a class have a similar socio-economic status in relation to other classes in the society, while the members of a caste have either a high or a low ritual status in relation to other castes. A social class is not organized but the individuals and families who compose it are relatively similar in educational, economic and social status. Those who are classified as part of the same social class have similar life chances. Some sociologists regard social classes as being primarily economic in nature, whereas others tend to stress factors such as prestige, style of life, attitudes, etc.

Three criteria are generally used for determining an individual's position in the class system : objective, reputational, and subjective. The objective criteria are : income, occupation and education; the reputational criteria refer to the attitudes and judgements of other members of the community; and the subjective criteria refer to how people place themselves within the society.



Caste is a closed social stratum that determines its members' prestige, occupation and social relationships.

In each caste, social relations between members of different castes are severely limited and formalized. In class, on the other hand, the social relations of members of one class with other classes are circumscribed.

Castes and classes co-exist in the society. Also, castes can function as classes on many occasions. When *dhobis* (washermen) go on strike for increasing their rates, they function not as a caste but as a class.

Many caste groups (say, Brahmins or Baniyas) are composed of a number of castes. These are divided into castes which may in turn be divided into sub-castes. A broad grouping may be referred to as a segment of a lower order and its sub-divisions as segments of higher orders (Andre Beteille, 1977 : 60).

Briefly speaking, thus, the difference between caste and class may be given as follows :

(1) Caste is an endogamous group but class is not.

(2) Caste is a unique phenomenon (according to Leach and Dumont) found in India but class is a universal phenomenon.

(3) Caste works as an active political force in a village (Beteille, 1966 : 200) but class does not work so. Andre Beteille on the basis of his study in Sripuram in South India found that contrary to the Marxist viewpoint, class categories do not constitute a basis for communal and political action. Referring to this, Leach (1960) has said that when caste assumes economic and political functions and competes with other castes, it defies caste principles. He says : "The level at which caste associations assume political and economic functions, they violate

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the traditional norms of caste reciprocity and enter into the arenas of conflict, a situation different from that of a caste." Gough and Richard Fox also hold the same opinion. M.N. Srinivas (1962 : 7) does not agree with Leach on this. He maintains : "I cannot agree with Leach when he says that competition between caste groups is defiance of caste principles. It is true that castewise division of labour facilitates the interdependence of castes (and this is strikingly seen in the *jajmani* system), but inter-dependence is not the whole story. Castes do compete with each other for acquiring political and economic power and high ritual position".

(4) Caste has an organic character but class has a segmentary character where various segments are motivated by competition.

(5) In the caste system, there is co-operation and economic inter-dependence but in the class system, there is no economic dependence. Instead, there is competition in the class system. In this context, Leach (*Ibid* : 9-10) has said that caste system is an organic system, with each particular caste filling a distinctive functional role. It is a system of labour division from which the element of competition among members has been largely excluded.

(6) In the caste system, upper castes compete with each other for the services of the lower-castes but in the class system, lower- classes compete with each other for the favour of the upper classes. Referring to this, Leach (*Ibid* : 5-6) has said : "It is the characteristic of the class-organized societies that rights of ownership are the prerogative of minority groups which form privileged elites. The capacity of the upper-class minority to exploit the services of the lower-class majority is critically dependent upon the fact that members of the under-privileged groups must compete among themselves for the favours of the elites. In a caste society, however, the position is reversed".

(7) In the caste system, status of a caste is determined not by the economic and the political privileges but by the ritualistic legitimation of authority, that is, in the caste-based system, ritual norms encompass the norms of power and wealth (Dumont). For example, even though Brahmins have no economic and political power yet they are placed at the top of the caste hierarchy. In the class system, ritual norms have no importance at all but power and wealth alone determine one's status. According to Dumont, in the class-based system, economic and political ideologies encompass the ritual order. Bailey, however, does not accept Dumont's statement that religious ideas rather than the economic values establish the rank of each caste. He says that if we accept this statement, it would mean that changes in control over economic resources can take place without causing changes in rank. This is only partially true. It may be true for Brahmins and untouchables but not for the intermediate castes. In his own study in Bisipara, Bailey (1957 : 264-65) found that change in wealth is followed by change in rank. Further, in the caste system, social mobility is not possible but in the class system, change in status is possible. D.N. Majumdar (1958) in this context has even explained caste as a closed class. This view is not accepted by M.N. Srinivas (1962-42) who thinks that movement is always possible through the processes of sanskritization and westernization. Andre Betaille (1965) has also said that no social system is absolutely closed. There is always some scope, however limited, for alternative combinations. But the choice allowed for different combinations varies from community to community.

6.2 Features of Caste System

The structure of caste could be discussed by analyzing its important features. As already pointed out in the foregoing pages, when Bougle (1958) has postulated three elements of caste, namely, hereditary specialization, hierarchy and repulsion or opposition, Hocart (1950) has emphasized on ritual purity and impurity, while Risley (1915) has referred to endogamy and hereditary occupation. Ghurye, Hutton, Ketkar, Dutt, etc. have also pointed out all these features. In giving

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these features, the scholars have not made distinction between caste as a unit and caste as a system. Keeping this difference in view, it may be maintained that the important features of caste as a unit are hereditary membership, endogamy, fixed occupation, and caste councils; while the features of caste as a system are hierarchy, commensal restrictions, and restrictions with regard to physical and social distance. We will analyze these features of caste as a system and caste as a unit separately.

Features (of Caste) as a System

(*a*) Hierarchy based on Birth

No two castes have an equal status. One caste has either a low or a high status in relation to other castes. It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the exact or even the approximate place of each caste in the hierarchical system. Two methods have mainly been used in assessing the hierarchy : observational method and opinion-assessing method. In the former, either the attributional method or the interactional method has been used for ranking the castes. The attributional method determines the rank of a caste by its behaviour, for example, its customs, practice of degrading occupation, vegetarianism, habits of liquor-drinking, etc., the interactional method evaluates ranks of two given castes in relationship to each other by observing the commensal interaction and marital relations, etc. between the two castes. If a caste 'A' accepts a girl in marriage from a caste 'B' but does not give a girl in that caste, 'A' will have higher status than 'B'. This is because of the hypergamy rule according to which a girl of a lower caste can marry in a higher caste but not vice-versa. Similarly, if the members of a caste 'A' do not accept food from the members of a caste 'B' but members of caste 'B' accept it, it will indicate the higher status of 'A' over 'B'.

In the 'opinion-assessing' method, the ranks of various castes in the collective caste hierarchy are assessed on the basis of the opinions of various respondents from different castes. The advantage in the 'opinion-assessing' method over the 'observational' method is that in the former, it is possible to regard hierarchy and interaction as two variables and study their relationship. A.C. Mayer, M.N. Srinivas, D.N. Majumdar, S.C. Dube, Pauline Mahar, etc. had used the observational method while Mckim Marriot and Stanley Freed had used the opinionassessment method in analyzing the caste ranks in the caste hierarchy. S.C.Dube (1955 : 34-42) used only one criterion for determining the caste hierarchies in three villages in Telangana : which castes can theoretically take food from which other castes. Mayer (*Caste and Kinship in Central India*, 1960) on the other hand, used the criterion of 'commensality' which involves principally the giving and taking of food and water and sharing of the same pipe (*huka*) among various castes. Pauline Mahar (1959 : 92-107) ranked castes with regard to their ritual purity and pollution by using a multiple-scaling technique. She issued a 13-item questionnaire about the kinds of interaction between castes which involve to a considerable extent ritual purity and pollution. M.N. Srinivas (cf. Mckim Marriott, 1955) and D.N. Majumdar (1959) constructed their own picture of hierarchy. Srinivas, however, agrees that such evaluations (by constructing one's own picture of hierarchy) are somewhat subjective. Mayer also maintains that caste hierarchies constructed according to different criteria do not completely agree.

Mckim Marriott (1955) and Stanley Freed (1963 : 879-91) used the card system to determine median rank for each caste in the collective caste hierarchy. Both presented a set of movable cards, upon each of which was written the name of a caste, to each respondent with a request to arrange the cards in their order of rank. The slight difference between Marriott's and Freed's procedure was that Marriott presented the cards one by one, while Freed presented them altogether. Scholars like Srinivas and Mayer have commented that caste membership may influence a person's view of the caste hierarchy, or at least his opinion about the place

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of his own caste within it. But Freed did not find it to be so. In his study of twenty-five respondents in 1957-58 selected from twelve castes in Shantinagar village (pseudonym) near Delhi, he found that most of the respondents ranked their own castes close to the ranks accorded to them by others. He, thus, concluded that caste membership has little effect upon a person's overall views of the caste hierarchy.

In recent years, though there has been a change in some characteristics of the caste system but there has been no change at all in the hierarchical characteristic.



What do you understand by 'opinion-assessing' method ?

(*b*) Commensal Restrictions

Detailed rules are laid down with regard to the kind of food that can be accepted by a person from different castes. According to Blunt (1911 : 90), there are seven important taboos in this respect : (i) commensal taboo, which determines rules regarding persons in whose company a man may eat; (ii) cooking taboo, which lays down rules regarding persons who may cook food that a man may eat; (iii) eating taboo, which prescribes rituals to be observed at the time of eating; (iv) drinking taboo, which prescribes rules regarding accepting water etc., from other persons; (v) food taboo, which prescribes rules regarding the kind of food (*kachcha, pucca*, green vegetables, etc.) a man may eat with members of other castes; (vi) smoking taboo, which lays down rules regarding persons whose pipe (*hukka*) a man may smoke; and (vii) vessels taboo, which determines the types of vessels to be used or avoided for cooking food to protect oneself from being polluted.

Blunt believes that the commensality restriction is the result of marriage restriction, but Hutton (1963 : 73) claims it is the other way round, if one comes before the other at all. On the basis of the severity of the food taboo, Blunt (*Ibid* : 90) has classified castes into five groups : (i) castes which take the *kachcha* (cooked with water) and *pucca* (cooked with *ghee*) food cooked only by a member of their own endogamous group; (ii) castes which eat food cooked by the members of own caste and also by Brahmins; (iii) castes which take food cooked by the members of own caste or by Brahmins or by Rajputs; (iv) castes which take food cooked by the members of own caste or by Brahmins or Rajputs or by lower castes of rank which they regard as at least equal to their own; and (v) castes which eat food cooked by almost anyone. Hutton (*Ibid*: 75) has criticized this classification because of the distinct restrictions on the *kachcha* and*pucca* food. Some which fall into one group as regards the *kachcha* food will fall into another in regard to the *pucca* food about which they are not so strict. For example, some Brahmin castes and Kachhi (vegetable sellers) and Kumhar (potters) castes will fall into the first category on all accounts but some castes like Kalwar (distiller and liquor-seller) will fall into group (i) for the *kachcha* food and group (iii) for the *pucca* food. *Halwai* (sweatmeat seller) likewise falls into group (i)for the *kachcha* and group (iv) for the *pucca*; Kayasth into group (ii) for both; Kahar into group (iv) for the *kachcha* and group (iii) for the *pucca* food. These instances clearly show that each caste almost has a law to itself. The various castes, thus, do not fall into uniform groups.

In the last few decades, however, we find these commensal restrictions are no longer rigidly observed. In other words, there is change in the commensal characteristic of the caste system.

(*c*) Compelling Religious Sanctions on Social Participation

Restrictions on social interaction have been imposed because of the belief that pollution can be carried by mere bodily contact. It is because of such beliefs that the low caste people

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engaged in inferior occupations are avoided by the upper caste people. Likewise, the *chamars, dhobis*, doms and hundreds of beef-eating low castes, commonly known as untouchables, are shunned by the high caste Hindus. There are also specific rules for greeting and interacting with members of high or intermediate castes, for sharing common cot (*charpoi*) with others, and for day-to-day as well as ritual interaction.

(*d*) The Outcaste Substratum

Castes engaged in defiling or menial or polluting occupations are treated as untouchables. They are called outcastes, depressed classes or scheduled castes. These castes are believed to have descended from the races originally inhabiting India before the invasion of the Aryans. Later they accepted servitude on the lowest fringes of Hindu society. They mostly live outside the village and eke out their existence by labour like scavenging, shoe-making, tanning, etc. They are not permitted to draw water from wells used by the uppercaste people. They are even debarred from the use of public roads, schools, temples, cremation grounds, hotels and tea-shops. They sacrifice animals to appease the dreaded demons that dominate their lives. Their presence and their touch is thought to contaminate others. In the Peshva period, Doms were not permitted to enter Poona city between 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. because it was thought that even their shadows (which become longer in this period due to the setting and the rising of the sun) could pollute the high caste people. For the same reason, Brahmin doctors in South India used to wrap their hands with a silken cloth before examining the pulse of their Sudra patients. On the same ground, Panan (basket-maker), Tiyan (toddy-drawer), Pulayan, Shanan and other lower castes in South India were not allowed to approach high castes within certain distances. They were to maintain a distance of thirty-six, seventy-two or ninety-six paces from these people, depending on their status. Caste mores have held these untouchable castes down in abysmal ignorance and degradation on the assumption that they suffer justly for their vicious deeds in previous lives. However, many of the prohibitions imposed on the out castes have now been relaxed. But, though legally these restrictions have been removed, and socially also pollution is no longer treated very seriously by the majority of the high caste Hindus, yet we continue to find the practising of some restrictions in ritual situations, though no longer enforced in ordinary day-to-day secular life.

Features (of Caste) as a Unit

(*a*) Ascribed Status

The membership of an individual in a caste is determined by his birth. Since each caste has its own rank in relation to other castes, the high or low status of an individual depends upon the ritual status of the caste in which he is born. In fact, every aspect of the life of an orthodox Hindu hinges on his birth. His domestic ceremonies and customs, temple worship, circle of fniends and occupation, all depend upon the level of the caste into which he is born.

(*b*) Endogamy

The members of a caste have to marry in their own caste and sub-caste. Endogamy has, thus, been permanently enforced within caste groups.

(*c*) Fixed Occupation

Each caste has a fixed hereditary occupation. There is an old saying, once a Brahmin, always a Brahmin and once a Chamar, always a Chamar. Since certain occupations are considered unclean, persons following them become untouchable and anyone adopting them, unless in company with his caste, must necessarily be outcasted to preserve the whole caste from pollution. But this also does not mean that all Brahmins have always to remain engaged in priestly occupation, or all Rajputs are always to take to protective function by joining the

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military, etc. Under certain circumstances, some members in a caste were permitted to change their occupations. Similarly, different sub-castes of the same caste are found engaged in different occupations. For example, four sub-castes of a Khatik caste (a caste of butchers) in Uttar Pradesh are engaged in different occupations of butchery (*bekanwala*), masonry (*rajgar*), rope-making (*sombatta*) and selling of fruits (*mewa farosh*). Similarly, Teli caste in Bengal has two divisions—Till and Teli—the former engaged in pressing oil and the latter in selling oil since the pressing of oil-seeds is stigmatized as a degrading occupation because it destroys life by crushing the seeds. Tilis are treated as untouchable but not the Telis. Telis will outcaste a member who should venture to press it. The change of occupation did not necessarily involve the change of caste unless it involved the change of status. According to Blunt (1911 : 13), when such a change of status occurs, it will take one of the three forms : (i) segregation into a new caste, or (ii) affiliation of the new group to another already existing caste, or (iii) the creation of a new endogamous sub-caste within the original caste.

Though generally the occupational restrictions imposed by caste have a religious motive but sometimes they may have a purely economic purpose also. For example, O'Malley (*Indian Caste Customs*, 1932 : 134-135) refers to Sonars (goldsmiths) of one district in Madhya Pradesh who have a feast at which the caste men take oath that they will not reveal the amount of alloy decided to be mixed with gold by the Sonars on pain of being outcasted.

After the industrialization of the country, particularly after the two World Wars, a significant change has come to be observed in this characteristic of the traditional occupation of caste. Restriction on change of occupation has been weakened and occupational mobility has become feasible.

(*d*) Caste Councils

Each caste has a council of its own, known as caste panchayat. This panchayat exercised tremendous power over its members till recently. Today, though some caste panchayats are found to have branches all over India because of the development of the postal system and rapid communications of various kinds but till few decades back, these panchayats acted only for a limited area, an area small enough for the members of the council to assemble and for members of the caste within the area to have some knowledge of each other as a general rule. Local conditions, such as ease of communication, etc., determine the area within which the caste council functions. Thus, since the ideal of a council for the whole caste or even a sub-caste is impossible to attain, the members of a caste or a sub-caste usually form a nearly related group called *biradri* (association of kinsmen) which constitutes an exogamous unit within the endogamous sub-caste or caste. This group acts for the caste or the sub-caste as a whole in enforcing sanctions on the members within their sphere of action. Some of the offences dealt with by these panchayats till recently were : eating and drinking with other castes and sub-castes with whom such intercourse was forbidden, keeping as con-cubine a woman of other caste, adultery with a married woman, refusal to fulfil a promise of marriage, non-payment of debt, petty assaults, breaches of customs, and so on. The mode of punishment usually adopted was outcasting, fine, feast to caste men, corporal punishment, etc. (Ghurye, 1961 : 4). All the members of the caste were obliged to accept the verdict of their panchayat. Even in the British period, these panchayats were so powerful that they could re-try cases which were once decided by the civil and the criminal courts. In a way, thus, a caste panchayat was a semi-sovereign body.

The officials of the panchayat who perform executive and judicial functions may either be nominated or elected or may be hereditary some may be elected while others may be hereditary. Blunt (1911 : 104), Sleeman O'Malley (1932 : 52), and Hutton (1961 : 100) point out that lower the caste in the social scale, stronger its combination and the more efficient its organization. The procedure observed for trial is extremely simple, informal and untrammelled by the law of evidence.

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Referring to the authority enjoyed by these caste councils, Kapadia (*Sociological Bulletin*, September, 1962 : 74) has referred to certain examples pertaining to three periods-1962, 1912 and 1861. Pointing to the period 1861, he gives two examples of a civil judge of Maharashtra who had married a widow, and the couple was so much humiliated by their caste council that they had to commit suicide; another of a person who was ex-communicated by his caste council for going to London and was readmitted on paying a fine of Rs.1,500. Referring to a period fifty years later, that is, in 1912, Kapadia refers to one Raman Bhai who was ex-communicated from his caste for taking food with low caste people; and one Jaisukhlal Mehta who too was ex-communicated for marrying his widowed sister. Referring to the year 1962, Kapadia maintains that when caste council is legally deprived of its authority to enforce its traditional norms upon its members by ex-communication, it continues to regulate the conduct and minds of its members. In 1993, in villages the caste councils may hold some power but in the urban areas, they are no longer powerful.

6.3 Caste System as a System of Stratification

Societies are divided into hierarchical groups in a way that though various groups are considered inequal in relation to each other but within one group, members are viewed as equals. Two main criteria of social stratification are caste and class, but some other recognised units of stratification are age, gender and race/ethnicity too. Social stratification is different from social differentiation. The term 'differentiation' has broader application as it makes individuals and groups separate and distinct from each other for purposes of comparison. For example, within class strata, income, occupation, and education provide basis for differentiation and comparison. Stratification occurs where differences are ranked hierarchically.

Caste as a Unit and a System

In India, both caste and class are used as basis of hierarchical ranking and exist side by side. However, caste, which is rooted in religious belief, is considered a more important basis of social stratification for social, economic, and religious purposes. 'Caste' is a hereditary social group which does not permit social mobility to its members. It involves ranking according to birth which affects one's occupation, marriage, and social relationships.

Caste is used both as a unit and as a system. As a unit, caste is defined as 'a closed-rank status group', i.e., a group in which the status of members, their occupations, the field of mate-selection, and interaction with others is fixed. As a system, it refers to collectivity of restrictions, namely, restrictions on change of membership, occupation, marriage, and commensal and social relations. In this context, there is a presupposition that no caste can exist in isolation and that each caste is closely involved with other castes in the network of economic, political, and ritual relationships. The 'closed-rank group' feature of caste also explains its structure.

Caste : Structural and Cultural Concepts

Caste is looked upon as a structural as well as a cultural phenomenon. As a structural phenomenon, it refers to interrelated statuses, patterned interaction among castes on the basis of different restrictions, and a stable set of social relations. As a cultural phenomenon, it is viewed as 'a set of values, beliefs and practices'. Most scholars have viewed caste as a solidarity and not as a set of values and attitudes. The structure of the caste system is such that it has an organised pattern of interrelated rights and obligations of members of each caste and individual castes as groups, in terms of statuses, roles and social norms.

In structural terms, Bougle (1958:9) has explained castes as "hereditarily specialised and hierarchically arranged groups", while as a system, he has referred to its three characteristics : hierarchy, hereditary specialisation, and repulsion. Explaining the last characteristic, he claims

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that different castes *repel* rather than *attract* each other. Repulsion is manifested in endogamy, commensal restriction, and social contact. This interpretation is, however, not true. We do not and cannot find repulsion among castes because they need each other. Gough (cf. Leach, 1960 : 11) views castes as "ranked birth-status groups which are usually endogamous and tend to be associated with an occupation". Senart (1930) has described caste as "a closed corporation, rigorously hereditary, bound with others (castes) by common occupation, and equipped with a council that rules its members by the sanction of certain penalties". In this definition, the words 'closed corporation' have been questioned. Besides, all castes do not have councils. Bailey and Srinivas have viewed castes as structures and have avoided the definition of caste. Dutt (1931 : 3-4), describing caste system has referred to restrictions on marriage, eating and drinking, occupation, change in hereditary membership, and the hierarchical gradation of castes. Morris (1950 : 284) also believes that a short definition of caste is not satisfactory; so it is more illuminating to talk in terms of the characteristics of caste. He describes caste system as "characterised by hereditary membership and endogamy and prescribing specific norms which regulate social interaction". Ghurye (1957 : 2-19) too has given similar features of the caste system. Besides, referring to hereditary membership, caste councils, hierarchy and endogamy as important features of the caste system, he also refers to the restrictions on feeding and social inter-course, lack of unrestricted choice of occupation, and civil and religious disabilities. D'Souza (1969 : 72) has referred to the definition of caste system as "the integration of the interacting and heterogeneous but internally homogeneous hereditary groups into a structure of status hierarchy". This concept not only describes the caste system as a superior or subordinate relationship among hereditary groups in a society, but also explains the conditions under which such a relationship takes place.

Singh (1974 : 319) holds that structurally, the caste system simultaneously manifests two tendencies : one, segmental and other, organic. As a segmental reality, each caste or a sub-caste tends to articulate mutual repulsion, social distance and social inequality, but as an organic system, the caste segments are mutually interlinked by a principle of reciprocity through the *jajmani* system. Bailey (1960) has referred to caste stratification as a 'closed organic stratification' in contradistinction with the class principle which is based on 'segmentary stratification'. In the former, the social segments (castes or sub-castes) interact through cooperation and in the latter through competition.

Caste : Three Perspectives of the Study

The caste system in India has been studied with three perspectives : indological, socio-anthropological and sociological. The indologists have viewed caste from the scriptural point of view, social anthropologists from the cultural point of view, and sociologists from the social stratification point of view.

The *indological perspective* takes its cue from the scriptures about the origin, purpose and future of the caste system. Those who have used this perspective maintain that *varnas* have originated from Brahma's body and castes or *jatis* are fissioned units within the *varna* system, developed as the result of hypergamy and hypogamy practices. Though the customs and the rituals, etc., to be followed by different castes are prescribed in the *Smrits* written in about 200-100 B.C. but the regional, linguistic, ethnic, and sectarian variations have gradually come to affect the ordering of *jati* relationships. The object of the origin of castes, according to the indologists, was the division of labour. Gradually, castes became more and more rigid and membership and occupation became hereditary. The rigidity in the caste system is the result of the beliefs in *karma* (deeds) and *dharma* (duties and obligations) which means that the motive force for the caste dogmas was religious. The indologists further maintain that since castes are divine, they will continue to exist in future (Verma, 1972 : 159).

The *cultural perspective* of the social anthropologists (Hutton, Risley, Kroeber) ramifies itself in three directions : structural, institutional and relational. The structural view focuses its attention on the origin of the caste system, its development, and the processes of change in the structure.

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The institutional approach (John Rex) views caste system not only as a unique phenomenon found in India but also in ancient Egypt, medieval Europe and present southern United States, etc. The relational approach finds caste situations in army, business, factory management, politics, and so forth. Caste system in these organisations is weak if mobility is normal and strong if it is barred.

The *sociological perspective* views caste system as a phenomenon of social inequality. Society has certain structural aspects which distribute members in different social positions.

The reference to three different perspectives does not mean that sociologists do not take interest in the origin and development of the caste system like indologists and social anthropologists or that the social anthropologists do not accept caste system as resultant of social stratification as the sociologists do.

Self-Assessment

Choose the correct options

1. The Brahmanas was written in about
   (*a*) 700 B.C. (*b*) 800 B.C. (*c*) 900 B.C. (*d*) None of these
2. The Smritis was written in about
   (*a*) 200—100 B.C. (*b*) 300—200 B.C. (*c*) 250—150 B.C. (*d*) None of these
3. Untouchables have been known as scheduled castes since
   (*a*) 1913 (*b*) 1930 (*c*) 1921 (*d*) 1935
4. The Rigveda was written in about
   (*a*) 4000 B.C. (*b*) 4500 B.C. (*c*) 3500 B.C. (*d*) None of these
5. Each caste has a council of its own, known as
   (*a*) District (*b*) Tahsil (*c*) Caste panchayat (*d*) None of these

6.4 Summary

- The word *caste* derives from the Portuguese *casta*, meaning breed, race, or kind. Among the Indian terms that are sometimes translated as caste are *varna, jati, at, biradri*, and *samaj*. All of these terms refer to ranked groups of various sizes and breadth. *Varna*, or colour, actually refers to large divisions that include various castes; the other terms include castes and subdivisions of castes sometimes called subcastes. Many castes are traditionally associated with an occupation, such as high-ranking Brahmans; middle-ranking farmer and artisan groups, such as potters, barbers, and carpenters; and veiy low-ranking "Untouchable" leatherworkers, butchers, launderers, and latrine cleaners.
- In rare cases, a person is excommunicated from the caste for gross infractions of caste rules. An example of such an infraction might be marrying or openly cohabiting with a mate of a caste lower than one's own; such behaviour would usually result in the higher-caste person dropping to the status of the lower-caste person.
- Caste is a developed form of *varna* which had started as a class in early India and gradually came to have religious sanctions. It is the accepted religious principles supporting the caste system that distinguish it from the stratification system in America and many other countries based on ascriptive status, endogamy and low-prestige status (for example, of Negroes).
- Caste and varna are two separate concepts. It was Senart who for the first time brought to the attention of the world the fact that a caste and a varna are not identical. The peculiarity of the Hindu theory of social organization is its reference to Varnashram organization. Though the *varna* organization and the *ashram* organization are two separate organizations, yet they go together as they refer to the problems of nurture and nature of man. *Ashram* organization refers to the conduct of an individual in the world (nurture) in different stages of his life and

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varna organization refers to the work that an individual would undertake in the society according to his nature.

- There was nothing like higher or lower *varna* in the Vedic period. The division of society into four *varnas* (or four orders or classes) was based on the division of labour. Brahmins acted as priests, Kshatriyas as rulers and fighters, Vaishyas as traders, and Sudras as a servile class. Each varna worshipped different deities and followed different rituals. This difference was because each group had to achieve different object according to its occupational role. Brahmins wanted maximum holy lustre for which they worshipped *agni* (fire) and recited Gayatri *mantras*; Kshatriyas wanted physical strength (*viryam*) for which they worshipped Indra and recited Trishtubh *mantras*; and Vaishyas wanted cattle-wealth (*pasavah*) for which they worshipped Visvedevas and recited Jagati *mantras*.
- *Varna* means 'colour', and it was in this sense that the word seems to have been employed in contrasting the Arya and the Dasa, referring to their fair and dark colours respectively. The colour-connotation of the word was so strong that later on when the classes came to be regularly described as *varnas*, four different colours were assigned to the four classes, by which their members were supposed to be distinguished. The colour associated with the Brahmin is white, with Kshatriya red, with Vaishya yellow, and with Sudra black.
- "The difference in religious practices and techniques reflects the separate existence and history of these entities than serves as cause for their separation from the larger units."
- Krickpatrick (1912) has explained that sub-castes, which are the fissioned groups of castes, were earlier formed as the result of migration and political and social factors but today they are the results of attempts by the well-to-do elements in a despised caste to cut adrift from their humbler caste brethern and raise themselves in the social scale by finding a new name and a dubious origin, and associating themselves with some higher caste.
- According to Mayer (1960 : 8) : "At the level of the regional study, a sub-caste may be the unit of inter-caste as well as intra-caste relations, though within the village, inter-caste relations can be seen in terms of castes rather than sub-castes."
- Max Weber (1960 : 31) also holds : "Today one caste frequently contains several hundred sub-castes. In such cases, these sub-castes may be related to one another exactly or almost exactly as are different castes. If this is the case, sub-castes in reality are castes; the caste name common to all of them has merely historical significance".
- This means that because we find admixture of Hindu religious elements and values in tribal religion and tribal values in Hindu religion, religion as a single criterion cannot be used to distinguish between a tribe and a caste. Ghurye, Naik and Bailey have also rejected this criterion.
- The tribals live in geographically isolated regions like hills and mountains, but Hindus live in plain regions. Due to lesser contacts with the civilized neighbours, tribals are more uncivilized than the Hindus. It may be true by and large that tribals live in hills away from the lines of communication but we have examples which show that many caste Hindus also live in isolated regions and many tribals live in plains. This means that in addition to a purely geographical isolation, we demand other criteria also to distinguish a tribe from a caste.
- Economic backwardness too is not a correct criterion for distinction between a tribe and a caste. To maintain that tribals are backward and primitive but caste Hindus are not is not a correct statement. It is true that many tribes even today are economically backward; they have low income, use primitive methods in cultivation and in some cases still use barter system in exchange, but there are many tribes (for example, Meena) which are economically advanced. At the same time, there are many castes which are as much economically backward as many tribes.

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- Caste and class are both status groups. A status group is a collection of individuals who share a distinctive style of life and a certain consciousness of kind. However, castes are perceived as hereditary groups with a fixed ritual status while classes are defined in terms of the relations of production. The members of a class have a similar socio-economic status in relation to other classes in the society, while the members of a caste have eluner a high or a low ritual status in relation to other castes.
  - In the caste system, there is co-operation and economic inter-dependence but in the class system, there is no economic dependence. Instead, there is competition in the class system. In this context, Leach (*Ibid* : 9-10) has said that caste system is an organic system, with each particular caste filling a distinctive functional role. It is a system of labour division from which the element of competition among members has been largely excluded.
  - In the caste system, status of a caste is determined not by the economic and the political privileges but by the ritualistic legitimation of authority, that is, in the caste-based system, ritual norms encompass the norms of power and wealth (Dumont).
- No two castes have an equal status. One caste has either a low or a high status in relation to other castes. It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the exact or even the approximate place of each caste in the hierarchical system. Two methods have mainly been used in assessing the hierarchy : observational method and opinion-assessing method. In the former, either the attributional method or the interactional method has been used for ranking the castes. The attributional method determines the rank of a caste by its behaviour, for example, its customs, practice of degrading occupation, vegetarianism, habits of liquor-drinking, etc. , the interactional method evaluates ranks of two given castes in relationship to each other by observing the commensal interaction and marital relations, etc. between the two castes.
- In the 'opinion-assessing' method, the ranks of various castes in the collective caste hierarchy are assessed on the basis of the opinions of various respondents from different castes. The advantage in the 'opinion-assessing' method over the 'observational' method is that in the former, it is possible to regard hierarchy and interaction as two variables and study their relationship.
- Restrictions on social interaction have been imposed because of the belief that pollution can be carried by mere bodily contact. It is because of such beliefs that the low caste people engaged in inferior occupations are avoided by the upper caste people. Likewise, the *chamars, dhobis*, doms and hundreds of beef-eating low castes, commonly known as untouchables, are shunned by the high caste Hindus. There are also specific rules for greeting and interacting with members of high or intermediate castes, for sharing common cot (*charpoi*) with others, and for day-to-day as well as ritual interaction.
- Castes engaged in defiling or menial or polluting occupations are treated as untouchables. They are called outcastes, depressed classes or scheduled castes. These castes are believed to have descended from the races originally inhabiting India before the invasion of the Aryans. Later they accepted servitude on the lowest fringes of Hindu society. They mostly live outside the village and eke out their existence by labour like scavenging, shoe-making, tanning, etc. They are not permitted to draw water from wells used by the uppercaste people. They are even debarred from the use of public roads, schools, temples, cremation grounds, hotels and tea-shops. They sacrifice animals to appease the dreaded demons that dominate their lives. Their presence and their touch is thought to contaminate others.
- The membership of an individual in a caste is determined by his birth. Since each caste has its own rank in relation to other castes, the high or low status of an individual depends upon the ritual status of the caste in which he is born. In fact, every aspect of the life of an orthodox Hindu hinges on his birth. His domestic ceremonies and customs, temple worship, circle of fniends and occupation, all depend upon the level of the caste into which he is born.

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- The members of a caste have to marry in their own caste and sub-caste. Endogamy has, thus, been permanently enforced within caste groups.
- Each caste has a council of its own, known as caste panchayat. This panchayat exercised tremendous power over its members till recently. Today, though some caste panchayats are found to have branches all over India because of the development of the postal system and rapid communications of various kinds but till few decades back, these panchayats acted only for a limited area, an area small enough for the members of the council to assemble and for members of the caste within the area to have some knowledge of each other as a general rule. Local conditions, such as ease of communication, etc., determine the area within which the caste council functions.
- The officials of the panchayat who perform executive and judicial functions may either be nominated or elected or may be hereditary some may be elected while others may be hereditary. Blunt (1911 : 104), Sleeman O'Malley (1932 : 52), and Hutton (1961 : 100) point out that lower the caste in the social scale, stronger its combination and the more efficient its organization. The procedure observed for trial is extremely simple, informal and untrammelled by the law of evidence.
- In India, both caste and class are used as basis of hierarchical ranking and exist side by side. However, caste, which is rooted in religious belief, is considered a more important basis of social stratification for social, economic, and religious purposes. 'Caste' is a hereditary social group which does not permit social mobility to its members. It involves ranking according to birth which affects one's occupation, marriage, and social relationships.
- Caste is used both as a unit and as a system. As a unit, caste is defined as 'a closed-rank status group', i.e., a group in which the status of members, their occupations, the field of mate-selection, and interaction with others is fixed. As a system, it refers to collectivity of restrictions, namely, restrictions on change of membership, occupation, marriage, and commensal and social relations. In this context, there is a presupposition that no caste can exist in isolation and that each caste is closely involved with other castes in the network of economic, political, and ritual relationships.
- The structure of the caste system is such that it has an organised pattern of interrelated rights and obligations of members of each caste and individual castes as groups, in terms of statuses, roles and social norms.
- D'Souza (1969 : 72) has referred to the definition of caste system as "the integration of the interacting and heterogeneous but internally homogeneous hereditary groups into a structure of status hierarchy". This concept not only describes the caste system as a superior or subordinate relationship among hereditary groups in a society, but also explains the conditions under which such a relationship takes place.
- As a segmental reality, each caste or a sub-caste tends to articulate mutual repulsion, social distance and social inequality, but as an organic system, the caste segments are mutually interlinked by a principle of reciprocity through the *jajmani* system. Bailey (1960) has referred to caste stratification as a 'closed organic stratification' in contradistinction with the class principle which is based on 'segmentary stratification'. In the former, the social segments (castes or sub-castes) interact through cooperation and in the latter through competition.
- The *indological perspective* takes its cue from the scriptures about the origin, purpose and future of the caste system. Those who have used this perspective maintain that *varnas* have originated from Brahma's body and castes or *jatis* are fissioned units within the *varna* system, developed as the result of hypergamy and hypogamy practices. Though the customs and the rituals, etc., to be followed by different castes are prescribed in the *Smrits* written in about 200-100 B.C. but the regional, linguistic, ethnic, and sectarian variations have gradually

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come to affect the ordering of *jati* relationships. The object of the origin of castes, according to the indologists, was the division of labour. Gradually, castes became more and more rigid and membership and occupation became hereditary. The rigidity in the caste system is the result of the beliefs in *karma* (deeds) and *dharma* (duties and obligations) which means that the motive force for the caste dogmas was religious.

6.5 Key–Words

1. Pasavah : Cattle wealth
2. Charpai : Cot
3. Mewa farosh : Fruits
4. Bekanwala : Butchery

6.6 Review Questions

1. What is the concept of caste? Discuss.
2. Explain the features of caste system.
3. Briefly describe caste systems as a system of stratification.
4. Write a short note on the following:
   (*a*) Caste and Class
   (*b*) Caste and Tribe
   (*c*) Caste and sub-caste
   (*d*) Caste and Varna

Answers: Self–Assessment

1. (*b*) 2. (*a*) 3. (*d*) 4. (*a*) 5. (*c*)

6.7 Further Readings



1. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Perspectives on Social Stratification, Rawat Publication.
2. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Social Stratification & Mobility, Rawat Publication.
3. Hasnain, Nadeem, 2011 : Indian Society and Culture Continuity and Change, Jawahar Publishers and Distributors.

Unit 7: Class

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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Understand the concept of Class.
- Explain the Class as a System of Stratification.
- Discuss the Class and Mobility : Occupation and Mobility.

Introduction

Class in India is generally seen as a consequence of change in the caste system and not as a concomitant and co-existent system inseparable from caste. Several questions can be raised about the studies of caste hierarchy and social mobility. For example, why did Srinivas and his associates often study caste structure, positional changes, village community, and family life and kinship; and why did they leave out the studies of class relations, vertical mobility, urban community, industry and formal organizations from their sociological purview ? Culturology is given primacy over the structural perspective in the understanding of the caste system in most studies carried out by Srinivas and his followers.The concepts of dominant caste and sanskritization remain central to this view. Corporate mobility and the study of the social and cultural aspects receive greater attention instead of mobility at the level of family and individual and economic and political aspects. Resentment, opposition and conflict in the study of intergroup relations remain inactive notions.

European sociology has generally used class models as a means of exploring the social structure. These models divide the economic sphere according to a 'class schema' in order to study the distribution of wealth and power, the extent of mobility between classes, and the degree of openness of the class structure. In general, such schemes have been defined in terms of a classification of occupations and employment statuses, and the analyses generally assume that class membership is long enduring and stable (so that, for instance, a specific individual can usefully be characterized as 'working class' because he or she has held a working-class occupation for a significant length of (time). However, a number of recent studies have noted that there is, in fact, a considerable amount of occupational changing, some resulting in a change of class, although little attention has been drawn to the significance of this for class theory. For instance, Goldthorpe (1980) noted a great deal of short-range, short-term mobility in the data collected in the Oxford Mobility Survey.

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The work-history material collected by Cousins, Curran and Brown (1983) also shows that, over a 10 year period, around 40 per cent of the men and women in their sample had held jobs located in more than one Registrar General's class. Other work-history material has also highlighted considerable class mobility among women. These studies suggest a need for a more systematic examination of short-term class mobility and its consequences.

In this unit, a model of the class structure which distinguishes classes according to market-related criteria will be used to record the extent and nature of short-term interclass mobility, drawing on a nationally representative sample of over 90,000 employed adults. The results will be compared for men working full-time, women working full-time and women working part-time. The patterns of interclass mobility will be shown to differ systematically for men and women, the occupational system being considerably less structured for women. Particular occupations are observed to facilitate mobility between classes. Overall, the pattern of mobility provides a view of the extent to which occupational classes can be distinguished empirically as relatively stable collectivities.

The observed rate of class mobility depends upon a number of factors. First, it varies whit the overall recorded rate of job changing, which, in turn, varies with the time span between observations and with the economic climate at the time of measurement. For example, data for recent years are likely to show the effect of the current economic decline and restructuring. If a new job can be found when firms go out of business and workers are made redundant it often means working in a different occupation and acquiring new skill. Second, the rate of observed class mobility will depend upon the extent of occupational mobility. This may result from employees, 'normal progression' through promotion chains into managerial and supervisory positions. It may also reflect occupational change occurring in a less coherent way in order to obtain better pay or working conditions or for a wide variety of other reasons, such as a more convenient place of work.


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Structural changes are visualized only latently and that too due to sanskritization and westernization. Emphasis on the study of social mobility in terms of upward movement in the caste hierarchy further legitimizes the culturological approach to the study of society and culture in India.

Although these types of job changing are necessary before a class change can occur, they do not in themselves define a change of class; this occurs only when a job change coincides with a division between the classes in whichever schema is used. Thus the class categorization will play a major part in determining the nature and amount of class changing recorded. A class model which makes a simple division between manual and non-manual work would be likely to record fewer class changers than a model involving a greater number of classes.

If the boundaries between classes are established only in terms of the characteristics of the occupational structure of male employment, which has often been the case in previous studies, the mobility rates observed for women may be mainly an artefact of using that particular class schema. Moreover, occupational segregation, which tends to cluster most women into a few occupations, means that their mobility is to a large degree constrained to a small set of 'female' occupations; for women, there are also likely to be fewer chances of promotion into supervisory and managerial positions and thereby into a different class. These and other differences in the relationship of men and women to the occupational structure have been used as the basis of arguments that married women should be excluded from studies of either occupational mobility or the entire class system We and others have attempted to counter this position elsewhere.

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In the remainder of the paper, the class mobility recorded between 1980 and 1981 by respondents to the Labour Force Survey (OPCS 1983) will be examined for men and women separately. Because previous work (Dale, Gilbert and Arber 1983) has shown that the labour market for women working part-time differs greatly from that for full-time workers, separate analyses have also been carried out for women working full-time and part-time. The flows *between* the full-time and part-time labour markets for women are not considered here.

7.1 Concept of Class

Dube (1976) and Singh (1979) both realize that the concepts of caste and class have been basically 'western', and therefore, ignore the historicity of Indian society in their formulations. Indigenization of social science paradigms would ensure a proper input of historical substance in the concepts and theories related to Indian society. Both Marxist and non-Marxist scholars (Thorner, 1974; Saran, 1962) have pleaded for the use of native concepts and categories, respectively. D.P. Mukerji (1958) has argued vehemently for making the Indian tradition as the sole basis of analyzing social change. Desai (1948) has strongly opposed to the application of the non-Marxist approaches. Srinivas has been blamed for an inappropriate application of British structural-functionalism by Mencher (1974) and Saberwal (1979).

Caste has been taken as synonym with the social formation of Indian society and therefore class is treated as an alternate system to caste. However, the fact is that neither does caste refer to the totality of social formations nor is class the polar opposite of caste. Studies such as caste and class (D'Souza, 1967); caste, class and power (Beteille, 1965); caste, religion and power (Aggrawal, 1971); and caste, class and politics (Bhatt, 1975) do not provide a corrective to the 'caste alone' approach. These studies are rooted in the falsity of the western dichotomy of tradition and modernity and the trio of 'class, status and party' (Weber, 1947). They do not in-corporate the experience of Indian society into the concepts of caste, class and power, hence inadequate in rescuing us from these alien concepts and theories.

It has been noted that there was never a perfect congruence between caste, class and power. Mobility and migration were quite normal activities in ancient and medieval India. However, Bailey, Beteille and Bhatt give the impression that a congruence prevailed between caste, class and power in the pre-independent India, and land reforms and politicization have brought about incongruities and caste-free areas.



Did u know? Class in India has existed along with caste and power. Caste incorporates class and class incorporates caste in the Indian context. Neither the 'caste alone' view nor the 'class alone' perspective can help in a proper and fuller understanding of Indian society.

Historians of the Marxist disposition have realized that there is an intertwining of caste and class in India, but they prefer to look at caste from a class point of view. Kosambi (1956) makes a class analysis of the Aryans after the Rig Veda. Thapar (1974), Habib (1974:), and Desai (1948) have also done a class analysis of Indian society. According to Desai, caste inheres in an underdeveloped but potentially explosive class character. In another study, Desai (1975) has analyzed the Indian State from a class (Marxist) point of view. But class does not necessarily mean openness, mobility and a combination of certain attributes as generally perceived by western social scientists and their followers in India. Castes have been functioning as classes for all practical considerations. Class relations are as old as caste relations or even older than caste relations. Lamb (1975) reports the prevalence of class relations as early as 600 B.C. in India. Material and cultural traditions

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existed with a sort of congruity, and class transformation had been a vital fact in the form of new kingdoms, settled agriculture, trade, cities and banking and guild organizations.

The non-Marxist scholars in general have relied on analytical abstractions in the form of statistical-mathematical indicators or analytical topologies D'Souza (1975) treats class as a conceptually abstracted category. Class does not exist as a community like caste. Class is defined operationally in terms of certain indices. D'Souza applies the attributional approach to class purely in terms of constructing an 'order' comprising upper, middle and lower class categories. The following points have been made about classes in India :

(1) Classes are not found as a system of stratification in the same way as castes are rooted in the Indian society.

(2) Class is not a universalistic phenomenon of social stratification.

(3) There are no objective criteria of class identification.

(4) It is not clear whether class is a category or a concrete unit of interaction with other units.

One could affirm that these points have been put forth in order to prevent a class analysis of Indian society. Caste has created numerous problems of a class nature related to economic domination and subjugation, privileges and deprivations, 'conspicuous waste' and bare survival. However, these problems have not been taken up as central concerns of social research. Pollution-purity and the encompassing power of caste have been taken up as a positive dimension of the caste system. The usual pretension is that class antagonism, class consciousness and class unity are not found as Karl Marx had seen, hence no class analysis. However, this is not true. Caste is a system of harmonic relations from a particular perspective only, it is also a system of opposition and antagonism from another perspective, and the latter has not been taken up seriously.

The mode of production and class contradictions are essential features of the Marxian approach to social stratification. Gough (1980) considers the mode of production as a social formation in which she finds interconnections of caste, kinship, family, marriage and even rituals with the forces of production and production relations. Gough's study of Thanjavur explains the emergence of a new bourgeoisie, the polarization of the peasantry, and the pauperization of the working class due to historical transformations in the mode of production. The totality of contradictions in social stratification can be seen through the contradictions in the mode of production. Marxist ideologists like Namboodiripad (1979) and Ranadive (1979) consider class relationships as a domain assumption in the treatment of caste and kinship in India. Even *varna* and the *jajmani* system can be explained in terms of class relations as they are embedded in the mode of production (Meillassoux, 1973). Others who have used the mode of production as the framework for analysis of class relations in village India are : Djurfeldt and Lind-berg (1975), Heera Singh (1979), Thorner (1969), Saith and Tanakha (1972), and Bhardwaj and Das (1975).

Contradictions can be found between various classes in terms of continuance of the old classes and the emergence of new ones at the same time. Industrial, business and professional classes characterize urban India, and landowners, tenants, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers are found in the countryside. These classifications have ideological overtones. The classification comprising landowners, moneylenders and labourers does not refer necessarily to class antagonism. But the other classification comprising the bourgeoisie, capitalist-type landowners, rich peasants, landless peasantry and agricultural labourers necessarily refers to class interaction, dependence-independence and conflict as the basic elements of class structure.

Approaches to the concepts of caste and class bear ideological contents. The methodology and data used in the studies of caste and class provided legitimacy to these approaches. Caste was treated not as a 'social formation', but as an encompassing institution which encompassed all other aspects of Hindu society. However, caste, in fact, was more than a 'ritualistic' mechanism, and it could face a variety of forces and constraints due to its all-inclusive character. If it were

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simply a ritualistic arrangement, it would have crumbled down long ago due to its very cumbersome nature. The social formation of Indian society comprises class, ethnicity, power, religion and economy along with caste. All these aspects of the social formation are incorporated into each other. They provide an understanding of the historicity of Indian society including that of caste and class. Indigenization of the concepts of caste and class must come from the realization of such a formation and the totality of its historicity.



Did u know? The main classes today in India are : (*i*) agrarian, (*ii*) industrial, (*iii*) business and mercantile, and (*iv*) professional.

The approaches such as the functional, dialectical, psychological and structuralist are inadequate for explaining the historicity of the Indian situation as they are rooted in the experience of the situations that are unfamiliar with India's historicity. Issues relating to caste and class were raised and debated elsewhere and subsequently passed on to Indian scholars through the mechanism of the academic hegemony of western scholars. Whether caste is a cultural phenomenon or a structural aspect, whether it should be studied by participant observation or by using survey method, whether it should be treated as the sole representative institution or class, power and religion should also be studied, whether 'caste alone' should be studied—have been raised by western scholars and later on taken up by their Indian counterparts with the tacit understanding of promoting certain ideas upheld by them. We must examine carefully why structural-functionalism has become so popular, why participant observation is regarded as a sacrosanct technique of research, why Redfield' notions of 'little community' and 'peasant society' or Marriott's notions of Little and Great Traditions and parochialization and Universalization have gained currency. One view is that the Brahminocentric sociology produced by Srinivas is due to such indoctrination by these academic forces.

In an earlier study, Singh (1974) provides a paradigm of social stratification in the light of cultural versus structural and particular versus universal characteristics. The types that emerge from these criteria are : (i) cultural-universalistic; (ii) cultural-particularistic; (iii) structural-universalistic; and (iv) structural-particularistic. This paradigm is based on Parson's analysis of social structure. Singh's analysis shows relevance of the structural-particularistic type for analyzing social stratification in India. However, Singh does not provide reasons for the suitability of such a classification. Nomology is the obvious reason for Singh's scientism. However, in a recent study, Singh (1981) provides another classification of the studies on social stratification carried out in the 1970s. The main theoretic concerns are : (i) structural-functional; (ii) structuralist; (iii) structural-historical; and (iv) historical-materialist or Marxist. I have already referred to some of the studies which have been analyzed under the rubric of these approaches. Caste is the central concern of all the researchers including the Marxists.

Caste is an all-inclusive institution and it subsumes class relations. Any departure from caste is treated as incongruence between caste, status, wealth and power, hence the emergence of class relations. Such a view is known as the structural-functional. Change within the caste (sanskritization), resilience and consensus are the hallmarks of structural-functionalism. Dumont is the most well known proponent of structuralism. The pivotal notions of this approach are reflected in Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus* (1970). Singh (1981) points out ideology, dialectics, transformational relationship and comparison as the salient features of Dumont's study of caste. For Dumont, hierarchy is ideology, and hierarchy implies ranking based on the notion of purity-impurity. The opposition between pure and impure refers to binary tension or dialectics. Pure and impure imply exclusion as well as inclusion in regard to caste hierarchy. Hierarchy also refers to

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the relationship of the 'encompassing' and the 'encompassed'. The 'pure' encompasses the 'less pure' and so on. This applies to all the sections and aspects of society. Thus, change is in the society and not of the society.

Dumont's view falls short of all those points which have been indicated in regard to structural-functionalism. In addition to these points, Singh (1981) comments that Dumont's structuralism suffers both theoretically and substantively. Gould's notion of 'contra priest' (1967) also negates the dichotomy or binary opposition between the pure and impure. The lower caste men also function as priests, hence they become pure. But they remain impure being lower in the caste hierarchy. The implication of Dumont's treatment of caste is that caste and class are in binary opposition. Singh's (1981) comments on structuralism are as follows : "The structuralist's treatment of dialectics is dissociated from history. History, indeed, links essence to existence, form to content, super-structure to infrastructure and theory to practice. Devoid of such a sense of historical conjecture structuralism amounts to a set of conceptual schema, devoid of a basis in evolutionary changes in society. Its transformational relationships being a historical abound in tautologies."

In a study, Klass (1980) has raised the question of origin of caste. Klass projects a paradigm of the possible development of the caste system. The main idea is that clans exchange women, whereas the caste system exchanges goods without exchanging women. The explanation given by Klass is that India has developed ecosystems in which people have different modes of life, and the various human groups (corporate groups) would have a minimum of intercourse and not exchange women with outside groups. Thus, corporate groups form marriage circles. Klass relates caste with physical force and economic power. However, the corporateness of caste groups is equated with their egalitarian character, and this might be historically and substantively incorrect.

The understanding of caste and class demands an approach which has such as : (i) dialects, (ii) history, (iii) culture, and (iv) structure. Dialectics refers to the effective notions which bring about contradictions and highlight relations between unequal segments and men and women. Thus, it does not simply mean binary fission in the cognitive structure of Indian society as perceived by structuralists in terms of pure and impure. History provides a sub-stantial account of the conditions of human existence. It is not a conjectural construction based on mythology, scriptures and ideations. Culture defines the rules of the game, the nature of relations between the haves and the have-nots. Thus culture does not include only cultural practices, rituals, *rites de passage*, etc. Structure is a product of dialectical contradictions, historical forces, and a certain 'formation'. Once it has emerged, it becomes a sort of force in determining the course of history, the nature of contradictions and the evaluational standards. Thus, structure refers to relations between social segments at a point of time as a historical product and as an existent reality.

Dialectics, history, culture and structure refer to a combination of theory, structure and process about the social formation (both caste and class) of Indian society. Together they explain the historicity of Indian society from the point of its genesis. The debates to-day are: whether changes in caste and class are 'transformational' or they are 'replacements', whether caste is 'closed' and class is 'open'; whether caste is 'organic' and whether class is 'segmentary' ; and whether caste is replaced by class. These are questions which have come up quite often as the idea of 'social formation' has not gained currency in our understanding of caste and class. The obsession of considering caste and class as polar opposites has prevented us from thinking of caste and class as dimensions of the historicity of India's social formation.

Several scholars have denied the 'congruence' version about caste, class and power in the ancient India. They have conclusively established that social mobility existed in ancient and medieval India. The *jajmani* system was never completely 'organic' in practice. The idea of the contrapriest exposes the hollowness of the concepts of hierarchy and pollution-purity. In the place of sanskritization, westernization and dominant caste etc., it is necessary to study downward mobility and proletarianization, upward mobility and embourgeoisiement, urban incomes for the rural people and the migration of the rural rich to towns, and rural non-agricultural income and mobility etc.

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Caste has inhered in class and class has inhered in caste for centuries in the Indian context, and Indian society continues to have this inseparable mix even today. Role of caste and class in elections is an evidence of this mix. However, caste operates as a 'marriage circle' in a different way from the way it functions in other arenas. Hypergamy explains the role of status and wealth within caste. Class-like distinctions within caste and caste-like styles within a class are part of the people's life situations. 'Class' has been an in-built mechanism within caste, and therefore, caste cannot be seen simply as a 'ritualistic' system, and class cannot be seen as an open system as it has often been influenced by the institution of caste. In order to go deep into such a phenomenon the structural-historical perspective becomes inescapable.

7.2 Class as a System of Stratification

The usual and universalistic way of describing social structure has been through institutions based on birth such as family, kinship and caste. Another way of describing it is through class. Thus, the agrarian class structure may be used to understand the power structure and class stratification in Indian rural social structure. However, both caste and class are necessary to describe the agrarian social structure in India. It also explains the power structure in rural India. In this way when we talk of agrarian class stratification we get a better view of rural India which was, traditionally, viewed through caste stratification only. K.L. Sharma (1980) putting the whole issue in proper perspective makes the incisive comment by saying that caste incorporates the element of class and class has a cultural (caste) style, hence the two systems cannot be easily separated even analytically.

Broadly speaking, the modern agrarian class structure in India evolved during the British colonial rule. It was the outcome of the land revenue system evolved and enforced by the British rule. There were three classes :

(*i*) land owners

(*ii*) tenants

(*iii*) agricultural labourers

Daniel Thorner (1973) in his classical work describes these three classes as

(*i*) proprietors

(*ii*) working peasants

(*iii*) labourers

In vernacular language he uses the terms *maalik, kissan* and *mazdur* for these three classes respectively. The landowners or proprietors traditionally belonged to the upper caste groups. They were tax gatherers and non-cultivating owners of land. Thorner (ibid) understands that the category of proprietors or *maalik* refers to families whose agricultural income is derived primarily (although not necessarily solely) from property rights in the soil. That is to say that whatever other sources of family income may exist, such as from a profession or business, the main agricultural income is derived from a share of the produce of lands belonging to the family.

Typically, this share will be realized in the form of rent. Usually, the rent will be taken in money, but it may be in kind also on crop sharing basis. Instead of renting out his lands, however, a proprietor may hire labourers to cultivate them for him. He may manage these hired labourers himself or he may hire some one else as manager. He may actually go into the fields and perform some of the work along side of his hired labourers. The main determinant should be his mode of income—if his agricultural income from that part of his holdings which he cultivates with his own hands is less than the amount he receives from renting out the rest of his lands, or having them tilled by hired labourers. Within this group or class of proprietors, it is possible to separate out two subgroups. One consists of large absentee landlords, who typically have holdings in more than one village. The second consists of smaller proprietors who reside personally in the village in

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which they own land, and usually exercise some degree of management and control over its cultivation. Most of the members of this class come from the higher castes.

The second class referred to as *kisan* or working peasants has also a recognised property interest in the land. They may be small owners, or tenants with varying degrees of security. By and large (but not in every state) their legal and customary rights will be somewhat inferior to these of the *malik* (proprietors) in the same village. The chief distinguishing feature however, is the amount of land held. In the case of the working peasant the size of the holding is such that it supports only a single family and then only if one or more members of the family actually perform the field labour. In fact, the produce from the land owned by the *kisan* may not even provide the entire income required by his family, but at least it provides a larger share than whatever funds he may receive from other agricultural sources, such as doing labour on other people's lands. *Kisan* as defined here are those villagers who live primarily by their own toil on their own lands. They do not employ labour, except briefly in the ploughing or harvest season, nor do they commonly receive rent. They come from the middle level cultivating or artisan castes, most of these being OBCs or backward castes.

The third agrarian class referred to as labourer or *mazdur* comprise those villagers who gain their livelihood primarily from working on other people's land. Families in this class may indeed have tenancy rights in the soil, or even property rights, but the holdings are so small that the income from cultivating them or from renting them out comes to less than the earnings from fieldwork. Wages may be received in money or in kind. If the latter they may be fixed or may be in the form of a crop share. In practice the lower ranks of croppers and tenants at will are almost indistinguishable from *mazdur*, they will tentatively be included in this category. Most of the members of this class come from the traditionally landless, deprived, lowly untouchable castes or scheduled castes and backward castes.

As Thorner rightly points out, the maintenance of this hierarchial structure of interests in the land has required that quite a substantial proportion of the produce be reserved for persons who perform no agricultural labour. What was left to the actual cultivator, after the claims of the various superior might holders were satisfied, might still be subject to collection as unpaid debt by the moneylender. Thus, the power structure in the agrarian classes is largely based on exploitation and deprivation.

In his landmark work D.N. Dhanagre (1983) says that although Thorner's categories and sub-categories are nearer the realities of the Indian agrarian social structure there is still a need to readjust or regroup these categories into a broader and more comprehensive model and redesignate them by commonly used concepts and criteria in the study of peasant societies. Such a model can be drawn from the works of Lenin and Marx, especially those relating to analyses of agrarian projected during the freedom struggle or even there after and the actual measures introduced for land reforms. Consequently, socialist transformation in the class structure of the villages has not taken place.

(*i*) This lag could partly be explained by the class character of the Indian political and administrative elite who are resistant to the needed radical reforms.

(*ii*) The existing land reforms have initiated a process by which the security of tenure and economic prosperity of the rich peasantry has increased, but the condition of the small peasants both in respect of economic level and tenurial stability has deteriorated.

(*iii*) The feudalistic and customary type of tenancy has declined and it has been replaced by a capitalistic form of lease labour or wage labour agrarian system.

(*iv*) A new class of rich middle stratum of peasantry system has come into being, and not all of these are from among the ex-zamindars.

(*v*) The class inequalities, between the top and the bottom levels of the classes, have increased rather than decreased.

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(*vi*) The benefits of land reforms have so far not gone so much to the agricultural workers or even to ex-zamindars as to the emergent middle peasantry.

(*vii*) As a result of these contradictions in the agrarian class structure the tensions in the rural social system have increased and are bound to increase further, and finally,

(*viii*) That the sociological process that is dominant in the current class transformations in the villages is the embourgeoisiment, of some and 'proletarianization' of many social strata.

PC Joshi (1971) in his celebrated work has made very incisive comments on the trends in the agrarian class structure. Some of these are summarized as under :

(*a*) It led to the decline of feudal and customary types of tenancies. It was replaced by a more exploitative and insecure lease arrangement.

(*b*) It gave rise to a new commercial based rich peasant class who were part owners and part tenants. They had resource and enterprise to carry out commercial agriculture.

(*c*) It led to the decline of feudal landlord class and another class of commercial farmers emerged for whom agriculture was a business. They used the non-customary type of tenancy.

Thus, the rural India witnessed and still witnessing the process of social mobility and transformation. Depeasantization of small and marginal peasant is also a by-product of the transformation of village India.

Meaning of a Social Class or Class

People may be placed on different positions on a continuum or a range; the continuum, in fact is divided into specific social classes, or *strata*. Thus, people in a society may be placed in different strata based on their status; each of these strata may be referred to as social class.

Schiffman defines social class as "*the division of members of a society into a hierarchy of distinct status classes, so that members of each class have relatively the same status and members of all other classes have either more or less status*".

Social Class and Social Status

Social class is measured in terms of *status*; a person belonging to a particular class is said to hold status similar to members of that class. So social class is defined in terms of the amount of status the members of a particular class relatively have, in comparison with members of other social classes. Broadly speaking, the stratification into varied social classes, is done on the bases on three factors, viz., wealth (economic assets) power (ability to exert influence over others) and prestige (recognition received). However, marketing academicians and researchers, as well as consumer researchers, define status in terms of demographical variables like *income*, *occupation* and *education*; in fact, the three are interrelated and thus, used in conjunction to each other. While understanding buying patterns and consumption behavior, it is necessary to understand the dynamics of social class. These are discussed as follows :

(*i*) Hierarchical structure : Social class is hierarchical in nature. The social-class categories are ranked in a hierarchy that ranges from low to high. Based on education, occupation and income, the society is divided into various ranks, such that people in a particular rank are similar to others in the same rank and different across various ranks. So members of a particular social class view themselves as a) having a status similar to others in their own class; and b) having a status high or low than members of the higher or lower class. Based on the social class, they view themselves *equal* to other (in the same social class), *inferior* to others (from higher social class), and *superior* to others (from lower social class). The hierarchical structure holds relevance for a marketer.

- First, marketers can use this as a basis to segment the market; the various strata provide a basis for market segmentation.

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- Two, when people are "other-directed" or susceptible to social influence, they would buy such products and services and/or brands that people from their respective social classes purchase. This is because they look for social approval. So they would purchase certain products and service offerings and/or brands because they are used and favored by members of their own class.
- Third, people are class conscious and relate brands to their social class; thus, they would buy brands which they feel relate to their "class", and would avoid brands that they relate to "lower-class" products. There are social-class influences on the actual consumption of products.
- Fourth, the higher social class or the upper social class also acts as reference groups, for people in the lower class. The latter aspire to emulate the former and desire buying products and brands which the former buy.

(*ii*) **Similarity of people within a social class :** People within a social class are similar to each other. This similarity is not only witnessed in terms of their education, occupation and income, but also their thinking, values, norms, attitudes, lifestyle and behavioral patterns. There is similarity among members *within* each social class and dissimilarity with *between* social classes.

Social Class Categories and Lifestyle Profiles

Various classifications of social class have been proposed. Sociologists have divided the society into distinct class divisions that number two, three, four, five, six and even nine class social structures. Which of the classifications is most useful, depends upon the purpose of the researcher, and also on the amount of detail that the research/study requires. Consumer researchers are interested in the social-class structures primarily for the purpose of viewing them as potential markets for their products and service offerings. For reasons of uniformity, researchers prefer to adopt a three class structure, and thereby divide social classes into upper, middle and lower classes.

Each social class is characterized by certain lifestyle factors, in terms of shared beliefs, norms, attitudes, activities, interests and behavior. These are similar within people of each class and different across social classes. In fact, they tend to distinguish the members of a social class from the members of other social classes.

However, it may be noted here that people from the middle class may serve as aspirational groups or have a reference group appeal for the lower; similarly people of the upper class may serve the same for people in the middle class. With this impact, people in a class may possess beliefs, norms, attitudes, activities, interests and behavior that are a hybrid of two or more classes.

Social Class Mobility

People in community can move from one strata to another. They can move either up or down the social class; this mobility gets exhibited in two forms. One, individuals can move either up or down in social-class standing across generations, i.e. while their parents may have belonged to one strata, they begin to belong to another, either upper or lower. Two, such a transition may also be seen through one's life, i.e. as a person becomes independent and starts earning, he may belong to one class and as he progresses in life, he may begin to belong to another. Upward mobility is more common and is generally the trend these days.

As mentioned above, the higher social classes often become aspirational and reference groups for people of lower social status. Marketers realize this and use symbols of higher-class status into their products, as also the advertisement, both in terms of content and context. It has also been seen that that products and services that were traditionally within the realm of one social class, are now getting into the realm of lower social classes. The influence of upper classes on lower, has also benefited the "me-too" marketers, who come up with counterfeiters and doners, to satisfy the lower classes; thus we have 'me-too" products for various products and/or brands.

7.3 Class and Mobility : Occupations and Mobility

Notes

1. Data and Methods

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) for 1981 has been used as the source of data on occupations. The LFS collects information biennially on about 250,000 individuals throughout the UK (although from 1984 it became an annual survey with a continuing element). In 1981, the sampling frame was the Valuation Roll, which lists properties eligible for rating, including all domestic and commercial property and institutions such as hospitals and colleges but not Crown property. In Scotland the Postal Address File was the basis of the sample, and those living in institutions are therefore excluded. Interviews were carried out during a six week period from the beginning of June, and the survey achieved a response rate of 85.0 per cent in 1981.

Current occupation is recorded using the Key Occupations for Statistical Purposes (KOS) which contains 546 categories at the lowest level of aggregation. This classification corresponds to that of the OPCS *Classification of Occupations* (1980) used to record occupation in the 1980 Census. The fine divisions which the classification makes, together with the other information in the LFS relating to employment status, mean that the data lend themselves to regrouping into class schema. In addition to current occupation, the LFS records the occupation in which the respondent was in paid employment during the week one year before the survey. This is coded in the same was as current occupation. Occupational changes *during* the one year period are not noted. The analyses presented here are based only on individuals for whom there is occupational information for both points in time. Respondents are also asked whether they work full or part-time. Other variables in the data set include 'highest educational qualification' and industry, coded using the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.

The fact that the analyses include only those who were in work both at the time of the survey and one year previously has important implications for the interpretation of the result. A significant amount of mobility into less advantageous jobs is likely to be omitted. For instance, Martin and Roberts (1984) demonstrate that women reentering the labour market after having had a period away from paid work are disproportionately likely to move to a lower social class, especially if they are working part-time. Prolonged periods of male or female unemployment are also likely to result in a return to work at a lower level. For these reasons the rates of class movement shown below, which are based only on those who are in work at both the beginning and the end of the period, do not give a picture of occupational mobility over the whole of the economically active population. They do, however, correctly show the flows between classes of those in employment, the focus of the analyses in the paper.

2. An Occupational Class Schema for Men and Women

Social classes are collectivities of individuals who occupy similar locations within the social division of labour. Hence members of a class may be expected to share similar work and market situations. Distinct classes persist when people move only rarely between classes, that is, when there is 'closure'. The greater the degree of closure the more the formation of identifiable classes is facilitated (Giddens 1980 : 107). Although local factors act to condition class formation, such as the division of labour and the authority of relationships within the workplace, occupation is the primary principle of differentiation in the labour market and thus an effective indicator of class in a capitalist society.

The most commonly used class schema based on occupation, the Registrar-General's (RG), was devised for practical purposes such as the examination of mortality rates and does not relate particularly well to the division of labour (Dale, Gilbert and Arber 1983). For this reason, although a few results using the RG classification are reported below, a new schema, the 'KOS schema', based upon more analytically relevant bases of categorization, has been constructed.

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It has five key criteria — employment under contract; control over other workers; ownership of human capital (educational and technical qualifications or craft skills); the type of labour, manual or non-manual; and the strength of occupational trade union solidarity.

An important feature of this new schema is that it is a classification of occupations, rather than of individuals. Stewart, Prandy and Blackburn (1980 : 113) show that it is necessary to distinguish individuals from occupations when discussing class position. They emphasize that individuals may come to particular occupations through a diversity of routes and from many different backgrounds; similarly, there is a diversity of destinations from any one occupation. Consequently, the meaning of an occupation will not be the same for all engaged in it. For example, the occupation of clerk is held by individuals with a wide range of experiences and expectations : the older male worker who has moved into a clerical job from a manual occupation, the young male worker who is moving through the occupation of 'clerk' on his way to a management position, and the female clerk who is likely to stay within the occupation for most of her working life. Nevertheless, the occupation of clerk itself can be characterized by the nature of the work, the work environment, the bureaucratic nature of the employing organization, and the level of pay, irrespective of the meaning of these and other aspects of the job for the employee. It is these and other characteristics of occupations which form the key to the distinctions made in the class schema described below.

The scheme allocates each of the 546 occupations of the KOS classification to one of eight classes on the basis of the characteristics held by the majority of the respondents in the sample who follow that occupation. These characteristics were examined in order. Employing others took precedence over all other characteristics, followed by working on one's own account, managerial status, the possession of technical and higher educational qualifications, and the manual of non-manual nature of the occupation (as defined by OPCS, *Classification of Occupations,* 1980). Manual employees were then classified according to whether they had served a craft apprenticeship, their supervisory status and their employment in a highly unionized industry group.

Class 1 in the schema consists of those occupations in which the majority of members are employers with employees. The self employed occupations, those in which most members work on their own account without employees, are placed in Class 2. Class 3 contains all those who are in KOS occupations where the majority of workers either define themselves as managers, or have a university degree, a professional qualification or a teaching qualification. Class 4 contains occupations in which the majority hold a technical qualification (HNC or HND, a nursing qualification, an ONC or OND, a City and Guilds certificate or 'A' levels), and is defined solely on the basis of education. Class 5 contains non-manual occupations whose members are largely employees not of managerial status and without educational qualifications. A large proportion are clerks. Class 6, craft, contains those occupations where the majority of members have served a recognized trade apprenticeship, for example, compositors, carpenters and joiners, pattern makers and tool makers. Class 7, higher manual, includes supervisors of manual workers who are not in Class 6; it also includes occupations in which most of the members are in industries with a strong union structure, such as coal miners, gas, electricity and water workers, rail workers, and those employed in local government. All other manual workers are placed into Class 8, lower manual.

The schema reflects the market position of occupations through its consideration of the rewards and resources which members of those occupations could expect to command. Although the method of categorization depends upon a hierarchical selection of occupational characteristics, the resulting schema is only partially ordered with respect to the relative market power of each class. For instance, the rewards and resources of the clerical occupations in Class 5 may be less than those of the craft occupations in Class 6.

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The allocation of occupations to classes was first performed using the occupational characteristics of only the men in the sample, and then, independently, using those of the women, thus generating two comparable schema. All the results reported below were obtained using the male schema. All the results reported below were obtained using the male schema for classifying the men and the female schema for classifying the women. Most occupations are situated in the equivalent classes in the two schema; note 4 lists those occupations placed in different classes. Most of the differences between the male and female classifications arise because fewer women than men are self-employed, and because in some occupations men and women have different average levels of educational qualification. The distribution of the sample amongst the schema's classes (Table 7.1) shows the high percentage of women in clerical work, particularly amongst full-time workers; the complete absence of any occupation where the majority of women have an apprenticeship, and the preponderance of lower manual workers amongst part-time working women.

Table 7.1 shows the cross-classify the respondent's class one year before the survey with their class in 1981, and show the extent of mobility between the classes. In order to indicate the pattern of flows, each table has been fitted to a model of quasi-independence (Goodman 1968).

Table 7.1 : Percentage distribution in KOS Classes for men and women

	Men	Women	
	full-time	*full-time*	*part-time*
1. Employers with employees	1.5	1.3	0.1
2. Self-employed without employees	5.8	2.3	1.1
3. Professional and managerial	19.7	17.5	4.8
4. Technical	4.0	8.0	7.3
5. Clerical	15.4	43.7	35.5
6. Craft	18.2	0.0	0.0
7. Higher manual	7.1	2.7	3.3
8. Lower manual	28.3	24.5	47.8
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	(55210)	(21732)	(13444)

This model hypothesizes that there are no structural barriers impeding the mobile, so that the destination classes of movers are unrelated to their classes of origin. The model serves as a benchmark against which to judge the extent to which the flows are structured. The measure used to assess the difference between the degree of mobility predicted by the quasi-independence model and the observed mobility is the standardized residual, obtained by dividing the difference between the observed and predicted flows by the square root of the predicted flow (Gilbert 1981). A positive residual indicated that the observed flow is larger than that predicted by the quasi-independence model.

3. Short-term Occupational Class Mobility

Men's class mobility Table 7.2 shows the extent and distribution of class changes amongst men over a one year period using the KOS class schema. During the year, 3.6 per cent of the men changed class. The corresponding percentage using the RG schema is little different at 3.7 per cent. Because the KOS classification has eight categories and the RG classification has six, one would expect the KOS schema, not the RG schema, to yield the higher rate of class changing. The fact that this is not so is due to the greater ability of the KOS classification to group

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occupations into closed classes. The figure of 3.6 per cent may be compared with the extreme possibilities : a minimum of zero for a class structure in which there is no inter-class mobility whatsoever, and a maximum of 11.8 per cent for a structure with the same rate of changing of occupation, but no constraints on mobility to other classes.

Compared with the other classes, Classes 1, employers, and 3, managers and professional, are the most 'closed', that is, they lose the smallest proportion of their members to other classes during the course of the year, and Class 5, clerical, is the most open. However, the differences between classes in the proportions who experience mobility are not large. Subsequent tables will show that for women the differences between classes in rates of outflow are much more marked. The largest interclass flows as compared with the quasi-independence model are from Class 5, clerical, to Class 3, professional and managerial, and vice versa; from Class 8, lower manual, to Class 7, higher manual; and from Class 6, craft, to Class 8. In the main, these flows are also the largest in terms of absolute magnitude.

Table 7.2 : KOS class by KOS Class one year ago, for men working full-time

		Current KOS Class 1981							
	KOS Class one year ago	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
1	Employers with employees	767	4	4	0	1	3	1	7
		(2.5)	3.0	0.1	–1.0	–1.2	0.4	–1.0	0.4
2	Self employed	3	3061	15	2	10	10	4	56
		0.2	(3.2)	–1.0	–1.3	–1.6	0.0	–2.7	4.2
3.	Prof, managerial	9	11	10507	32	123	34	11	57
		0.2	–1.4	(2.6)	4.1	9.8	–0.7	–5.0	–4.5
4	Technical	0	4	34	2082	29	9	4	17
		–1.5	–0.4	3.5	(4.5)	3.4	–0.7	–2.6	–2.4
5	Clerical	11	12	211	42	8207	32	21	81
		–0.3	–2.4	12.9	4.1	(4.8)	–3.1	–5.3	–5.3
6	Craft	6	13	38	15	37	9797	33	173
		–1.0	–1.0	–3.4	–0.4	–2.4	(3.1)	–2.0	6.5
7	Higher manual	2	10	20	4	17	24	3651	86
		–1.2	0.3	–2.5	–1.6	–2.2	0.6	(4.3)	4.0
8	Lower manual	28	60	62	13	81	121	219	15170
		1.7	3.0	–7.4	–4.1	–4.1	2.7	10.6	(3.7)
	Total	826	3175	10891	2190	8505	10032	3944	15647
		(1.5)	(5.8)	(19.7)	(4.0)	(15.4)	(18.2)	(7.1)	(28.3)

***Key* :**

Upper value in each cell of the table is the count.

Lower values in the off-diagonal cells are the standardized residuals from fitting a model of quasi-independence

Lower values in the leading diagonal cells are the proportions of those in each class who changed from that class to another during the year.

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Table 7.3 : Source and destination occupations –men working full-time

Source occupation			Destination occupations		
KOS Code		% of all in cell	KOS Code		% of all in cell
Class 3 (professional & managers) No Class 5 (clerical)					
038.4	Other proprietors managers (sales)	24	057.5	Sales representatives	30
			046.3	Other clerks & cashiers (not retail)	17
034.0	Production, works & maintenance managers	13	055.1	Shop salesmen & assistants	7
005.1	Marketing & sales managers	10	057.6	Sales representatives (property & services)	7
005.4	Buyers & purchasing officers) (not retail)	5			
Total number in this cell in Table 7.2 - 123					
Class 5 (clerical) to Class 3 (professional and managerial)					
057.5	Sales representatives	23	038.4	Other proprietors & managers (sales)	22
046.3	Other clerks & cashiers (not retail)	19	005.1	Marketing & sales managers	12
058.0	NCO's & other ranks, UK armed forces	11	034.0	Production works & maintenance managers	11
055.1	Shop salesmen & assistants	9			
Total number in this cell in Table 7.2 = 211					
Class 6 (craft) to Class 8 (lower maxual)					
117.0	Metal working production fitters	20	152.2	Drivers of road goods vehicles	15
118.1	Motor mechanics, auto engineers	14	157.1	Storekeepers, warehousemen	9
105.1	Carpenters, joiners	12	112.4	Machine tool operators	6
128.0	Welders	9			
Total number in this cell in Table 7.2 = 173					
Class 8 (lower manual) to Class 6 (craft)					
112.4	Machine tool operators	9	117.0	Metal working production fitters	21
131.9	Other metal, jewellery, electrical production workers	7	105.1	Carpenters, joiners	11
			128.0	Welders	9
			118.1	Motor mechanics, auto engineers	7
			125.0	Plumbers	7
			139.1	Bricklayers, tile setters	5
Total number in this cell in Table 7.2 = 121					

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The flow from Class 8 to Class 7 is composed of workers who have been promoted to supervisory positions, or who have found jobs in more highly unionized industries. The mobility between Classes 3 and 5, and between Classes 6 and 8, are examined further in Table 7.3, which lists the occupations which give rise to the greatest proportion of the movement. As well as facilitating a relatively large amount of class mobility, these areas are also of interest in terms of class theory. Mobility into a managerial job is usually seen as the result of an orderly and uni-directional progression along a carreer line which projects the individual into a substantially different employment status and which is accompanied by considerable changes in life style (Pahl and Pahl 1971). However, the table shows that there is also a significant flow in the reverse direction, from managerial to clerical and sales jobs. The sales occupations are clearly particularly important in the flow between managerial and clerical graded jobs.

In the manual sector, there is perhaps a surprising amount of movement between the craft occupations in Class 6 and the 'lower' manual occupations in Class 8. The craft occupations tend to require specialized on-the-job training or apprenticeships, and are often portrayed as an elite among manual workers, with considerable market power and transferable skills. Conversely, the latter group have only their labour power to sell, and a correspondingly weaker market position. Those who move from craft to lower manual occupations are therefore experiencing a marked change in their labour market situation. As Table 7.3 shows, mobility between Classes 6 and 8 is spread widely between occupations, although metal working production fitters, drivers of road goods vehicles and storekeepers all have a fairly high proportion of movers. None of the manual occupations act as both source and destination in the way that sales and clerical work do in the non-manual sector, and mobility between manual classes seems to be accounted for by movement between a rather large number of different occupations.

The residuals in Table 7.2 also show that there is significantly less mobility between the manual sector (the craft, higher and lower manual classes) and the non-manual sector (the managerial, technical and clerical classes) than would be expected under a model of quasi-independene. Conversely, there are greater flows internal to these two sectors than would be expected from the model. The self-employed class is tied more closely to the manual sector than to the non-manual, and also gains members from Class 1, employers with employees.

The tables indicate that a good deal of changing seems to originate from relatively few class locations. Furthermore, the non-manual occupations in these locations (but not in general the manual occupations) are not only those which act as the source occupations for those moving 'up' the class structure, but are also those which accept people who move 'down' from other occupations with greater economic status. Goldthorpe (1980 : 14) makes a similar observation when he refers to a state of 'flux' which he sees in certain intermediary areas of the occupational structure. The flux is due to the areas' marginality in relation to the two major organizational principles or forms which underlie the occupational division of labour : namely those of bureaucracy and the market.

Examples of occupations he cites as showing this marginality are routine clerical and sales personnel, junior technicians and foremen. These occupations reflect an 'ambiguous or uncertain location between "staff" and "management" and the manual labour force.' He goes on to suggest that these occupations are those which can serve as 'stepping stones' in advancement through working life but which, on the other hand, afford no strong assurance of further progress. His view of the location of 'flux' within the occupational structure accords well with the patterns of mobility shown in Tables 7.2 and 7.3, amongst, for example, sales representatives and sales managers.

Table 7.2 also shows that there is a moderately large two way flow between self employment (Class 2) and the lower manual class (Class 8). This flow consists principally of individuals starting up small retail businesses (butchers, publicans and hairdressers) or working on their own account as painters, builders and goods vehicle drivers after having been employed in a

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manual occupation, and those who give up or are forced to abandon their business and take up employment. Although the self employed petty bourgeoisie constitute a distinct class, separate from employed workers by virtue of their different relations to the means of production, these data show that there is considerable mobility across the divide, and that the inflow into self employment comes largely from the lower manual class, the one with the least labour market resources. Just under half of the recruitment to Class 2, the self employed without employees, is from Class 8, lower manual.

Women's class mobility Table 7.4 shows the class locations of the women in the 1981 LFS sample working full-time at the time of the survey according to the 'female' version of the classification. Because only a very small proportion of women have craft qualifications, there are no occupations in the 'craft' class (Class 6) of this version of the schema. Overall, 3.1 per cent of the women changed class during the one year period, compared with 3.3 per cent using the RG classification. The row percentages for the cells on the diagonal indicate that the highest rate of inter-class movement is from Class 7, higher manual, although the number of women in this class is so small that it accounts for virtually none of the total recorded mobility. The residuals show that there are relatively high rates of mobility between Classes 7 and 8, and between Classes 3 ad 5, as there were in the male schema, but there are also significant flows between Class 2, self-employed, and Class 3, professional and managerial, and between Class 4, technical, and Class 5, clerical.

Table 7.4 : KOS Class by KOS Class one year ago, for women working full time

		Current KOS Class (1981)							
	KOS Class one year ago	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
1	Employers with employees	256	1	3	1	3	0	0	3
		(4.1)	0.7	0.4	–0.3	–0.3	0.0	–0.8	0.3
2	Self-employed	0	453	8	1	5	0	1	7
		–1.0	(4.6)	1.4	–1.0	–0.8	0.0	–0.3	0.9
3	Prof, managerial	1	13	3642	7	44	0	2	12
		–1.5	4.0	(2.1)	–1.4	2.2	0.0	–1.6	–2.0
4	Technical	0	3	18	1643	27	0	3	7
		–1.6	0.0	1.1	(3.4)	1.4	0.0	–0.4	–1.9
5	Clerical	9	10	94	60	9336	0	4	85
		–1.6	–1.7	1.5	2.3	(2.7)	0.0	–3.6	0.4
6	Craft	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
7	Higher manual	0	1	8	5	7	0	529	20
		–1.3	–0.7	–0.4	0.0	–1.8	0.0	(7.2)	3.5
8	Lower manual	25	11	37	23	76	0	40	5188
		4.4	–0.3	–2.6	–1.5	–1.0	0.0	6.1	(3.9)
	Total	291	492	3810	1740	9498	0	579	5322
		(1.3)	(2.3)	(17.5)	(8.0)	(43.7)	(0.0)	(2.7)	(24.5)

The residuals highlight the extent of recruitment into Class 1, employers, from the lower manual class. The flow of those leaving the lower manual class to become employers is very much more marked than for the men and is largely the outcome of women setting up

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hairdressing establishments which employ a few assistants. In the reverse direction, the proportion of those who move out of the employer and self employed classes (Classes 1 and 2) is nearly 50 per cent higher for women than for men. Women in these locations not only form a much smaller proportion of all economically active women, but are also relatively insecurely placed. Many of them are homeworkers. A similar comparison can be made about women in Class 7. The proportion in this class (made up of those in supervisory positions and in strongly unionized industries) is about one third of the proportion amongst males, and the rate of outflow is 7.2 per cent per year, compared with 4.3 for men.

Overall the residuals show that the benchmark model of quasi-independence fits the class changing of women rather more closely than it does that of men, suggesting that there may be a lesser degree of class closure in the female occupational structure. Moreover, women in manual jobs who change class are considerably more likely to move into a non-manual than a manual occupation. The pattern of residuals does not reveal as clear cleavage line between the manual and non-manual sectors as was evident in the table for men. For example, there is *more* mobility between Class 5, clerical, and Class 8, lower manual, than the quasi-independence model would lead us to expect, and only slightly less in the reverse direction.

Class theories generally propose that one of the major divisions in the class structure is that between manual and non-manual occupations. Although numerous studies have examined this boundary, they have almost always considered only the male occupational structure (but see Heath and Britten, 1984). The data in Table 7.4 suggest that if a demarcating line exists, it apparently fails to act as a barrier to women's class mobility. This may be because the distinction between the manual and non-manual classes, although clear and well-supported for men's employment, is not significant for women's jobs. Alternatively, it may be that the observed mobility is an artefact stemming from a mis-classification of a manual occupation as a non-manual one.

Table 7.5 shows the occupational composition of the cells in Table 7.4 which contain the largest flows. Over one third of the movement from Class 5, clerical, to Class 8, lower manual, is the result of the downward mobility of shop saleswomen and assistants into lower manual jobs, and nearly one third of the upward mobility from the lower manual to the clerical class is due to movement into this occupation. The important role which the job of shop assistant can play in women's work-histories is illustrated by the Women and Employment Survey (Dex 1983). Women often became shop assistants as temporary measure when it was difficult for them to find alternative work. They were frequently school leavers taking their first job, married women on their first return to work after child-birth, women with domestic constraints or those who had just moved house.

Dex also shows that there is considerable mobility between shop work, semi-skilled factory work, semi–skilled domestic work and other semi-skilled work. While these occupations have been usefully gathered together into a single 'semi-skilled' profile by Dex, in most schema (including the KOS schema) mobility between them would represent at least one change and possibly two changes of class. To a large extent the magnitude of the observed class mobility between the clerical and lower manual classes, and the apparent absence of a manual/ non-manual divide amongst women's occupations, can therefore be attributed to the conventional placement of shop assistants into the non-manual category.

Treating the occupation as a manual one, that is as having conditions of services and rewards more similar to manual jobs than clerical ones, would have the effect of reducing the apparent flow across the manual/non-manual line. However, it would still leave the flows between Classes 5 and 8 as the second and third largest in the table. Furthermore, there is substantial mobility of sales assistants into mangerial jobs, and the reassignment would also have the effect of increasing the flow between Class 8, lower manual, and Class 3, professional and managerial, by about 60 per cent. An alternative tactic would be to assign sales people to a class of their own, as Heath and Britten (1984) propose, but in relation to its

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size this new class would have very high rates of flow between it and the lower manual and professional and managerial classes. If appears, therefore, that for women the sales occupations do have a special role, serving to straddle several classes in the occupational structure.

Table : 7.5 Source and destination occupations - women working full-time

Source occupation			Destination occupations		
KOS Code		% of all in cell	KOS Code		% of all in cell
Class 3 (professional & managers) to Class 5 (clerical)					
038.4	Other proprietors & managers (sales)	39	046.3	Other clerks and cashiers (not retail)	41
011.0	Teachers	14	055.1	Shop saleswomen & assistents	28
005.1	Marketing & sales managers	7	048.1	Typists, shorthand writers secretaries	14
039.3	Restaurantenrs				
Total number in this cell in Table 7.4 = 44					
Class 5 (clerical) to Class 3 (professional and managerial)					
046.3	Other clerks & cashiers (not retail)	37	038.4	Othe0r proprietors & managers (sales)	37
055.1	Shop saleswomen & assistants	25	005.1	Marketing & sales managers	5
049.2	Typists, shorthand writers, secretaries	13	034.0	Production, works & maintenance managers	5
057.5	Sales representatives	6	039.3	Restauranteurs	5
			044.4	Managers ncc	5
Total number in this cell in Table 7.4 = 94					
Class 5 (clerical) to Class 8 (lower manual)					
655.1	Shop saleswomen & assistants	34	068.3	Other domestic & school helpers	13
046.3	Other clerks & cashiers (not retail)	35	137.2	Pakers, bottlers canners, fillers	
049.2	Typists, shorthand writers, secretaries	9			
Total number in this cell in Table 7.4 = 85					
Class 8 (lower manual) to class 5 (clerical)					
068.3	Other domestic & school helpers	12	046.3	Other clerks & cashiers (not retail)	42
137.2	Packers, bottlers, canners, fillers	11	055.1	Shop saleswomen & assistants	28
065.1	Waitresses	8			
066.1	Counter hands, assistants	7			
074.0	Hairdressers	2			
Total number in this cell in Table 7.4 = 76					

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Table 7.6 shows mobility between KOS classes for women working part-time. The overall percentage of part-time working women who change, 2.9 per cent, is slightly lowe than for either men or full-time working women, and considerably lower than the 4.1 per cent obtained from the RG Classification. The RG sechema is particularly badly suited for classifying part-time woking women's occupations, not surprisingly given its origins as a classification intended for full-time working men. The apparently higher rate of mobility arises largely from movements between the RG unskilled and partly skilled classes. The distinction of skill which are supposed to sort occupations into these classes tend to be made using the characteristics of men's work, and so lead to anomalies when applied to women's, and particularly part-timers' work. For intance, the staff who are responsible for providing school dinners to children include cooks (classified by the Registrar-General's (RG) classification into class 3M, kitchen helpers (RG V)), and canteen assistants or 'dinner ladies' (RG IV). All these women are in similar labour market positions, working part-time with low rates of pay and no career prospects, and yet they fall into three separate RG classes. The KOS schema includes them all in Class 8, lower manual.

Table 7.6 : KOS Class by KOS Class one year ago, for women working partime.

		Current KOS Class (1981)							
	KOS Class one year ago	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
1	Employers with employers	19	0	0	0	2	0	0	6
		(12.6)	–0.2	–0.6	–0.7	–0.7	–0.8	–0.8	1.5
2	Self-employed	0	142	2	0	4	0	2	9
		0.2	10.7	1.4	–1.1	–1.1	0.0	0.6	0.8
3	Prof, managerial	0	0	626	5	29	0	0	17
		–0.3	–0.4	(7.5)	0.7	1.7	0.0	–2.0	–1.0
4	Technical	0	0	3	942	12	0	1	6
		–0.2	–0.3	1.9	(2.3)	0.9	0.0	–0.6	–1.2
5	Clerical	0	0	11	17	4626	0	7	82
		–0.6	–0.8	0.7	1.0	(2.5)	0.0	–2.1	0.4
6	Craft	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0
7	Higher manual	0	1	1	1	10	0	399	11
		–0.2	3.0	–0.2	–0.6	–0.1	0.0	(5.7)	0.1
8	Lower manual	1	1	7	16	96	0	33	6297
		0.8	0.1	–1.4	–0.5	–0.6	0.0	2.9	(2.4)
	Total	20	144	650	981	4779	0	442	6428
		(0.1)	(1.1)	(4.8)	(7.3)	(35.5)	(0)	(3.3)	(47.8)

The rate of movement out of KOS Classes 1, 2 and 3 for part-timers is very high, an that for Class 7 only slightly lower. As with full-time working women, the numerically small classes are also those with the highest rates of outward flow. However, part-timers are much more likely to be working in 'lower manual' jobs that full-time working women. In comparison with

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full-timers there is little mobility between Classes 5 and 3, mainly because there are so few part-timers in the managerial occupations of Class 3. The only area where the flow is significantly greater than expected from the quasi-independence model is the flow from lower to higher manual (Classes 8 to 7). Most of the cell counts are too small make disaggregation into occupations worthwhile, the exception being that for the flow between Classes 5 and 8, shown in Table 7.7. The occupations listed here are generally similar to those for full-time working women (Table 7.5) except that shop assistants and cleaners account for a somewhat higher percentage. The movement from Class 8 into Class 5 consists very largely of women becoming shop assistants.

Table 7.7 Source and destination occupations - women part-timers

Source occupation			**Destination Occupation**		
KOS Code		**% of all in cell**	**KOS Code**		**% of all in cell**
Class 8 (lower manual) in Class 5 (clarical)					
72.2	Cleaners	17	055.1	Stop sale women &	
066.1	Counter hands, assistants	13		assistants	58
137.2	Packers, bottlers, canners,		046.3	Other clerks & cashiers	
	fillers	8		(not retail)	21
			049.2	Typist, shorthand writers,	
				secretaries	5
Total number in this cell in Table 7.6 = 96					
Class 5 (clerical) to Class 8 (lower manual)					
055.1	Shop sales women & assistants.	39	072.2	Cleaners	24
046.3	Other clerks & cashiers		065.2	Barmaids	21
	(not reatail)	28	068.3	Other domestic & school	
049.2	Typists, shorthand writers			helpers	17
	secretaries	17	065.1	Waitresses	7
Total number in this cell in Table 7.6 = 82					

These tables of class mobility for men and for women have shown not only that there is an overall high rate of mobility between classes over the course of a year, but also that this mobility is concentrated in a few specific occupations, some of which seem to act as a point of departure or arrival for movement both up and down the occupational structure. These occupations figure as important locations for mobility partly because of their position in the occupational structure, but also because of their size. Other things being equal, an occupation with many members will of course make a greater impact as a source or destination occupation than one with relatively few members. Table 7.8 lists the largests occupations, at the unit KOS level, for men and full-time and part-time working women, with the rates of inflow from another class in 1981.

The table shows that, amongst full-time workers, clerks have a lower than average rate of inflow compared with other occupations. The significance of this occupation for class mobility

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stems from its very large size, there being a relatively low chance that any individual clerk with have experienced a change of class in the preceding year. In contrast, other proprietors and manages (sales), who constitute another of the occupations important for class mobility, do have a high rate of inflow. For men, the inflow rate is 50 percent higher than the average,

Table 7.8 : Rates of class inflow by occupation, for the largest occupations, by sex and working hours

KOS Code	Occupation	N	% in occ.	% of occupation arriving from another class
Mes working full-time				
046.3	Other clerks and cashiers (not retail)	2585	5	2.7
152.1	Drivers of road goods vehicles	1974	4	3.2
117.0	Metal working production fitters	1948	4	2.2
038.4	Other proprictors and managers (sales)	1721	3	5.5
034.0	Production works and maintenance managers	1410	3	4.3
011.0	Teachers	1149	2	0.6
040.0	Farmers, horticulturalists farm managers	1116	2	0.6
121.2	Electricians, electrical maintenance fitters	1039	2	1.4
105.1	Carpenters, joiners	1002	2	2.3
075.5	Sales representatives	996	2	5.8
157.1	Storekeepers, warehousemen	953	2	4.3
112.4	Machine total operators	906	2	5.6
All men working full-time		55210		3.7
Women working full-time				
046.3	Other clerks and cashiers (not retail)	4340	20	1.6
049.2	Typists, shorthand writers, secretaries	2183	10	0.9
011.0	Teachers	1352	6	0.3
016.0	Nurses, nursing auxiliaries	1149	5	5.1
055.1	Shop saleswomen & assistants	907	4	3.6
038.4	Other proprietors & managers (sales)	750	3	13.7
103.2	Sewers, embroiderers	523	2	1.5
137.2	Packers, bottlers, canners fillers	505	2	2.6
068.3	Other domestic and school helpers	350	2	4.3
050.0	Office machine operators	372	2	4.3
All women working full-time		21732	2	3.1
Women working part-time				
072.2	Cleaners, window cleaners, chimney sweeps	1990	15	1.8
055.1	Shop saleswomen and assistants	1665	12	4.6
046.3	Other clerks and cashiers (not retail)	1503	11	2.3
068.3	Other domestic and school helpers	1367	10	1.5
016.0	Nurses, nursing auxiliaries	847	6	4.3
049.2	Typists, shorthand writers , secretaries	832	6	1.2
066.1	Barmaids	606	4	0.7
065.2	Counter hands, assistants	318	2	7.9
011.0	Teachers	267	2	2.2
137.2	Packers, bottlers, canners, fillers	207	2	1.2
All women working part-time		13444		2.9

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and twice the rate for clerks, while for women the inflow rate is more than four times greater than the average. Male sales representatives and female shop workers also have high rate of inflwo. Sales work thus has an effect on mobility through the class structure out of proportion to the number of people in the occupation. The same is found amongst part-timers, where shop sales work is not only the second largest occupation for part-time working women, but also has an inflow rate over 50 per cent greater than the average.

Other occupations amongst those listed, notably teachers, farmers, and typists and secretaries, show very low rates of inflow, and stand as examples of occupations which have a high degree of closure. As the examples indicate, the basis for closure can be very varied. For instance, teachers depend upon educational qualifications as a barrier to admittance, while mobility into farming is probably restricted both by the capital required and by the need to move house to live on the land. The anomalously high rate of class mobility into nursing is accounted for by the OPCS definition of this occupational group, in which unqualified nursing auxiliaries as well as certificated nurses are included.

5. **Discussion** We have taken the view that classes are perpetuated to the extent that they exhibit closure, defined in terms of a comparative absence of movement into and out of the class, and that the structural relationships between classes are delineated by the patterns of interclass flows. A system with no structure would be one in which mobile individuals would be as likely to move to any one class as to any other; this is the quasi-independence model against which the observed inter-class mobility has been compared in earlier tables. The observed structure will be shown by the distribution of differences between the flows predicted by this model and the actual flows, positive residuals indication areas where the flow is larger than the base line model predicts, and negative residuals, areas where there is less movement than predicted. This is seen most clearly in the male occupatinal structure. If one focuses only on those standardized residuals in Table 7.2 which are positive and relatively large (greater than 2.0), one finds that they are grouped into distinct clusters, one in the top left corner joining the two employer classes, one in the centre of the table linking the managerial, technical and clerical classes, and one in the bottom right corner connecting the craft, and higher and lower manual classes. These clusters signify the continuing importance of the familiar distinctions between capital and labour, autonomy and supervision, and manual and mental work, as reflected by the barriers of social closure which are erected on these foundations.

   Within this overall pattern of three broad sectors within the class structure, there are several areas of special interest. Amongst men, there is a relatively high degree of mobility between the self-employed Class 2 and the lower manual Class 8, both from worker to slef-employment and in the reverse direction. Indeed, amongst men, this two way flow is the only one of significance to span the dividing lines between the three main sectors. Amongst women, there is a much higher rate of flow from the lower manual class to the 'employer with employees' class than would be expected from the quasi-independence model. These flows indicate that there are numbers of men and women coming from origins in manual employment to set themselves up on their own account as small entrepreneurs or self-employed artisans.

   There is a marked difference in the occupatinal chances of men and women located in Classes 1 and 2, the employers and slef-employed. In the case of men, these classes together account for 7.3 per cent of the sample, and just over 3 per cent leave them during the course of a year, an exit rate about 14 per cent lower than the average over all the classes. The same two classes include only 3.6 per cent of the full-time working women, and have a rate of outflow of 4 per cent, about 30 per cent greater than the average. For men, therefore, the ownership of productive capacity is not only relatively common, but once achieved, is relatively secure. For women, it is much less common, and relatively insecure.

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Several occupations provide points for both upward and downward mobility, acting as source occupations for those changing either to the managerial and technical classes or to the manual classes, and as destination occupations for those leaving managerial posts or manual jobs. Shop work is one such for women, and slaes work serves similarly, but to a lesser extent for men. These occupations are particularly important because they provide mobility over the divide between manual and non-manual work for men.

A comparison of the magnitudes of the residulas in the tables for the male and female full-timers (Tables 7.2 and 7.4) indicates that the flows between classes for the female occupational structure more closely resemble the quasi-independence model than the flows for the males, suggesting that the structuring of the labour market is more pronounced for men than for women. On the other hand, the women are concentrated in certain classes (40 per cent are in Class 5, clerical, and none are in Class 6, craft,) while the men are spread more evenly. These two aspects of the class structure can be summarized by saying that in comparison to men, women tend to be confined to certain classes, but move more readily between them, there being lower barriers to class mobilitly within these confines than appears to be the case for men.

Self-Assessment

Fill in the blanks

1. Dumont in his famous work ..... consider special type of inequality.
2. The main classes of today are
   (*a*) Agrarian (*b*) Industrial and professional
   (*c*) Business and mercantile (*d*) All of these
3. Caste and class both are the forms of social.....
4. Caste has became a liability on ..... people because of reservation policy of government for the lower caste people.
5. The demand for a separate nation based on religion or .....

7.4 Summary

- By examining the extent of mobility between classes observed over a short period of time, the major divisons within the class structure have been traced for men and for women. However, the analysis still needs further development in a number of directions. For instance, the data allow only an investigation of mobility between classes defined in terms of market situation. In particular, the LFS data do not provide detailed information on either individuals' tasks and positions within the labour process, or their wider social relationships or class consciousness. Alternative schema, based on these or other characteristics, may reveal other barriers to mobility and suggest other bases of closure. Moreover, because the 1981 LFS includes details about occupation at only two points in time, work histories cannot be followed, and one cannot tell whether the class mobility observed is the restult of job chaning widely distributed through the working population, or the effect of a small number of people changing jobs and class very frequently. The data also say little about the processes which lead to the formation of interclass barriers to mobility, although there can be little doubt that the factors leading to closure are very various and can only be studied by detailed investigations of particular occupational communities.
- Within these limitations, however, the data have shown that there is a fair amount of short-term class mobility taking place, with between 3 and 4 per cent changing class every year. This mobility is structured, more so in the case of men than women, and follows the expected

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lines, dividing the class system into a sector containing the employer and self-employed classes, a sector containing all the non-manual classes, and a manual sector. The employer classes recruit a proportion of their members from the lower manual class, this being the most important link between the employer and manual sectors. Much of the mobility from the manual into the non-manual sector and within the non-manual sector is through specific occupations, with sales work being especially important in this respect, particulalry for women.

- Class in India has existed along with caste and power. Caste in-corporates class and class incorporates caste in the Indian context. Neither the 'caste alone' view nor the 'class alone' perspective can help in a proper and fuller understanding of Indian society. It has been noted that there was never a perfect congruence between caste, class and power. Mobility and migration were quite normal activities in ancient and medieval India. However, Bailey, Beteille and Bhatt give the impression that a congruence prevailed between caste, class and power in the pre-independent India, and land re-forms and politicization have brought about incongruities and caste-free areas.
- Class relations are as old as caste relations or even older than caste relations. Lamb (1975) reports the prevalence of class relations as early as 600 B.C. in India. Material and cultural traditions existed with a sort of congruity, and class transformation had been a vital fact in the form of new kingdoms, settled agriculture, trade, cities and banking and guild organizations.
- The mode of production and class contradictions are essential features of the Marxian approach to social stratification. Gough (1980) considers the mode of production as a social formation in which she finds interconnections of caste, kinship, family, marriage and even rituals with the forces of production and production relations. Gough's study of Thanjavur explains the emergence of a new bourgeoisie, the polarization of the peasantry, and the pauperization of the working class due to historical transformations in the mode of production. The totality of contradictions in social stratification can be seen through the contradictions in the mode of production.
- Approaches to the concepts of caste and class bear ideological contents. The methodology and data used in the studies of caste and class provided legitimacy to these approaches. Caste was treated not as a 'social formation', but as an encompassing institution which encompassed all other aspects of Hindu society. However, caste, in fact, was more than a 'ritualistic' mechanism, and it could face a variety of forces and constraints due to its all-inclusive character. If it were simply a ritualistic arrangement, it would have crumbled down long ago due to its very cumbersome nature. The social formation of Indian society comprises class, ethnicity, power, religion and economy along with caste. All these aspects of the social formation are incorporated into each other. They provide an understanding of the historicity of Indian society including that of caste and class. Indigenization of the concepts of caste and class must come from the realization of such a formation and the totality of its historicity.
- Caste is an all-inclusive institution and it subsumes class relations. Any departure from caste is treated as incongruence between caste, status, wealth and power, hence the emergence of class relations. Such a view is known as the structural-functional. Change within the caste (sanskritization), resilience and consensus are the hallmarks of structural-functionalism. Dumont is the most well known proponent of structuralism. The pivotal notions of this approach are reflected in Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus* (1970). Singh (1981) points out ideology, dialectics, transformational relationship and comparison as the salient features of Dumont's study of caste.

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- Culture defines the rules of the game, the nature of relations between the haves and the have-nots. Thus culture does not include only cultural practices, rituals, *rites de passage*, etc. Structure is a product of dialectical contradictions, historical forces, and a certain 'formation'. Once it has emerged, it becomes a sort of force in determining the course of history, the nature of contradictions and the evaluational standards. Thus, structure refers to relations between social segments at a point of time as a historical product and as an existent reality.
- Several scholars have denied the 'congruence' version about caste, class and power in the ancient India. They have conclusively established that social mobility existed in ancient and medieval India. The *jajmani* system was never completely 'organic' in practice. The idea of the contrapriest exposes the hollowness of the concepts of hierarchy and pollution-purity. In the place of sanskritization, westernization and dominant caste etc., it is necessary to study downward mobility and proletarianization, upward mobility and embourgeoisiement, urban incomes for the rural people and the migration of the rural rich to towns, and rural non-agricultural income and mobility etc.
- In vernacular language he uses the terms *maalik, kissan* and *mazdur* for these three classes respectively. The landowners or proprietors traditionally belonged to the upper caste groups. They were tax gatherers and non-cultivating owners of land. Thorner (ibid) understands that the category of proprietors or *maalik* refers to families whose agricultural income is derived primarily (although not necessarily solely) from property rights in the soil. That is to say that whatever other sources of family income may exist, such as from a profession or business, the main agricultural income is derived from a share of the produce of lands belonging to the family.
- The second class referred to as *kisan*) or working peasants has also a recognised property interest in the land. They may be small owners, or tenants with varying degrees of security. By and large (but not in every state) their legal and customary rights will be somewhat inferior to these of the *malik* (proprietors) in the same village. The chief distinguishing feature however, is the amount of land held. In the case of the working peasant the size of the holding is such that it supports only a single family and then only if one or more members of the family actually perform the field labour.
- The third agrarian class referred to as labourer or *mazdur* comprise those villagers who gain their livelihood primarily from working on other people's land. Families in this class may indeed have tenancy rights in the soil, or even property rights, but the holdings are so small that the income from cultivating them or from renting them out comes to less than the earnings from fieldwork.
- The existing land reforms have initiated a process by which the security of tenure and economic prosperity of the rich peasantry has increased, but the condition of the small peasants both in respect of economic level and tenurial stability has deteriorated.
- The rural India witnessed and still witnessing the process of social mobility and transformation. Depeasantization of small and marginal peasant is also a by-product of the transformation of village India.
- Social class is measured in terms of *status*; a person belonging to a particular class is said to hold status similar to members of that class. So social class is defined in terms of the amount of status the members of a particular class relatively have, in comparison with members of other social classes. Broadly speaking, the stratification into varied social classes, is done on the bases on three factors, viz., wealth (economic assets) power (ability to exert influence over others) and prestige (recognition received). However, marketing academicians and researchers, as well as consumer researchers, define status in terms of demographical variables like *income*, *occupation* and *education*; in fact, the three are interrelated and thus, used in

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conjunction to each other. While understanding buying patterns and consumption behavior, it is necessary to understand the dynamics of social class. These are discussed as follows :

- People within a social class are similar to each other. This similarity is not only witnessed in terms of their education, occupation and income, but also their thinking, values, norms, attitudes, lifestyle and behavioral patterns. There is similarity among members *within* each social class and dissimilarity with *between* social classes.
- Each social class is characterized by certain lifestyle factors, in terms of shared beliefs, norms, attitudes, activities, interests and behavior. These are similar within people of each class and different across social classes. In fact, they tend to distinguish the members of a social class from the members of other social classes.
- However, it may be noted here that people from the middle class may serve as aspirational groups or have a reference group appeal for the lower; similarly people of the upper class may serve the same for people in the middle class. With this impact, people in a class may possess beliefs, norms, attitudes, activities, interests and behavior that are a hybrid of two or more classes.
- The observed rate of class mobility depends upon a number of factors. First, it varies whit the overall recorded rate of job changing, which, in turn, varies with the time span between observations and with the economic climate at the time of measurement. For example, data for recent years are likely to show the effect of the current economic decline and restructuring. If a new job can be found when firms go out of business and workers are made redundant it often means working in a different occupation and acquiring new skills. Second, the rate of observed class mobility will depend upon the extent of occupational mobility. This may result from employees normal progression' through promotion chains into managerial and supervisory positions.
- Current occupation is recorded using the Key Occupations for Statistical Purposes (KOS) which contains 546 categories at the lowest level of aggregation. This classification corresponds to that of the OPCS *Classification of Occupations* (1980) used to record occupation in the 1980 Census. The fine divisions which the classification makes, together with the other information in the LFS relating to employment status, mean that the data lend themselves to regrouping into class schema. In addition to current occupation, the LFS records the occupation in which the respondent was in paid employment during the week one year before the survey.
- Social classes are collectivities of individuals who occupy similar locations within the social division of labour. Hence members of a class may be expected to share similar work and market situations. Distinct classes persist when people move only rarely between classes, that is, when there is 'closure'. The greater the degree of closure the more the formation of identifiable classes is facilitated (Giddens 1980 : 107). Although local factors act to condition class formation, such as the division of labour and the authority of relationships within the workplace, occupation is the primary principle of differentiation in the labour market and thus an effective indicator of class in a capitalist society.
- An important feature of this new schema is that it is a classification of occupations, rather than of individuals. Stewart, Prandy and Blackburn (1980 : 113) show that it is necessary to distinguish individuals from occupations when discussing class position. They emphasize that individuals may come to particular occupations through a diversity of routes and from many different backgrounds; similarly, there is a diversity of destinations from any one occupation. Consequently, the meaning of an occupation will not be the same for all engaged in it.
- The scheme allocates each of the 546 occupations of the KOS classification to one of eight classes on the basis of the characteristics held by the majority of the respondents in the

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sample who follow that occupation. These characteristics were examined in order. Employing others took precedence over all other characteristics, followed by working on one's own account, managerial status, the possession of technical and higher educational qualifications, and the manual of non-manual nature of the occupation (as defined by OPCS, *Classification of Occupations,* 1980). Manual employees were then classified according to whether they had served a craft apprenticeship, their supervisory status and their employment in a highly unionized industry group.

- Compared with the other classes, Classes 1, employers, and 3, managers and professional, are the most 'closed', that is, they lose the smallest proportion of their members to other classes during the course of the year, and Class 5, clerical, is the most open. However, the differences between classes in the proportions who experience mobility are not large. Subsequent tables will show that for women the differences between classes in rates of outflow are much more marked. The largest interclass flows as compared with the quasi-independence models are from Class 5, clerical, to Class 3, professional and managerial, and vice versa; from Class 8, lower manual, to Class 7, higher manual; and from Class 6, craft, to Class 8. In the main, these flows are also the largest in terms of absolute magnitude.
- This flow consists principally of individuals starting up small retail businesses (butchers, publicans and hairdressers) or working on their own account as painters, builders and goods vehicle drivers after having been employed in a manual occupation, and those who give up or are forced to abandon their business and take up employment. Although the self employed petty bourgeoisie constitute a distinct class, separate from employed workers by virtue of their different relations to the means of production, these data show that there is considerable mobility across the divide, and that the inflow into self employment comes largely from the lower manual class, the one with the least labour market resources. Just under half of the recruitment to Class 2, the self employed without employees, is from Class 8, lower manual.
- Treating the occupation as a manual one, that is as having conditions of services and rewards more similar to manual than clerical ones, would have the effect of reducing the apparent flow across the manual/non-manual line. However, it would still leave the flows between Classes 5 and 8 as the second and third largest in the table. Furthermore, there is substantial mobility of sales assistants into mangerial jobs, and the reassignment would also have the effect of increasing the flow between Class 8, lower manual, and Class 3, professional and managerial, by about 60 per cent. An alternative tactic would be to assign sales people to a class of their own, as Heath and Britten (1984) propose, but in relation to its size this new class would have very high rates of flow between it and the lower manual and professional and managerial classes. If appears, therefore, that for women the sales occupations do have a special role, serving to straddle several classes in the occupational structure.
- The rate of movement out of KOS Classes 1, 2 and 3 for part-timers is very high, an that for Class 7 only slightly lower. As with full-time working women, the numerically small classes are also those with the highest rates of outward flow. However, part-timers are much more likely to be working in 'lower manual' jobs that full-time working women. In comparison with full-timers there is little mobility between Classes 5 and 3, mainly because there are so few part-timers in the managerial occupations of Class 3. The only area where the flow is significantly greater than expected from the quasi-independence model is the flow from to higher manaual (Classes 8 to 7). Most of the cell counts are too small make disaggregation into occupations worthwhile, the exception being that for the flow between Classes 5 and 8, shown in Table 7.7.

Notes

7.5 Key–Words

1. Agrarian class : An agrarian system is a concept used to describe the dynamic set of economic and technological factors that affect agricultural practices.
2. Proletariat : A social class comprising those who do manual labour or work wages

7.6 Review Questions

1. What do you mean by Agrarian social structure?
2. What is the concept of class? Discuss.
3. Write a short note on class as a social stratification.
4. Discuss class and mobility.
5. What is the meaning of a Class? Discuss social class.

Answers: Self–Assessment

1. homo Hierarchicus
2. (*d*)
3. stratification
4. upper caste
5. language

7.7 Further Readings



1. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Perspectives on Social Stratification, Rawat Publication.
2. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Social Stratification & Mobility, Rawat Publication.
3. Hasnain, Nadeem, 2011 : Indian Society and Culture Continuity and Change, Jawahar Publishers and Distributors.

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Unit 8: Race and Ethnicity

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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Know the Race and Racial Group.
- Explain the Ethnic Group.
- Discuss the Minority and Majority Relations.

Introduction

The distinction between race and ethnicity is considered highly problematic. Ethnicity is often assumed to be the cultural identity of a group from a nation state, while race is assumed to be biological and/or cultural essentialization of a group hierarchy of superiority/inferiority related to their biological constitution. It is assumed that, based on power relations, there exist 'racialized ethnicities' and 'ethnicized races'. Raman Grosfoguel (University of California, Berkeley) notes that 'racial/ethnic identity' is one concept and that concepts of race and ethnicity cannot be used as separate and autonomous categories. Before Weber, race and ethnicity were often seen as two aspects of the same thing. Around 1900 and before the essentialist primordialist understanding of ethnicity was predominant, cultural differences between peoples were seen as being the result of inherited traits and tendencies. This was the time when "sciences" such as phrenology claimed to be able to correlate cultural and behavioral traits of different populations with their outward physical characteristics, such as the shape of the skull. With Weber's introduction of ethnicity as a social construct, race and ethnicity were divided from each other. A social belief in biologically well-defined races lingered on.

In 1950, the UNESCO statement, "The Race Question", signed by some of the internationally renowned scholars of the time (including Ashley Montagu, Claude Levi-Strauss, Clauford von Magellan desch Singrones Strauss, Julian Huxley, etc.), suggested that : "National, religious, geographic, linguistic and cultural groups do not necessarily coincide with racial groups : and the cultural traits of such groups have no demonstrated genetic connection with racial traits. Because serious errors of this kind are habitually committed when the term 'race' is used in popular parlance, it would be better when speaking of human races to drop the term 'race' altogether and speak of 'ethnic groups'."

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In 1982 anthropologist David Craig Griffith summed up forty years of ethnographic research, arguing that racial and ethnic categories are symbolic markers for different ways that people from different parts of the world have been incorporated into a global economy :

> The opposing interests that divide the working classes are further reinforced through appeals to "racial" and "ethnic" distinctions. Such appeals serve to allocate different categories of workers to rungs on the scale of labor markets, relegating stigmatized populations to the lower levels and insulating the higher echelons from competition from below. Capitalism did not create all the distinctions of ethnicity and race that function to set off categories of workers from one another. It is, nevertheless, the process of labor mobilization under capitalism that imparts to these distinctions their effective values.

According to Wolf, races were constructed and incorporated during the period of European mercantile expansion, and ethnic groups during the period of capitalist expansion.

Often, ethnicity also connotes shared cultural, linguistic, behavioural or religious traits. For example, to call oneself Jewish or Arab is to immediately invoke a clutch of linguistic, religious, cultural and racial features that are held to be common within each ethnic category. Such broad ethnic categories have also been termed *macroethnicity.* This distinguishes them from smaller, more subjective ethnic features, often termed *microethnicity*.

In some cases, especially involving transnational migration, or colonial expansion, ethnicity is linked to nationality. Anthropologists and historians, following the modernist understanding of ethnicity as proposed by Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson see nations and nationalism as developing with the rise of the modern state system in the seventeenth century. They culminated in the rise of "nation-states" in which the presumptive boundaries of the nation coincided (or ideally coincided) with state boundaries. Thus, in the West, the notion of ethnicity, like race and nation, developed in the context of European colonial expansion, when mercantilism and capitalism were promoting global movements of populations at the same time that state boundaries were being more clearly and rigidly defined. In the nineteenth century, modern states generally sought legitimacy through their claim to represent "nations."

Nation-states, however, invariably include populations that have been excluded from national life for one reason or another. Members of excluded groups, consequently, will either demand inclusion on the basis of equality, or seek autonomy, sometimes even to the extent of complete political separation in their own nation-state. Under these conditions—when people moved from one state to another, or one state conquered or colonized peoples beyond its national boundaries—ethnic groups were formed by people who identified with one nation, but lived in another state.

8.1 Race

Most modern societies have numerous ethnic and racial groups. India, the USA, the UK, Canada, etc., are *plural societies*. Economically and politically, ethnic and racial groups may perform the same functions in a particular society, though culturally they are generally distinct from each other. However, in reality, ethnic and racial differences are also marked by inequalities of power and wealth, tension and conflict, and prejudice and discrimination. There are also ethnic and racial minorities, and as such they are bound to have unequal access to opportunities and status distinctions. Discrimination based on ethnic and racial considerations has been reported from both highly industrialized and less industrialized societies. But ethnic or racial minorities are not necessarily backward economically and socially. In India, some ethnic groups are minorities, but economically they are far more ahead of the majority groups. Parsis, Christians, Sikhs are generally better off than other groups in their respective regions.

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Defining Race

Generally, it is believed that people can be separated biologically into different races. Some anthropologists have categorized people into four or five major races. Such classifications are mainly based on the colour of skin, shape of hair, physique, etc. The science of genetics has proved that these are only conjectures and not valid characteristics. Population inbreeding and degree of contact between people could create physical differences. The same segment of population may have a variety of physical traits. Physical differences between human beings are partly inherited, but generally such differences are appropriated for social discrimination and prejudice. Anthony Giddens observes: "Racial differences, therefore, should be understood as *physical variations singled out* by the members of a community or society as *ethnically significant*" More than "race", "racism" is practised through a false attribution of inherited characteristics of personality.

Physical anthropologists have dealt with the question of "race" in great detail based on physical characteristics of different sections of population. Anthropologist A.L. Kroeber believes : "Race is a valid biological concept. It is a group united by heredity : a breed or genetic strain or subspecies." Further, Kroeber says that it is not a valid socio-cultural concept, nor usable in socio-cultural situations. All human beings are *homo sapiens*; how they have become different types is not known.

Classification of Races

Based on certain traits, such as stature or bodily height, cephalic index, or the ratio of the length and breadth of the head, nasal index, relation of breath and length of nose, prognathism, or the degree of the protrusion of the jaws, capacity of the skull, the texture of the hair, hairiness of the body, hair colour and eye colour, steatopygia, or a heavy deposit of fat in the buttocks, etc., classifications of different races have been made out. There are three primary categories of races : (1) Caucasian, Caucasoid, or Europoid; (2) Negroid; and (3) Mangoloid. These three are also referred to as "White", "Black" and "Yellow" races, respectively. The three main groups account for more than nine-tenths of all the nations and tribes of the world. Each of the three great primary stocks falls into several natural divisions. Primary stocks and races are as follows :

1. Caucasian or "White"
   - Nordic
   - Alpine
   - Mediterranean
   - Hindu
2. Mangoloid or "Yellow"
   - Mangolian
   - Malaysian
   - American Indian
3. Negroid or "Black"
   - Negro
   - Melanesian
   - Pigmy Black
   - Bushman
4. Doubtful Classification
   - Australoid
   - Veddoid (Indo-Austral)
   - Polynesian
   - Ainu

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After discussing various classifications of races based on some specific physiological traits, Kroeber reiterates his view that "the term 'race' has here been used in its biological sense, for a group united in blood or heredity.

Popularly, the word is used in a different sense; namely, that of population having any traits in common, be they hereditary or nonhereditary, biological or socio-cultural, organic or superorganic". Thus, Kroeber also enlarges the initial definition of race by way of incorporation of socio-cultural traits. Scientifically speaking, to say that there is the French race, the Anglo-Saxon race, the Gypsy race, the Jewish race, etc., is not correct.



Did u know? A race is a subdivision of species and corresponds to a breed in domestic animals.

Caste and Race Compared

In a recent study, Chris Smaje considers both "race" and "caste" as natural hierarchies, that is, people can be divided into ordered collectivities as *sui generis*. However, caste and race are not the same thing, the two have some differences and similarities as well. Three common points as under are discerned in the two institutions :

1. the separation or identity between persons and things;
2. conceptions of cosmic order and its relation to worldly diversity, particularly with respect to political boundaries; and
3. the character of the persons and the "substance" that they embody.

Both create certain tensions and conflicts vis-a-vis social processes. The very essence of the two institutions is against egalitarianism. Social science theories and conceptualizations are also free from the socio-cultural limitations of caste race. In case of race, the physical traits are socially consequential. Smaje does not understand "race" principally in terms of somatic traits, but in terms of a specific engagement between political ideology and the colonial expansion of Europe. Smaje is opposed to the idea that some actual, substantive quality or qualities exist which unambiguously and unfailingly differentiate some kinds of people from others. In other words, it opposes the idea that involves natural properties which define groups of people. Race inheres relations of a particular kind between persons - relations which are symbolized or denoted by the concept of "race". Race denotes categories or devices through which particular ideas of groupness are constituted. Thus, according to Smaje, race is not a given "natural" property, it is the idea of a relation, which is created in specific historical or social contexts, usually involving exclusion or discrimination of some kind. In reality, many societies practise "racism", without knowing fully connotations of the idea of race.



Notes Race can be regarded as one of broader class of social phenomena that we might term as *essentialist identifications*.

Kenan Malik observes that "the concept of race ... is not an expression of a single phenomenon or relationship. Rather it is a medium through which the changing relationship between humanity, society and nature has been understood in a variety of ways". Smaje questions this definition of race as *unchanging* medium or context of social relations, which are constantly changing. It seems

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that Malik argues that racism emerged in the 19th century as a rationale for inequality - in an age which espoused egalitarianism. In the 17th century, it was used for enslavement of labour. There have been a variety of "racisms" as it is obvious from the contemporary racial discourse. For Louis Dumont racism is simply an inherent human tendency towards discriminations of status. Gunnar Myrdal, certainly before Dumont, considers that racism is practised, for example, as an excuse for slavery in American society. The fateful word "race" is appropriated to deny inalienable rights of all men to freedom and equality of opportunity. Race prejudice is the perversion of equalitarianism - the apparent national creed of the Americans.

Racial hierarchy and individualist egalitarianism represent two poles of a single socio-cultural system, characterized with capitalist production. In a secular political order, perpetuation of racism indicates a paradoxical situation in the modern world. Myrdal tries to explain how biological racism has been transformed into a socio-cultural, political and economic system of deprivations and discriminations.

Racism

"Racist mentality" aroused in Europe around 1800-1815. Hostile attitudes towards the Jews gave birth to new belief. Theological dogmatism was opposed by way of belief in Science and Logic. Jews were addressed as a "race", having characteristics such as bad smell, hereditary diseases, hidden illnesses, and other loathsome defects. German patriotism and pride in Nazism resulted into framing of racial laws. Racial conceptions and stereotypes have found their way into philosophical and theological thought in the 19th century Germany, France and other countries of Europe. In fact, there is a close relationship between the rise of nationalism and that of racism. Rivalry between Christians and Jews is well known as the two competed in all fields. Superiority-inferiority complex haunted the two communities.

The protagonists of racism have argued that "race" is a kind of magic key to universal historical secrets. "All is race, there is no other truth". "Race is key to history." In Great Britain and France the notion that "coloured races" were congenitally inferior was spread out by powerful economic interests. A sort of nexus was worked out between capitalist interests and psychological needs vis-a-vis racism. Even in the writings of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud references to racial thinking can be found.

According to Peter Robb, "the concept of race included any essentialising of groups of people which held them to display inherent, heritable, persistent or predictive characteristics, and which thus had a biological or quasi-biological basis". There may be different kinds of race theory, reflecting various understandings of biology, history or societies. "The idea of race is a form of this process (essentilisation) applied to humans." "Racism occurs when characteristics are assumed from generalizations and are not verifiable. Its crucial measures include the degrees of mutability or plurality admitted to exist within categories, and the arbitrariness of their outer limits. But, above all, racism implies a *ranking* according to the biological origins and features already mentioned."

Race and Indian Society

The question is : How far biology can be considered to have been *essential* ? In the context of Indian society, skin colour, birth, sexual relations, etc., were considered the bases of quasi-racial discrimination and stereotyping. *Varna* hierarchy reflected considerably racism. But it is difficult to say that these categories were wholly or clearly biological. The *mleccha* was racially stigmatized. "Untouchability" too reflected racial elements through *exclusion* of certain groups from the community. The Hindu idea of *dharma* as inherited roles also reflected racism. Thus, in some way; the terms such as "lineage", "blood", "breeding", *jati*, *varna*, though quite distinct from "race", reflected some elements of the concepts of "race" and "racism". Religious identities too in a sense reflected racial elements.

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A very important point is : "The relation of caste to race is not simply a question of whether the groups are in fact racially different, but rather that there seems to be some disposition to attribute racial difference to even the most marginal cues in caste and caste-like situations." Why it is that pariah groups engage in the same kinds of occupation ? Why are tanners, leather workers and butchers frequently pariah groups ? Such a pattern of segregation and exclusion is found in both caste and race. However, caste has been resilient, adaptive and discrete system, and as such biological or quasi-biological elements do not matter as much as they do in race, though *birth* continues to be there as significant ascriptive element in Indian society.

8.2 Racial Groups

The identification and description of various racial elements in India has been a difficult task. India has always been a place of attraction for a variety of immigrants from various parts of the world. Whether it was religious persecution or harassment on other grounds or mere attraction towards India because of economic factors, waves after waves of people have been coming into the subcontinent. Most of them never went back to their original habitats. In this way people having different racial, elements have been coming and settling down in India and the process of admixture has been taking place with the local populations. This has resulting in the colourful mosaic of human affairs that the Indian society is today.

Unfortunately we have been getting only stone tools in the name of archaeological evidences; skeletal remains have rarely been found. Because of these constraints it is very difficult to construct a racial history of India. Paucity of skeletal remains of even historic times is the major reason for the glaring gaps in our knowledge about the racial history of India. The last one hundred years have seen, some spurt in archaeological researches leading to fossil finds. The situation is still hazy.

Risley may be considered as the first scholar to have attempted the racial classification of India on a scientific basis.

He was a civil servant who, in 1890, conducted this study on the basis of anthropometric techniques. He was appointed by the then Government of India as Census Commissioner for 1901 Census. He presented his conclusions in the report of the Census and in 1915 in his path breaking work, *The Peoples of India*. He classified Indian population into seven racial types. Summarised description of his classification is as follows :

(*i*) **The Turko-Iranian type :** In this type he included the people of Baluchistan and frontier provinces (now in Pakistan).

(*ii*) **The Indo-Aryan type :** Punjabis, Rajputs, Jats and Kashmiri Khatris were the main groups in this type.

(*iii*) **The Scytho-Dravidian type :** Best examples of this type are Maratha Brahmins and Coorgs.

(*iv*) **The Aryo-Dravidian type :** People of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar are the main examples of this type.

(*v*) **The Mongolo-Dravidian type :** Bengali Brahmins and Kayasthas are considered to be the representatives of this type.

(*vi*) **The Mongoloid type :** The people of Assam, Nepal and Burma were included in this type.

(*vii*) **The Dravidian type :** The bulk of the population of the present Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, southern region of Madhya Pradesh and Chotanagpur was covered under this type.

The most glaring weakness and deficiency of Risley's classification is that many of his points are based on preconceived notions and arbitrary conclusions which have nothing to do with reality.

The second important attempt in this direction was made by Haddon. He divided India into three main geographical regions which, according to him, cover the entire racial groups present in

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Indian population. These three geographical regions are :

(*i*) The Himalayas.

(*ii*) The Northern plains of Hindustan, and

(*iii*) The Deccan

The major ethnic elements of these three respective geographical regions are (i) *Indo-Aryan and Mongoloid*, (ii) *Indo-Afghan viz*. the Jats and Rajputs and (iii) *Negrito*, pre-Dravidian, southern Brachaycephal and western Brachycephals.

Haddon's racial classification is based on physical traits, customs and traditions, language and the prevalent folklore. He analysed the racial elements in Indian population with the help of these "evidences". This classification now carries only historical importance.

In this crowd of scholars B.S. Guha stands apart. He presented his racial classification basing it on scientific criteria. This classification is based on anthropometric surveys conducted as past of the 1931 Census. It was for the first time that a study of racial types was done using the then developed anthropometric techniques. By virtue of being based on a sound scientific method, it is regarded as the most recognised and acceptable racial classification till date. It is invariably used in any study of Indian population. This classification is as follows :

1. The Negrito
2. The Proto-Australoid
3. The Mongoloid
   - (*a*) Plaeo-Mongoloid
     - (*i*) Long headed
     - (*ii*) Broad headed
   - (*b*) Tibeto-Mongoloid
4. The Mediterranean
   - (*a*) Paleo-Mediterranean
   - (*b*) Mediterranean
   - (*c*) Oriental type
5. The Western Brachycephals
   - (*a*) Alpinoid
   - (*b*) Dinaric
   - (*c*) Armenoid
6. The Nordic

Among the conclusions of Guha's Survey the most important is that the Barchycephals (broad headed people) dominate the Indian population. This was not the general belief before Guha's classification. Guha's classification has received the maximum approval of the scholars in this field. Since no other study or survey based on scientific line of this magnitude has been conducted, this classification continues to be the most recognised and acceptable. The two points on which Guha has been criticised most are the undue importance to Negrito elements and that the sources of all racial groups in India have been traced outside India.

On the basis of intensive study of racial elements in Indian population three most important racial types may be described. These are : Negrito, Proto-Australoid and Mongoloid. It is the general belief that the people with mongoloid racial elements came last.

In fact the main difference of opinion is with regard to Proto-Australoid and Negrito. Guha, and before him De Quarterfages in 1877 had expressed the view that the people with Negrito racial

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elements are the earliest inhabitants of India. He expressed the view that a certain submerged Negrito race had come to India perhaps from Malaysia; this Negrito racial element seems to be present among the Veddas of Sri Lanka and Kadar, Irula, Kurumba etc. of South India.

Some Proto-Australoid racial features have been noted from the skeletal remains found from Mohenjodaro. A number of scholars have expressed the view that the Australoid and Proto-Australoid racial elements are present throughout the Indian population. If the Negrito racial element had ever dominated the Indian population then some definite and clearly visible Negrito features should be there in the North Indian populations. The serological studies tell us that the Negrito features are almost absent even among the most primitive tribal communities of India. The primitive tribes of India have rarely demonstrated the predominance of B-blood group as is the case with Negroids. Australoid groups have a predominance of A-blood group; many primitive tribes of India have predominance of A-blood group. Another interesting and significant point in this discussion is that though the tribes like Bhil and Munda show a high frequency of B-blood group like the Negrito but they lack other physical features of the Negritos. Even otherwise no final conclusion can be drawn on the basis of only serological facts specially under the conditions when not many serological studies have been conducted in India. There is a lot of scope for research in this direction. On the basis of the present status of knowledge we can conclude only that perhaps the proto-Australoids were the earliest inhabitants of India who experienced the admixture of African or Negrito blood in several parts of the subcontinent. Even this may not be the final conclusion but till the time some other evidences prove it otherwise it will continue to be the most acceptable conclusion.

8.3 Ethnic Groups

An **ethnic group** is a group of people whose members are identified through a common trait. This can, but does not have to, include an idea of common heritage, a common culture, a shared language or dialect. The group's ethos or ideology may also stress common ancestry and religion, as opposed to an ethnic minority group which refers to race. The process that results in the emergence of an ethnicity is called ethnogenesis. Some ethnic groups are marked by little more than a common name.

Terminology and Definition

The terms *ethnicity* and *ethnic group* are derived from the Greek word *ethnos*, normally translated as "nation". The terms refer currently to people thought to have common ancestry who share a distinctive culture.

(Greek : *homaimon*, "of the same blood"), language (Greek : *homoglosson*, "speaking the same language"), cults and customs (Greek : *homotropon*, "of the same habits or life").

The recent meaning emerged in the mid 19th century and expresses the notion of "a people" or "a nation". The term ethnicity is of 20th century coinage, attested from the 1950s. The term nationality depending on context may either be used synonymously with ethnicity, or synonymously with citizenship (in a sovereign state).

The modern usage of "ethnic group" further came to reflect the different kinds of encounters industrialised states have had with external groups, such as immigrants and indigenous peoples; "ethnic" thus came to stand in opposition to "national", to refer to people with distinct cultural identities who, through migration or conquest, had become subject to a state or "nation" with a different cultural mainstream. — with the first usage of the term *ethnic group* in 1935, and entering the Oxford English Dictionary in 1972.

Writing about the usage of the term "ethnic" in the ordinary language of Great Britain and the United States, in 1977 Wallman noted that

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> The term 'ethnic' popularly connotes [race]' in Britain, only less precisely, and with a lighter value load. In North America, by contrast '[race]' most commonly means color, and 'ethnics' are the descendants of relatively recent immigrants from non-English-speaking countries. '[Ethnic]' is not a noun in Britain. In effect there are no 'ethnics'; there are only 'ethnic relations'.

Thus, in today's everyday language, the words "ethnic" and "ethnicity" still have a ring of exotic peoples, minority issues and race relations.


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Herodotus is the first who stated the main characteristics of ethnicity in the 5th century BC, with his famous account of what defines Greek identity, where he lists kinship.

Within the social sciences, however, the usage has become more generalized to all human groups that explicitly regard themselves and are regarded by others as culturally distinctive. Among the first to bring the term "ethnic group" into social studies was the German sociologist Max Weber, who defined it as :

Those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for group formation; furthermore it does not matter whether an objective blood relationship exists.

Whether ethnicity qualifies as a cultural universal is to some extent dependent on the exact definition used. According to "Challenges of Measuring an Ethnic World: Science, politics, and reality", "Ethnicity is a fundamental factor in human life: it is a phenomenon inherent in human experience. Many social scientists, such as anthropologists Fredrik Barth and Eric Wolf, do not consider ethnic identity to be universal. They regard ethnicity as a product of specific kinds of inter-group interactions, rather than an essential quality inherent to human groups.

Conceptual History of Ethnicity

According to Hans Adriel Handokho, the study of ethnicity was dominated by two distinct debates until recently.

- One is between "primordialism" and "instrumentalism". In the primordialist view, the participant perceives ethnic ties collectively, as an externally given, even coercive, social bond. The instrumentalist approach, on the other hand, treats ethnicity primarily as an ad-hoc element of a political strategy, used as a resource for interest groups for achieving secondary goals such as, for instance, an increase in wealth, power or status. This debate is still an important point of reference in Political science, although most scholars' approaches fall between the two poles.
- The second debate is between "constructivism" and "essentialism". Constructivists view national and ethnic identities as the product of historical forces, often recent, even when the identities are presented as old. Essentialists view such identities as ontological categories defining social actors, and not the result of social action.

According to Eriksen, these debates have been superseded, especially in anthropology, by scholars' attempts to respond to increasingly politicised forms of self-representation by members of different ethnic groups and nations. This is in the context of debates over multiculturalism in countries, such as the United States and Canada, which have large immigrant populations from many different cultures, and post-colonialism in the Caribbean and South Asia.

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Weber maintained that ethnic groups were *kunstlich* (artificial, i.e. a social construct) because they were based on a subjective belief in shared *Gemeinschaft* (community). Secondly, this belief in shared Gemeinschaft did not create the group; the group created the belief. Third, group formation resulted from the drive to monopolise power and status. This was contrary to the prevailing naturalist belief of the time, which held that socio-cultural and behavioral differences between peoples stemmed from inherited traits and tendencies derived from common descent, then called "race".

Another influential theoretician of ethnicity was Fredrik Barth, whose "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries" from 1969 has been described as instrumental in spreading the usage of the term in social studies in the 1980s and 1990s. Barth went further than Weber in stressing the constructed nature of ethnicity. To Barth, ethnicity was perpetually negotiated and renegotiated by both external ascription and internal self-identification. Barth's view is that ethnic groups are not discontinuous cultural isolates, or logical *a prions* to which people naturally belong. He wanted to part with anthropological notions of cultures as bounded entities, and ethnicity as primordialist bonds, replacing it with a focus on the interface between groups. "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries", therefore, is a focus on the interconnectedness of ethnic identities. Barth writes : "categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories."

In 1978, anthropologist Ronald Cohen claimed that the identification of "ethnic groups" in the usage of social scientists often reflected inaccurate labels more than indigenous realities :

The named ethnic identities we accept, often unthinkingly, as basic givens in the literature are often arbitrarily, or even worse inaccurately, imposed.

In this way, he pointed to the fact that identification of an ethnic group by outsiders, e.g. anthropologists, may not coincide with the self-identification of the members of that group. He also described that in the first decades of usage, the term ethnicity had often been used in lieu of older terms such as "cultural" or "tribal" when referring to smaller groups with shared cultural systems and shared heritage, but that "ethnicity" had the added value of being able to describe the commonalities between systems of group identity in both tribal and modern societies. Cohen also suggested that claims concerning "ethnic" identity (like earlier claims concerning "tribal" identity) are often colonialist practices and effects of the relations between colonized peoples and nation-states.

Social scientists have thus focused on how, when, and why different markers of ethnic identity become salient. Thus, anthropologist Joan Vincent observed that ethnic boundaries often have a mercurial character. Ronald Cohen concluded that ethnicity is "a series of nesting dichotomizations of inclusiveness and exclusiveness". He agrees with Joan Vincent's observation that (in Cohen's paraphrase) "Ethnicity ... can be narrowed or broadened in boundary terms in relation to the specific needs of political mobilization. This may be why descent is sometimes a marker of ethnicity, and sometimes not: which diacritic of ethnicity is salient depends on whether people are scaling ethnic boundaries up or down, and whether they are scaling them up or down depends generally on the political situation.

"Ethnies" or Ethnic Categories

In order to avoid the problem of defining ethnic classification as labeling of others or as self-identification, it has been proposed to distinguish between concepts of "ethnic categories", "ethnic networks" and "ethnic communities" or "ethnies".

- An "*ethnic category*" is a category set up by outsiders, that is, those who are not themselves members of the category, and whose members are populations that are categorised by

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outsiders as being distinguished by attributes of a common name or emblem, a shared cultural element and a connection to a specific territory. But, members who are ascribed to ethnic categories do not themselves have any awareness of their belonging to a common, distinctive group.

- At the level of "*ethnic networks*", the group begins to have a sense of collectiveness, and at this level, common myths of origin and shared cultural and biological heritage begins to emerge, at least among the elites.
- At the level of"*ethnies*" or "*ethnic communities*", the members themselves have clear conceptions of being "a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, and one or more common elements of culture, including an association with a homeland, and some degree of solidarity, at least among the elites". That is, an ethnie is self-defined as a group, whereas ethnic categories are set up by outsiders whether or not their own members identify with the category given them.
- A "*Situational Ethnicity*" is an Ethnic identity that is chosen for the moment based on the social setting or situation.

Approaches to Understanding Ethnicity

Different approaches to understanding ethnicity have been used by different social scientists when trying to understand the nature of ethnicity as a factor in human life and society. Examples of such approaches are: primordialism, essentialism, perennialism, constructivism, modernism and instrumentalism.

- "*Primordialism*", holds that ethnicity has existed at all times of human history and that modern ethnic groups have historical continuity into the far past. For them, the idea of ethnicity is closely linked to the idea of nations and is rooted in the pre-Weber understanding of humanity as being divided into primordially existing groups rooted by kinship and biological heritage.
  - "*Essentialist primordialism*" further holds that ethnicity is an *a priori* fact of human existence, that ethnicity precedes any human social interaction and that it is basically unchanged by it. This theory sees ethnic groups as natural, not just as historical. This understanding does not explain how and why nations and ethnic groups seemingly appear, disappear and often reappear through history. It also has problems dealing with the consequences of intermarriage, migration and colonization for the composition of modern day multi-ethnic societies.
  - "*Kinship primordialism*" holds that ethnic communities are extensions of kinship units, basically being derived by kinship or clan ties where the choices of cultural signs (language, religion, traditions) are made exactly to show this biological affinity. In this way, the myths of common biological ancestry that are a defining feature of ethnic communities are to be understood as representing actual biological history. A problem with this view on ethnicity is that it is more often than not the case that mythic origins of specific ethnic groups directly contradict the known biological history of an ethnic community.
  - "*Geertz's primordialism*", notably espoused by anthropologist Clifford Geertz, argues that humans in general attribute an overwhelming power to primordial human "givens" such as blood ties, language, territory, and cultural differences. In Geertz' opinion, ethnicity is not in itself primordial but humans perceive it as such because it is embedded in their experience of the world.
- "*Perennialism*" holds that ethnicity is ever changing, and that while the concept of ethnicity has existed at all times, ethnic groups are generally short lived before the ethnic boundaries realign in new patterns. The opposing perennialist view holds that while ethnicity and ethnic groupings has existed throughout history, they are not part of the natural order.

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- "*Perpetual perennialism*" holds that specific ethnic groups have existed continuously throughout history.
- "*Situational perennialism*" holds that nations and ethnic groups emerge, change and vanish through the course of history. This view holds that the concept of ethnicity is basically a tool used by political groups to manipulate resources such as wealth, power, territory or status in their particular groups' interests. Accordingly, ethnicity emerges when it is relevant as means of furthering emergent collective interests and changes according to political changes in the society. Examples of a perennialist interpretation of ethnicity are also found in Barth, and Seidner who see ethnicity as ever-changing boundaries between groups of people established through ongoing social negotiation and interaction.
- "*Instrumentalist perennialism*", while seeing ethnicity primarily as a versatile tool that identified different ethnics groups and limits through time, explains ethnicity as a mechanism of social stratification, meaning that ethnicity is the basis for a hierarchical arrangement of individuals. According to Donald Noel, a sociologist who developed a theory on the origin of ethnic stratification, ethnic stratification is a "system of stratification wherein some relatively fixed group membership (e.g., race, religion, or nationality) is utilized as a major criterion for assigning social positions". Ethnic stratification is one of many different types of social stratification, including stratification based on socio-economic status, race, or gender. According to Donald Noel, ethnic stratification will emerge only when specific ethnic groups are brought into contact with one another, and only when those groups are characterized by a high degree of ethnocentrism, competition, and differential power. Ethnocentrism is the tendency to look at the world primarily from the perspective of one's own culture, and to downgrade all other groups outside one's own culture. Some sociologists, such as Lawrence Bobo and Vincent Hutchings, say the origin of ethnic stratification lies in individual dispositions of ethnic prejudice, which relates to the theory of ethnocentrism. Continuing with Noel's theory, some degree of differential power must be present for the emergence of ethnic stratification. In other words, an inequality of power among ethnic groups means "they are of such unequal power that one is able to impose its will upon another". In addition to differential power, a degree of competition structured along ethnic lines is a prerequisite to ethnic stratification as well. The different ethnic groups must be competing for some common goal, such as power or influence, or a material interest, such as wealth or territory. Lawrence Bobo and Vincent Hutchings propose that competition is driven by self-interest and hostility, and results in inevitable stratification and conflict.

- "*Constructivism*" sees both primordialist and perennialist views as basically flawed, and rejects the notion of ethnicity as a basic human condition. It holds that ethnic groups are only products of human social interaction, maintained only in so far as they are maintained as valid social constructs in societies.
- "*Modernist constructivism*" correlates the emergence of ethnicity with the movement towards nationstates beginning in the early modern period. Proponents of this theory, such as Eric Hobsbawm, argue that ethnicity and notions of ethnic pride, such as nationalism, are purely modern inventions, appearing only in the modern period of world history. They hold that prior to this, ethnic homogeneity was not considered an ideal or necessary factor in the forging of large-scale societies.

Defining Ethnicity

There is a long trajectory of discourse on ethnicity as it is a culturally specific conception of the social world. As such, the idea of ethnicity is immanently transformative. Always, ethnicity is related to some basic aspects of society such as language, religion, region and styles of life, etc.

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When people having differences in terms of these aspects of social life, and are ranked as higher and lower or superior and inferior, ethnic stratification emerges as a social reality. The proponents of ethnic stratification consider the idea of ethnicity as a functioning mode of organization. Moderation of unequal conflicting ethnic segments is also an ongoing process. Structure and process are thus ontological basis of ethnicity. The fact is that ethnicity is a question of emphasis. To what extent one can stretch the criteria, namely, language and religion, to distinguish between people as higher and lower ? If a situation becomes too rigid causing immobility and hardship, anti-ethnic agitations and movements are organized to redress the cultural and social oppression and discrimination.

Ethnicity is thus a set of cultural areas or complexes, and these are synonymous with ethnic groups. Cultural representations, differences, boundaries, units/communities are created based on ethnic criteria and divides. On the one hand, one can see cultural affinities, and on the other, antipathies based on ethnic segregation. Such a situation is there because "I"/"we" and "other" complex gets roots based on ethnic differences. There are different mechanisms and rationales of ethnicity. A simple idealist approach to ethnicity is insufficient. A materialist (class) approach is equally significant. However, ethnicity is not race. As we have discussed earlier that race is pre-given, a natural hierarchy, generally based on the biological/physiological conception. And, the concept of ethnicity is seen as a medium of expression of social relationship, and it is not an immutable or static medium. Ethnicization is a cultural process, which explains ground conditions or cultural meta-context and also ideology underlying ethnic stratification.

The studies of the Blacks and Whites in the USA imply both "racial" and "ethnic" dimensions of stratification and inequality. More than the stratification aspect, ethnicity is used as a means of identification. It is a way to know the "cultural other". There is a Greek word -*ethnos*, which means "people" or "nation". In fact, *ethnos* referred to a range of situations in which a collectivity of humans lived and acted together. Ethnicity and ethnicization as such become mechanisms of distribution and redistribution of resources and opportunities in a given society. Ethnicity becomes an issue in everyday discourse as the politics of group identification and advantage. Collective interests and actions are geared to extract maximum share in societal resources. Such a situation may also result into ethnic conflicts. In some societies the vulgarization of ethnic game has invited "ethnic cleansing". "Groupness" as characterized by "distinctive cultural traits" is thus another way of defining ethnicity. The trajectory today implies from "race" to "culture" to "ethnicity". The word "tribe" is giving way to the use of the term "ethnic group". Regional linguistic groups are being labelled as "nations" or distinct cultural formations. The dimension of hegemony of the dominant group or numerical strength of a given group vis-a-vis a small linguistic/regional entity is referred to as majority-minority syndrome.

Ethnicization

F. Barth talks of ethnic groups and boundaries as "the cultural stuff", and a processual phenomenon. Barth relates ethnicity with boundaries of identification and differentiation between ethnic collectivities. He refers to ethnicity as a materialist, individualist and narrowly instrumentalist phenomenon. It has entered deep into politics, decision-making and goal orientation. The following points may be noted in the context of ethnicity and ethnicization:

1. Cultural differentiation
2. Shared meaning
3. Not fixed or unchaning nature
4. Social identity – collective and individual

Thus, ethnic groups are characterized by self-perception, others' perception, and participation in shared activities. Some scholars consider ethnicity as both source of strength and conflict. Such a dualism becomes the basis of its stability and change as a socio-cultural phenomenon.

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Ethnic Consciousness and Conflict

Another issue is related to ethnic consciousness and conflict. Sri Lanka is an appropriate example of ethnic conflict between Tamils led by the Liberation Tigers for Tamil Ealam (LTTE) and the government led by the dominant Sinhalese community. The ethnic strife has continued for nearly three decades. Behind the ethnic conflict are economic, political and cultural issues. The Tamils are discriminated against the Sinhalese as alleged by the LTTE. The questions are: Are ethnic groups classes ? Is the ethnic stratification the same as the class stratification ? Can a given ethnic group be seen as a dominant or ruling class and the other as a subservient class ? Recently, in May 2009, during a prolonged battle with the government forces and the LTTE, Prabhakaran, the strongman of the LTTE was killed. The LTTE has virtually acceded the defeat, and demand for a separate Tamil nation has died down, at least at present.

Answers to these questions are: Today, human society is polyethnic and multiethnic. Interethnic cleavages, competition and conflict have become a common tendency. Ethnic demands are made in the name of interests of a religious, linguistic and regional community. Ethnic community is projected as a nation. We may ask, for example, are Dalits an ethnic category ? Are tribes ethnic entities ?

With regard to the Jharkhand movement in Bihar it was observed that the tribes were moving from ethnicity to regionalism by way of a demand for the state of Jharkhand. Now, the question is: Have tribes merged into a single entity, which may be called Jharkhandi ? Are they no more concerned about themselves as Mundas, Oraons, Hos, Santhals, etc. ? It seems that with the realization of the goal of the formation of the Jharkhand state, the tribals are today more of socio-cultural entities rather than political fora as they were mobilized to be so before the formation of the state of Jharkhand.

Ethnicity and Class

Elements of ethnicity can be perceived in class differentiation and vice versa. There is class differentiation within and between ethnic groups. Interplay between ethnicity and class is found in all polyethnic societies. Ethnic groups have formed associations for protection and promotion of their interests and welfare. The people of Kerala have their voluntary associations in Chennai. In Delhi, innumerable ethnic associations can be found from various provinces of India. Sikh ethnicity is well known within and outside Punjab as well. In Assam, one can see Assamese and Bengali ethnic identities as competitive cultural and political forces. Movements like SNDP, Yadava, Akali, Jharkhand, Gorkhaland, Bodoland, Assam, Telangana, Uttaranchal, Lingayat, Sri Vaishanava, Bhagat and Dalit movements are rooted into ethnic game in one way or other. It is not a question of the apparent or real goals of these movements. What we see is that in all these movements "community" or "ethnicity" was considered appropriate for mobilizing the people to support and strengthen the declared cause and concern by the leadership.

From the above examples, we may ask: Can ethnicity be treated as a significant dimension of social stratification just like caste, class and power ? In our view, an ethnic group is a stratum along with class and power, hence, it has a structural basis, being a group of people in a given society. Besides this, ethnicity is also a cultural phenomenon as it is rooted into *sentiments*, which people share being a stock of people having certain common traits.

Difference between caste and ethnicity lies in the fact that caste is ascribed by birth hence, it remains immutable or natural. Ethnicity can also be ascribed, determined by birth in a given ethnic community, and its characteristics, including language, religion, styles of life, etc. But it is also mutable by a way of change in language, religion, etc. People move away to far off places, and learn and adopt a new language and culture, and as such their ethnicity too is also transformed. The best example is the USA, where people from different parts of the world live and share language and culture. Thus, situational factors may change ethnic status and power.

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Ethnicity and Power

There are both broad and narrow implications of ethnicity. The examples of the broad ethnic formations are: English, Japanese, Hindus, Muslims, etc. The narrow ethnic formations may be Bodos, Santhals, Manipuris, or abstracted entities, which are not really ethnic categories, they are more of ethnic misnomers. These are caste clusters like AJGAR (Ahir, Jat, Gurjar and Rajput), Forwards, Backwards, Dalits and Minorities. It has also become a common practice to express regional identities in ethnic idiom such as Oriya, Tamil, Telugu, Assamia, Marathi, Gujarati, etc. What we need is to study sociology of ethnicity and politics of ethnicity. The two could be studied independent of each other, and at the same time, the two seem to be inter-twined phenomena of the same reality.


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"Sons of the Soil" movement, the one presently seen in Maharashtra under the leadership of Shiv Sena and its splinter group, conversion, migration, territoriality, dual labour market, ethnic division of labour (for example, in Assam and Punjab) have all accelerated ethnicization of economic and political interests and aspirations, cleavages and conflicts.

To the extent, ethnicity is expressed and appropriated as a means of social protest and social criticism, providing reasoning to moral and political ideas, and contains a critical spirit, renaissance, humanism, etc. When ethnicity acquires the character of a tool in the hands of new status-seekers, the pyramid climbers, it takes the shape of resource in the hands of vested interests. The need is to see the values and norms, leaders and followers, and the nature of interaction in any given ethnicized activity/movement/protest. Forces behind ethnicism, and also its counter-protest could reveal the real character of ethnicization of issues and goals involved therein.

Ethnicity in Specific Regions

China

The People's Republic of China officially recognizes 56 ethnic groups, the largest of which is the Han Chinese. Han predominate demographically and politically in most areas of China, although less so in the autonomous regions of Tibet and Xinjiang (East Turkestan), where the Han are in the minority. The one-child policy only applies to Han living in cities and who were not born overseas.

Europe

Europe has a large number of ethnic groups; Pan and Pfeil (2004) count 87 distinct "peoples of Europe", of which 33 form the majority population in at least one sovereign state, while the remaining 54 constitute ethnic minorities within every state they inhabit (although they may form local regional majorities within a sub-national entity). The total number of national minority populations in Europe is estimated at 105 million people, or 14% of 770 million Europeans.

A number of European countries, including France, and Switzerland do not collect information on the ethnicity of their resident population.

Russia has numerous recognized ethnic groups besides the 80% ethnic Russian majority. The largest group are the Tatars 3.8%. Many of the smaller groups are found in the Asian part of Russia.

India

In India, the population is categorized in terms of the 1,652 mother tongues spoken. Indian society is traditionally divided into castes or clans, not ethnicities, and these categories have had no official status since Independence in 1947, except for the scheduled castes and tribes which remain registered for the purpose of positive discrimination.

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United States

In the United States of America, the term "ethnic" carries a different meaning from how it is commonly used in some other countries due to the historical and ongoing significance of racial distinctions that categorize together what might otherwise have been viewed as ethnic groups. For example, various ethnic, "national," or linguistic groups from Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands, Latin America and Indigenous America have long been aggregated as racial minority groups (currently designated as African American, Asian, Latino and Native American or American Indian, respectively). While a sense of ethnic identity may coexist with racial identity (Chinese Americans among Asian or Irish American among European or White, for example), the long history of the United States as a settler, conqueror and slave society, and the formal and informal inscription of racialzed groupings into law and social stratification schemes has bestowed upon race a fundamental social identification role in the United States.

"Ethnicity theory" in the US refers to a school of thinking on race that arose in response first to biological views of race, which underwrote some of the most extreme forms of racial social stratification, exclusion and subordination. However, in the 1960s ethnicity theory was put to service in debates among academics and policy makers regarding how to grapple with the demands and resistant (sometimes "race nationalist") political identities resulting from the great civil rights mobilizations and transformation. Ethnicity theory came to be synonymous with a liberal and neoconservative rejection or diminution of race as a fundamental feature of US social order, politics and culture.

Ethnicity usually refers to collectives of related groups, having more to do with morphology, specifically skin color, rather than political boundaries. The word "nationality" is more commonly used for this purpose (e.g. Italian, Mexican, French, Russian, Japanese, etc are nationalities). Most prominently in the U.S., Latin American descended populations are grouped in a "Hispanic" or "Latino" ethnicity. The many previously designated Oriental *ethnic* groups are now classified as the Asian *racial* group for the census.

The terms "Black" and "African American," while different, are both used as ethnic categories in the US. In the late 1980s, the term "African American" was posited as the most appropriate and politically correct race designation. While it was intended as a shift away from the racial inequities of America's past often associated with the historical views of the "Black race", it largely became a simple replacement for the terms Black, Colored, Negro and the like, referring to any individual of dark skin color regardless of geographical descent. The term Caucasian generally describes people whose ancestry can be traced to Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. This includes European-colonized countries in the Americas, Australasia and South Africa among others. All the aforementioned are categorized as part of the "White" racial group, as per US Census categorization. This category has been split into two groups : Hispanics and non-Hispanics (e.g. White non-Hispanic and White Hispanic.)

Difference between Ethnicity and Race

	Ethnicity	Race
Definition	An ethnic group or ethnicity is a population of human beings whose members identify with each other, on the basis of a real or a presumed common genealogy or ancestry.	The term race refers to the concept of dividing people into populations or groups on the basis of various sets of physical characteristics which result from genetic ancestry.

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Significance	Ethnicity connotes shared cultural traits and a shared group history. Some ethnic groups also share linguistic or religious traits, while others share a common group history but not a common language or religion.	Race presumes shared biological or genetic traits, whether actual or asserted. Racial genetic differences were previously assumed to have significance in the area of intelligence, but currently there is no evidence of that.
Genealogy	Ethnicity is defined in terms of shared genealogy, whether actual or presumed. Typically, if people believe they descend from a particular group, and they want to be associated with that group, then they are in fact members of that group.	Racial categories result from a shared genealogy due to geographical isolation. In the modern world this isolation has been broken down and racial groups have mixed.
Distinguishing Factors .	Ethnic groups distinguish themselves differently from one time period to another. They typically seek to define themselves but also are defined by the stereotypes of dominant groups.	Races are assumed to be distinguished by skin color, facial type, etc. However, the scientific basis of racial distinctions is very weak. Scientific studies show that racial genetic differences are weak except in skin color.
Nationalism	In 19th century, there was development of the political ideology of ethnic nationalism -- creating nations based on a presumed shared ethnic origins (e.g. Germany, Italy, Sweden...)	In 19th century, the concept of nationalism was often used to justify the domination of one race over another within a specific nation.
Legal System	In the last decades of the 20th century, in the U.S. and in most nations, the legal system as well as the official ideology prohibited ethnic-based discrimination.	In the last decades of the 20th century,the legal system as well as the official ideology emphasized racial equality.
Conflicts	Often brutal conflicts between ethnic groups have existed throughout history and across the world. But most ethnic groups in fact get along peacefully within one another in most nations most of the time.	Racial prejudice remains a continuing problem throughout the world. However, there are fewer race-based conflicts in the 21st century than in the past.

8.4 Minority and Majority Relations

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Probably the most outstanding weakness of the numerous studies appearing yearly on the various problems of race and minority relations in the United States has been the insistence that in the final evaluation of the available evidence, a solution must be fount! in the ideological area rather than within the framework of the empiric facts. There has been a never-ending flood of literature engulfing us with a rehash and repetition of the old formulas — traditional answers and cliches, the seemingly self-confident declarations of the "practical" man — all insisting that the answers to the difficulties lie in "ifs" — "if all men were behaving like Christians," "if we would just realize that this or that minority would not be so obnoxious if given half a chance," and so on, ad *nauseam*. This dominant school is headed by Gunnar Myrdal, whose interpretation of Negro-while relations in the United States is but a good illustration of believing that the acceptance of the creed will solve the facts; Myrdal makes the violation of the American Creed in our treatment of the Negro a basic point; for him "the status accorded the Negro in America represents nothing more and nothing less than century-long lag of public morals." Yet, in spite of all the previous and more recent proponents of Myrdal's thesis, this "lag of public morals" has continued to operate most efficiently and persistently; evidently the Myrdal tribe has an attractive ideology for its believers, but its appeal has influenced little, if at all, the non-organized and organised promoters of race hatred.

The same situation exists in regard to the other minorities in America. How, otherwise, can we explain the support given to the survival of such numerous organizations as the National Conference of Christians and Jews, Common Council for American Unity, the Department of Race Relations of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, the Congress of Racial Equality, the American Council on Race Relations, etc. ?

Whereas earlier research of minority relations assumed an inevitability in the disappearance of minority groups, recent studies suggest that ethnic minorities are surviving and that new minorities are emerging. Documentation is accumulating indicating that ethnic minorities are retaining their identity in contrast to those that have become assimilated into the larger cultural and social systems. A considerable proportion of the literature analyzes the nature and problems of inter-group relations between a minority and the larger society when the minority desires acceptance; but there is limited resource material available which contributes to an understanding of the forces that operate in the relationships between groups that want to retain their identity and the majority society.

The purpose of this unit is to review briefly the types of intergroup relations that can obtain in a society, to illustrate one kind of minority-majority relationship which has not received much attention, and to isolate one of the most important variable which determines the success of retaining separateness. This article will suggest also how this variable (economic interdependence) may he useful in analyzing other minorities which may be concerned either with gaining acceptance into the larger society, or remaining aloof.

Hypotheses

We investigate the implications of minority-majority asymmetry across eleven national contexts concerning (a) the relationship between ethnic subgroup and national superordinate levels of identification, and (b) negative intergroup attitudes. Starting from the assumption that ethnic majorities are likely to be in a higher status position than minorities, we expect that they are more likely to feel entitled to the nation and to consider that their group is representative of the superordinate category. Five predictions are derived from the discussion about minority – majority asymmetry.

First, majorities should identify more strongly with the nation than minorities. In addition, we also explore whether minorities or majorities have higher levels of ethnic subgroup identification.

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Second, for majorities one should observe a more positive correlation between ethnic and national attachment than for minorities.

Third, majorities are expected to exhibit more negative judgements against outgroups (i.e., immigrants) than minorities.

Fourth, for majorities we expect a positive relationship between in-group identification (both at the subgroup and the superordinate level) and negative outgroup attitudes, whereas for minorities this relationship should be negative, or at least significantly less positive.

Finally, since immigrants seek to enter and become part of a national group rather than of an ethnic group, we expect national identification to precede ethnic identification as a predictor of xenophobia. In other words, hostile attitudes towards immigrants should be determined first of all by national identification. However, to the extent that majorities cognitively equate the national and their ethnic group, ethnic identification should mediate the impact of national identification on xenophobia for majorities, but not for minorities. This prediction of a moderated mediation should reveal that for majorities, but not for minorities, identification with the superordinate category does not directly predict discrimination, but that it is mediated by subgroup identification.

Method

Data were taken from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) 1995 module on national identity. The ISSP is an ongoing program of cross-national collaboration intended to provide comparative data on a regular basis on important social topics. The 1995 module focused on national identity, and included measures of ethnic group membership and ethnic identification. The survey was conducted in 23 countries, with probability-based nationwide samples (with separate samples for East and West Germany).

National Sample Selection

Only 11 out of the 24 subsamples were used in our analyses. Selection of countries was based on the following criteria : (a) the national sample contained the data necessary to test our predictions (i.e., ethnic group membership and ethnic identification), and/or (b) were ethno-culturally sufficiently heterogeneous to provide statistically meaningful minority sample sizes. As our predictions bear on the relationship between established, resident, ethno-cultural minorities and majorities, respondents without national citizenship of the country in which they reside as well as those who arrived in the country after the age of 16 were excluded from the analyses. In countries where most minority members are immigrants without national citizenship, or where restrictive citizenship policies make naturalization difficult, this selection eliminated a considerable proportion of minority respondents (e.g., in Germany). In East European countries, excluded respondents were mainly part of ethnic groups not incorporated in the national citizenry, (e.g., Croatians in Slovenia).

Mean age differed between the national samples (lowest means in Canada and the Slovak Republic, 41 years; highest mean in Bulgaria, 49 years). Distribution of gender groups also varied between countries (lowest female proportion in West Germany, 46.4%; highest in Latvia, 60.9%). Sex, age and education level (measured in years of education) were controlled for in the analyses.

Ethnic Subgroup Classification

Asymmetry predictions tested comparisons between ethnic majority and minority subgroups. The item used to classify participants asked either the "country or parts of the world from which respondents' ancestors came", or respondents had to pick their group from a list of the major ethnic groups of the country. In some countries, ethnic group membership was included in the demographic participant information. Ethnicity was loosely defined as membership in any ascribed group defined with racial, linguistic, national or religious criteria, whichever was most meaningful to participants (Horowitz, 2000). In most countries, the classification into dominant and subordinate

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ethnic subgroups was straightforward, since the dominant subgroup shared the same category label as the nation (e.g., Czech and Czech Republic, Russian and Russia). Accordingly, all respondents who indicated another ethnic origin were classified as members of *Subordinate minorities*. Participants who refused to answer the ethnicity question or who indicated *mixed, other* or unspecified origins were left unclassified.

In the Anglo-Saxon countries, majority groups themselves are former immigrant groups. In the U.S. sample, we distinguished European immigrants (*Dominant majority* group) from African, Caribbean, Arab, Asian and Hispanic Americans who were categorized as *Subordinate minorities*. In Canada, European immigrants (mostly but not exclusively from British descent) were classified as the majority group, with the exception of the French Canadians who were assigned the subordinate minority status, togather with a small number of more recent immigrants.

We first assessed mean differences of national and ethnic identification between majority and minority groups for each national context separately (Table 8.1). Results reveal that in four out of eleven countries, majorities had higher levels of national identification than did minorities. The largest difference was observed in Canada where the Anglophones were clearly more identified with the nation than the Francophones. In all the remaining cases, the difference was not significant. Thus, the prediction of a higher levels of superordinate identification for majorities is partially confirmed when one looks at the countries separately. The overall effect clearly supports this general conjecture : majorities (M = 3.28) tend to have higher levels of national identification than minorities (M = 3.00).

Table 8.1

Mean Levels of National Identification and Ethnic Identification as a Function of National Status

	National identification					Ethnic identification				
	Majorities	Minorities	Difference	F	η^2	Majorities	Minorities	Difference	F	η^2
Canada	3.24	2.70	.54	101.39***	.084	2.48	3.09	-.61	110.48***	.097
Slovak Republic	3.33	2.90	.43	49.05***	.036	3.51	3.55	-.03	<1	.000
West Germany	3.01	2.61	.39	12.04**	.012	3.11	2.75	.36	9.54**	.009
Latvia	3.34	3.17	.17	5.07*	.007	-	-			
Great Britain	2.87	2.69	.18	1.47	.002	-	-			
Bulgaria	3.64	3.56	.08	1.41	.001	3.83	3.87	-.03	<1	.001
Russia	3.21	3.18	.03	<1	.000	2.89	2.54	.35	13.42***	.011
U.S.	3.15	3.13	.02	<1	.000	3.06	3.43	-.37	16.94***	.020
Czech Republic	3.40	3.38	.02	<1	.000	3.59	2.66	.94	120.56***	.129
New Zealand	3.54	3.54	.00	<1	.000	3.16	3.30	-.14	<1	.001
Slovenia	3.42	3.43	.00	<1	.000	3.60	2.44	1.17	89.47***	.087
Total	3.28	3.00	.28	149.99***	.014	3.28	3.20	.08	7.99**	.001

Notes

Note : Countries are ranked as a function of effect size (difference of national identification levels between majorities and minorities). Means are corrected for the effects of age, gender and education level. Ethnic identification was not measured in Great Britain and Latvia.

*** = $p < .001$. ** = $p < .01$. * = $p < .05$.

A different and less coherent picture emerges for levels of ethnic identification. In four out of eleven countries (Slovenia, Czech Republic, Russia and Germany), majority groups had higher levels of ethnic identification than minority groups. In North-American countries (Canada and U.S.), the opposite pattern was observed : minorities had higher levels of ethnic identification than majorities. In the three remaining countries (Slovak Republic, Bulgaria and New Zealand), the differences were not significant. Overall, majorities express a slightly higher level of ethnic identification (M = 3.28) than minorities (M = 3.20), but this difference is very small. These results suggest that there is no systematic pattern of the importance majority and minority groups attach to ethnic subgroup membership, but that this difference is to a large extent contingent upon contextual and historical factors.



What do you mean by native groups ?

Relationship between National and Ethnic Identification

A series of regression analyses were performed in order to test the second prediction that a positive relationship between subgroup and superordinate identities should be observed for majorities, and that this relationship should be less positive for minorities. First, within each of the nine national contexts, the majority and the minority groups were analysed separately. Ethnic identification was the dependent variable, and national identification was entered into the regression equation as the main independent variable, along with the control variables of age, sex and education level. Table 8.2 shows the unstandardised regression coefficients. As expected, results show that in 8 out of 9 majority groups, the relation between ethnic and national identification was significantly positive. For minorities, in contrast, we found two positive (Bulgaria and Russia), two negative (Canada and U.S.), and three non-significant relations between subgroup and superordinate identities (Germany, Czech Republic, and Slovak Republic). New Zealand and Slovene minorities were not analysed due to the low number of minority respondents.

In a second step, a series of slope analyses tested whether the relationships between ethnic and national identification were significantly different in minority and majority groups (Aiken and West, 1991). An interaction term was computed as the product of subgroup status (minority or majority) and national identification. In order to test the null hypothesis that regression coefficients were the same across minority and majority groups, the interaction term was entered in the equation after the main effects of group membership and national identification (again controlling for the effects of sex, age, and education level). Regression analyses were performed separately for each of the seven national contexts where minorities and majorities could be compared.

Table 8.2

Ethnic Identification Regressed upon National Identification (Unstandardised Coefficients) with Slope Tests

	Majorities		Minorities		Slope test	Natives	
	B	SE	B	SE	*t*	B	SE
Germany	.63***	.03	-.22	.22	-7.93***		

Notes

Canada	.09	.05	-.25***	.04	-4.75***		
U.S.	.13**	.05	-.19*	.09	-2.42*	.19	.15
New Zealand	.31***	.05	--	--	--	.42***	.09
Bulgaria	.26***	.02	.17*	.08	-1.70		
Czech Republic	.18***	.04	-.34	.19	-3.94***		
Russia	.35***	.03	.35*	.13	<1		
Slovenia	.29***	.03	--	--	--		
Slovak Republic	.25***	.03	.06	.07	-2.59*		
Total	.37***	.01	-.09**	.03	-15.80***		

*** = $p < .001$. ** = $p < .01$. * = $p < .05$.

Inspection of Table 8.2 indicates that in 5 out of 7 analyses the interaction effect was significant in the predicted direction : the link between ethnic and national identification was more positive for majorities than for minorities. The powerful overall effect underlined the consistency of these findings, $t(8743) = -15.80$, $p < .001$. Thus, the asymmetry between national minorities and majorities is clearly reflected in the patterns of subgroup and superordinate identification.

Finally, the two native groups were analysed separately. While the relationship between ethnic and national identification was positive for both Maoris and American Indians, it was significant only for the Maoris. Yet, these results suggest that the relationship natives establish with the nation is closer to a majority than a minority pattern. This effect may be due to strong feelings of national entitlement of natives and considerations that the nation represents an ancestral homeland.

η^2

Levels of Xenophobia as a Function of Minority-Majority Status

We now move to the analyses concerned with xenophobic attitudes of minority and majority members. In order to test the third prediction that majorities express a higher level of xenophobia than minorities, Table 8.3 presents mean levels of xenophobia (corrected for the effects of age, gender, and education level) for minorities and majorities. The results show that in 6 out of 11 national contexts, majority members hold more negative attitudes towards immigrants than minority members. The largest difference is observed in Latvia, presumably reflecting the difficult relationship between Latvia and Russia (all Latvian minority members are of Russian origin). In Great Britain, the Slovak Republic, New Zealand, the U.S. and Russia, majority members are also more xenophobic than minorities. The overall effect underlines the discrepancy between minorities and majorities when it comes to negative intergroup attitudes.

Table 8.3

Mean Levels of Xenophobia as a Function of National Status

	Majorities	Minorities	Difference	F	
Latvia	3.99	3.01	.98	160.8***	.196
Great Britain	3.27	2.88	.39	11.3**	.012
Slovak Republic	3.73	3.52	.21	10.9**	.009
New Zealand	2.92	2.63	.29	4.9*	.007
U.S.	3.13	2.96	.17	5.1*	.006

Notes

Russia	3.52	3.35	.17	4.8*	.004
Slovenia	3.58	3.39	.20	1.4	.002
Bulgaria	3.89	3.92	-.03	<1	.000
Canada	2.63	2.61	.02	<1	.000
Czech Republic	3.67	3.72	-.06	<1	.000
West Germany	3.14	3.08	.06	<1	.000
Total	3.41	3.19	.22	50.4***	.000

Note : Countries are ranked as a function of effect size (difference of xenophobia levels between majorities and minorities). A positive difference indicates higher xenophobia for majorities. Means are corrected for the effects of age, gender and education level.

*** = $p < .001$. ** = $p < .01$. * = $p < .05$.

In addition, we also compared the two native groups separately to the respective minorities and majorities. Contrast analyses revealed that Maoris in New Zealand (M = 3.21) had higher levels of xenophobia than minorities (M = 2.63), $p < .001$, and also higher levels of xenophobia than majorities (M = 2.93), $p < .001$. Native Indians in the U.S., in turn, expressed higher levels of xenophobia (M = 3.24) than U.S. minorities (M = 2.97), $p < .05$, but the difference with the U.S. majority (M = 3.13) was not significant. These results suggest that native populations, much like national majorities, have more negative attitudes towards immigrants than other minorities, and sometimes even more negative attitudes than the majorities themselves.

Predicting Xenophobia

Due to overlapping forms of ethnic and national identification, ethnic identification was expected to lead to higher levels of xenophobia for majorities, but not for minorities. In order to test this fourth hypothesis, two regression analyses were performed on all minorities and all majorities separately (Table 8.4). Xenophobia was the dependent variable, and ethnic and national identification the main independent variables. National variation was controlled by entering countries as dummy variables (with Slovenia as the reference category). Again, effects for age, sex, and education level were controlled for.

Table 8.4

Ethnic and National Identification Regressed upon Xenophobia for National Majorities and Minorities (Unstandardised Coefficients), with Slope Tests

	Majorities			Minorities		Slope test	
	B	SE	*t*	B	SE	*t*	*t*
Ethnic ID	.09	.01	7.34***	-.09	.03	-2.74**	-5.61***
National ID	.04	.01	3.47**	-.06	.03	-2.07*	-2.86**

Note : Effects of ethnic ID and national ID on Xenophobia are controlled for country, sex, age, and education level (coefficients not shown). Slovenia was used as reference category.
*** = $p < .001$. ** = $p < .01$. * = $p < .05$.

Results revealed the expected pattern. For majorities, both ethnic and national identification were positively linked to xenophobia. For minorities, in contrast, both forms of identification predicted, although quite weakly, lower levels of xenophobia. Slope tests were then carried out to test whether the relationships between identification and xenophobia were different in minorities and

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majorities. Results show that for both ethnic and national identification, the difference was significant.

Mediation

Finally, if there is an overlap in ethnic and national identifications for majorities, we would expect ethnic identification to support national identification. In order to test the final prediction that ethnic identification mediates the impact of national identification on xenophobia for majorities, but not for minorities, two mediation analyses were performed, with xenophobia as the dependent variable, national identification as the independent variable, and ethnic identification as the mediating variable.

Discussion

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that asymmetry between ethno-national subgroups within national categories plays an important role in shaping in group identification and outgroup attitudes. In line with predictions, we have first shown that ethnic majorities tended to identify more strongly with the nation than ethnic minorities, although a number of exceptions to this trend were also observed. The pattern concerning ethnic identification was more variable. In Canada and the U.S., minorities were more attached to their respective ethnic groups than majorities. In the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Russia and West Germany, however, the inverse pattern was observed : ethnic majorities were more identified with their respective groups than minorities. In addition, it is worth noting that majorities of small countries (e.g., Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovenia) tended to express a stronger sense of ethnic identity than majority citizens of large countries made up by a variety of ethnic subgroups (U.S., Canada, Russia).

Subgroup asymmetry was also evidenced in the analysis of the relationship between ethnic and national identification. As expected, we found that for all but one majority group (in Canada), this relationship was significantly positive, whereas it was negative for U.S. and Canadian minorities, unrelated for German, Czech and Slovak minorities, and positive for Bulgarian and Russian minorities. In five out of seven national contexts, the prediction of a significant difference of the ethnic-national relationship between minorities and majorities was confirmed.

The two native groups, the American Indians and the Maoris, expressed similar patterns of identification as the respective majority groups. They can therefore clearly be distinguished from other ethnic minority groups. Although it is difficult to know the exact reasons for this discrepancy between native and other minority groups, one important possibility seems to be that native groups feel a strong attachment to their ancestral homeland which they see as "theirs". Hence, much like majorities, native groups are likely to link their identities to territories, and lay claim to ownership of the nation (Brubaker, 1996). Contrary to majorities, however, a native sense of ownership is mostly symbolic, since natives have only limited or no control over national institutions (see Herrera, 2004, for another comparison between natives and minority and majority group in the Canadian context).

Further results indicated that overall majority groups were more xenophobic than minority groups, although this difference was significant in only 6 out of 11 national contexts. Yet, minorities were never more hostile against immigrants than majorities. Controlling for the effects of national membership, both ethnic and national identification predicted xenophobic attitudes for majorities only. For minorities, the reverse pattern was found, albeit with less powerful effects : the more minority members identify with their ethnic group or their nation, the more positive their attitudes towards immigrants.

We also found that ethnic identification was a stronger predictor of xenophobia for majorities. This finding suggests that ethnic subgroup identification was more relevant than national identification in the prediction of negative intergroup attitudes. The results of the mediation

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analyses clarify these results, and sum up the difference between ethnic majorities and minorities. Insofar as immigrants can potentially become members of a nation, but not of an ethnic group, one would expect national identification to precede ethnic identification as a predictor of xenophobic attitudes. The results show that this is the case for majorities only for whom the driving force behind xenophobia was ethnic identification which mediated the impact of national identification on xenophobia. No such mediation was found for minorities where only national identification predicted xenophobia. These results lend support for the in group projection model (Mummendey and Wenzel, 1999; Waldzus and Mummendey, 2004) inas much as they suggest that majorities cognitively connect their ethnic subgroup to the superordinate national group. Indirectly, hostility towards immigrants reflects the tendency that majorities express a stronger sense of entitlement to the nation, its institutions, rules and customs. Hence, they feel more inclined to "protect the nation" against immigrants who are viewed as a threat to the ethnic group rather than to the nation as a whole.

Self-Assessment

Choose the correct options

1. The Turko-Iranian is the type of people belongs to
   (*a*) Baluchistan (*b*) Turky (*c*) Afganistan (*d*) None of these
2. The Mongolo-Dravidian is the type of people who belongs to
   (*a*) Bengali Brahmins (*b*) Kayasthas (*c*) Rajputs (*d*) both *a* and *b*
3. The Western Brachycephals are
   (*a*) Alpinoid (*b*) Dinaric (*c*) Armenoid (*d*) All of these
4. An ethnic group is a group of people whose members are identified through
   (*a*) Education (*b*) Language (*c*) Common trait (*d*) Culture
5. In India the population is categorized in terms of the ..... mother language spoken.

8.5 Summary

- Our findings underscore the importance of analysing xenophobia and prejudice from a perspective of nested intergroup relations which combines processes occurring *within* superordinate categories and *between* sub-groups. The minority or majority status of ethnic subgroups within nations shapes attitudes towards outgroups such as immigrants. The main thrust of our findings is consistent with the asymmetry hypothesis of ethnic sub-groups within national contexts (Sidanius and Petrocik, 2001). Overall, these findings suggest that for dominant ethno-cultural majorities there is an unproblematic and positive association between attachment to one's nation and attachment to one's ethnic subgroup. On average, majorities hold more hostile attitudes towards immigrants than ethnic minorities, and their ethnic and national identification predicts xenophobia. Subordinate minorities, in contrast, have a more complicated relationship with the nation. For them, ethno-cultural identification is largely orthogonal to national attachment, and refers to two relatively independent dimensions of identity and self-definition.
- In coming to these conclusions, we must note that the identification measures used in the ISSP survey are not ideal for a definitive test of some of these hypotheses, since single-item indicators may be subject to various biases. Moreover, another important shortcoming of this research concerns the sampling of the minority groups. Other than the typical immigration countries and clearly multi-ethnic societies, the dataset often contained an inadequate number of minority group members who were long-time residents and legal citizens of the country. As a result, many countries had to be discarded from the analyses. Future surveys studying

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attitudes towards multiculturalism and nationhood should contain more elaborate identification measures and use ethno-cultural group membership as a stratification criterion in order to sample an appropriate number of resident non-majority members in each country.

- Finally, it should not be forgotten that nationhood and ethno-cultural attachment are historical processes that evolve and take on different forms and meanings over time (Brubaker, 1996). Only continued survey research under a range of systematically different circumstances will allow us to disentangle the historical, structural and psychological factors underlying the attitudes towards one's national and ethnic group on the one hand and immigrant groups on the other.
- Most modern societies have numerous ethnic and racial groups. India, the USA, the UK, Canada, etc., are *plural societies*. Economically and politically, ethnic and racial groups may perform the same functions in a particular society, though culturally they are generally distinct from each other.
- In India, some ethnic groups are minorities, but economically they are far more ahead of the majority groups. Parsis, Christians, Sikhs are generally better off than other groups in their respective regions.
- Anthropologist A.L. Kroeber believes : "Race is a valid biological concept. It is a group united by heredity : a breed or genetic strain or subspecies."
- Social science theories and conceptualizations are also free from the socio-cultural limitations of caste race. In case of race, the physical traits are socially consequential. Smaje does not understand "race" principally in terms of somatic traits, but in terms of a specific engagement between political ideology and the colonial expansion of Europe. Race can be regarded as one of broader class of social phenomena that we might term as *essentialist identifications*.
- Race inheres relations of a particular kind between persons - relations which are symbolized or denoted by the concept of "race". Race denotes categories or devices through which particular ideas of groupness are constituted.
- Racial hierarchy and individualist egalitarianism represent two poles of a single socio-cultural system, characterized with capitalist production. In a secular political order, perpetuation of racism indicates a paradoxical situation in the modern world.
- "Racist mentality" aroused in Europe around 1800-1815. Hostile attitudes towards the Jews gave birth to new belief. Theological dogmatism was opposed by way of belief in Science and Logic. Jews were addressed as a "race", having characteristics such as bad smell, hereditary diseases, hidden illnesses, and other loathsome defects. German patriotism and pride in Nazism resulted into framing of racial laws. Racial conceptions and stereotypes have found their way into philosophical and theological thought in the 19th century Germany, France and other countries of Europe.
- *Varna* hierarchy reflected considerably racism. But it is difficult to say that these categories were wholly or clearly biological. The *mleccha* was racially stigmatized. "Untouchability" too reflected racial elements through *exclusion* of certain groups from the community. The Hindu idea of *dharma* as inherited roles also reflected racism. Thus, in some way; the terms such as "lineage", "blood", "breeding", *jati*, *varna*, though quite distinct from "race", reflected some elements of the concepts of "race" and "racism". Religious identities too in a sense reflected racial elements.
- identification and description of various racial elements in India has been a difficult task. India has always been a place of attraction for a variety of immigrants from various parts of the world. Whether it was religious persecution or harassment on other grounds or mere attraction towards India because of economic factors, waves after waves of people have been coming into the subcontinent.

Notes

- The most glaring weakness and deficiency of Risley's classification is that many of his points are based on preconceived notions and arbitrary conclusions which have nothing to do with reality.
- Some Proto-Australoid racial features have been noted from the skeletal remains found from Mohenjodaro. A number of scholars have expressed the view that the Australoid and Proto-Australoid racial elements are present throughout the Indian population. If the Negrito racial element had ever dominated the Indian population then some definite and clearly visible Negrito features should be there in the North Indian populations.
- The term 'ethnic' popularly connotes [race]' in Britain, only less precisely, and with a lighter value load. In North America, by contrast '[race]' most commonly means color, and 'ethnics' are the descendants of relatively recent immigrants from non-English-speaking countries. '[Ethnic]' is not a noun in Britain.
- "Ethnicity ... can be narrowed or broadened in boundary terms in relation to the specific needs of political mobilization. This may be why descent is sometimes a marker of ethnicity, and sometimes not: which diacritic of ethnicity is salient depends on whether people are scaling ethnic boundaries up or down, and whether they are scaling them up or down depends generally on the political situation.
- An "*ethnic category*" is a category set up by outsiders, that is, those who are not themselves members of the category, and whose members are populations that are categorised by outsiders as being distinguished by attributes of a common name or emblem, a shared cultural element and a connection to a specific territory. But, members who are ascribed to ethnic categories do not themselves have any awareness of their belonging to a common, distinctive group.
- "*Perennialism*" holds that ethnicity is ever changing, and that while the concept of ethnicity has existed at all times, ethnic groups are generally short lived before the ethnic boundaries realign in new patterns. The opposing perennialist view holds that while ethnicity and ethnic groupings has existed throughout history, they are not part of the natural order.
- Ethnic stratification is one of many different types of social stratification, including stratification based on socio-economic status, race, or gender. According to Donald Noel, ethnic stratification will emerge only when specific ethnic groups are brought into contact with one another, and only when those groups are characterized by a high degree of ethnocentrism, competition, and differential power.
- When people having differences in terms of these aspects of social life, and are ranked as higher and lower or superior and inferior, ethnic stratification emerges as a social reality. The proponents of ethnic stratification consider the idea of ethnicity as a functioning mode of organization.
- Ethnicity is thus a set of cultural areas or complexes, and these are synonymous with ethnic groups. Cultural representations, differences, boundaries, units/communities are created based on ethnic criteria and divides. On the one hand, one can see cultural affinities, and on the other, antipathies based on ethnic segregation.
- The studies of the Blacks and Whites in the USA imply both "racial" and "ethnic" dimensions of stratification and inequality. More than the stratification aspect, ethnicity is used as a means of identification. It is a way to know the "cultural other".
- Answers to these questions are: Today, human society is polyethnic and multiethnic. Interethnic cleavages, competition and conflict have become a common tendency. Ethnic demands are made in the name of interests of a religious, linguistic and regional community. Ethnic community is projected as a nation.

Notes

- Difference between caste and ethnicity lies in the fact that caste is ascribed by birth. hence, it remains immutable or natural. Ethnicity can also be ascribed, determined by birth in a given ethnic community, and its characteristics, including language, religion, styles of life, etc.
- "Sons of the Soil" movement, the one presently seen in Maharashtra under the leadership of Shiv Sena and its splinter group, conversion, migration, territoriality, dual labour market, ethnic division of labour (for example, in Assam and Punjab) have all accelerated ethnicization of economic and political interests and aspirations, cleavages and conflicts.

  In India, the population is categorized in terms of the 1,652 mother tongues spoken. Indian society is traditionally divided into castes or clans, not ethnicities, and these categories have had no official status since Independence in 1947, except for the scheduled castes and tribes which remain registered for the purpose of positive discrimination.
- Documentation is accumulating indicating that ethnic minorities are retaining their identity in contrast to those that have become assimilated into the larger cultural and social systems. A considerable proportion of the literature analyzes the nature and problems of inter-group relations between a minority and the larger society when the minority desires acceptance; but there is limited resource material available which contributes to an understanding of the forces that operate in the relationships between groups that want to retain their identity and the majority society.
- An **ethnic group** is a group of people whose members are identified through a common trait. This can, but does not have to, include an idea of common heritage, a common culture, a shared language or dialect. The group's ethos or ideology may also stress common ancestry and religion, as opposed to an ethnic minority group which refers to race. The process that results in the emergence of an ethnicity is called ethnogenesis. Some ethnic groups are marked by little more than a common name.
- Hostile attitudes towards immigrants should be determined first of all by national identification. However, to the extent that majorities cognitively equate the national and their ethnic group, ethnic identification should mediate the impact of national identification on xenophobia for majorities, but not for minorities. This prediction of a moderated mediation should reveal that for majorities, but not for minorities, identification with the superordinate category does not directly predict discrimination, but that it is mediated by subgroup identification.
- In the Anglo-Saxon countries, majority groups themselves are former immigrant groups. In the U.S. sample, we distinguished European immigrants (*Dominant majority* group) from African, Caribbean, Arab, Asian and Hispanic Americans who were categorized as *Subordinate minorities.* In Canada, European immigrants (mostly but not exclusively from British descent) were classified as the majority group, with the exception of the French Canadians who were assigned the subordinate minority status, togather with a small number of more recent immigrants.
- A series of regression analyses were performed in order to test the second prediction that a positive relationship between subgroup and superordinate identities should be observed for majorities, and that this relationship should be less positive for minorities. First, within each of the nine national contexts, the majority and the minority groups were analysed separately. Ethnic identification was the dependent variable, and national identification was entered into the regression equation as the main independent variable, along with the control variables of age, sex and education level.
- An interaction term was computed as the product of subgroup status (minority or majority) and national identification. In order to test the null hypothesis that regression coefficients were the same across minority and majority groups, the interaction term was entered in the

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equation after the main effects of group membership and national identification (again controlling for the effects of sex, age, and education level).

8.6 Key–Words

1. Alpine : The Alpine race is historical concept used in scientific racism as one of the three subraces of the Caucasian race.
2. Pygmy : Pygmy is a term used for various ethnic groups worldwide whose average height is unusually short.
2. Ethnicity : The fact or state of belonging to a socal group that has a common national or cultural tradition.

8.7 Review Questions

1. What is meant by Races?
2. Distinguish between race and ethnicity.
3. What do you mean by the word Ethnic? Discuss Ethnic groups?
4. Discuss the types of races.

Answers: Self–Assessment

1. (*a*) 2. (*d*) 3. (*d*) 4. (*c*) 5. 1,652

8.8 Further Readings



1. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Perspectives on Social Stratification, Rawat Publication.
2. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Social Stratification & Mobility, Rawat Publication.
3. Hasnain, Nadeem, 2011 : Indian Society and Culture Continuity and Change, Jawahar Publishers and Distributors.

Unit 9: Gender and Stratification

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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to :

- Discuss the Gender and Stratification.
- Understand the Gender as a basis of Stratification.
- Explain the Patriarchy and the Subordination of a Women.

Introduction

The role of man and woman has been different in most of the societies including the West and in the middle class sections. Women are expected to do domestic chores and raise children while men are bread winners of family. This difference has been considered 'natural' and hence is based on biological attributes. However, the feminist movements have questioned this kind of division of labour and resultant subordination of women.

Today women do housework, but that is not considered as work which would be paid. Moreover, women earn much less than men for performing the same job outside home. Many occupations are differentiated as womanly job and women are excluded, from decision-making.

Feminists find the oppression of women on the lines of class oppression where men and patriarchal structures oppress women as a class. Hence, the major differentiation in society revolves around gender and not class. Marxists and Weberians explain the forms and structures of inequality. The class situation of family members derived from bread winner who is usually man has been widely criticized. The issue of gender raises serious problems for empirical and theoretical work in social stratification. Newby (1982) says that issue of gender equality emerged from women's location in social stratification with their increased participation in all walks of life.

Weber talks about social stratification taking shape in terms of class or status while Marxist approach treats the question of sexual inequality in terms of division of labour and considers women as 'reserve army' which could be used in times of acute labour shortage. Weber finds that technological and economic changes push status in the background and favour class stratification.

The class and status theories of stratification never gave serious thought to issues of gender inequality and it was viewed that gender relations were similar to ethnic relations.

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The sexual division explained by the Marxist thought has less to do with the actual patterns of social interaction or social relationship. From this perspective arose an important question of whether or not female domestic has always had difficulties in formulating a coherent theory of action which could not relate the analysis of objective class position and of system contradictions of class formation.

However, a proper stratification analysis on patriarchy has been ignored which according to Mann (1986) created a crisis in stratification theory.

In almost all cultures, patriarchy legitimizes the unequal access of men and women to resources, opportunities and rewards. Patriarchy and its institutions reinforce status inequality between men and women. According to Sylvia Walby (1994), in patriarchy both differential distribution of power and mechanism of production are included.

Cross-cultural studies done on sexual division of labour focus on a wide range of women's productive activities in society and the status implications of these on women's status.

9.1 Gender and Stratification

To begin with, males assert the biological inferiority of women even today. Female disorderliness is brought under control by education, producing modesty and humility, by honest work and the subordination of the wife to her husband. Married women are deprived of certain forms of independence, even regarding their dowries and possessions. They are confined to the domestic sphere. These are the views even today held and practised considerably in most societies. One hardly finds any description, for example, in a work like *The Making of the English Working Class* by E.P. Thompson. His class analysis refers more or less exclusively to men. Even in the recent work of Eric Hobsbawn one finds reference to experiences of middle-class women. Only very recently, the idea of "home"/"home making" has come up in a positive sense recognizing contribution of women. The notice of "housewife" has also emerged that she looks home and children, performing a very important task, and her husband goes out to earn money, as his duty towards his wife and children.

Domestic patriarchy has come with the concept of home and home making. Women's right to proper recognition of her work at home has been recognized to a great extent all over the world. Now women go out for work, have their savings, and a control over what they earn. Most men are not hostile towards women's work. Despite these very notable changes, the man's work determines where the couple lives, and how much of their lives are organized. R.W. Connell calls such a situation "gender regimes", and Harriet Bradley gives it the name "gendered work-cultures". Some types of work are believed to be "appropriate" for women; and women are debarred from various types of occupations by informal barriers and restrictions.

Marriage is a gendered and unequal division of labour. In Indian society, husband starts controlling his wife's activities, and also starts imposing upon her some of his own activities. Helping the wife by the husband is considered an inferior task. The modern technology has certainly reduced the manual load on women, but even then gendered division of work persists. Women, despite part-time or full-time work; are not able to get equal footing with men because men do not participate equally in parenthood and domestic labour.

Michael Mann emphatically states that gender divisions are considered as important, but not really integrated into the core of stratification theory, namely, social class, status and political power. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, individual, family and household, division of labour between the sexes, social classes and the nation-states are mediated by each of them. No doubt, patriarchy has taken a new form due to modern industry, interchangeability of men-women occupations, equal democratic rights and adult suffrage, and even then "neo-patriarchy" has emerged due to newly found control mechanisms by men over women in industry, politics and

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civic life. Women have become "individuals" like men, but they are gendered individuals through their connection with domesticity. Women are still in patriarchal family systems, they are also members of social class and affected by such class (caste) stratification. Thus, they belong to different, but to overlapping, stratification hierarchies. Their occupations cannot be meaningfully combined into a single scale. However, gender and stratification can no longer be kept in separate compartments. "Stratification is now gendered and gender is stratified."

9.2 Gender as a Basis of Stratification

"Gender regimes" refer to inequalities of gender in family, work and state related activities. Gender is reproduced within such a complex of institutions through "male reason" and the dichotomy of "maleness" and "femaleness". Connell writes : "A gender regime is a cluster of practices, ideological and material, which in a given social context, acts to construct various images of masculinity and feminity and thereby to consolidate forms of gender inequality." For Indian women, N. Kabeer observes that gender hierarchies have implications for the production of knowledge and the allocation of resources. Hence, a need for the "deconstruction" of conventional concepts. Kabeer says: "Ideology is gendered as well as sexed." Class mediates the way in which biological difference is translated into gender inequality. Hence, gender factor in the stratification theory is essential, supporting Mann's point of view. Even status which women extract from their own achievements, such as education and salaried jobs, is not fully recognized and are attributed to the husbands and their families or to the parents of the upwardly mobile women. Women thus enjoy only derived status despite their own individualistic gains and achievements. And all women do not enjoy equal status, they are differentiated among themselves based on their status among female members in the family.

The idea of *purush jati* and *stree jati* is quite there among the members of our society. Nita Kumar suggests four ways to deal with the question of women : (1) to make women the object of human "gaze", (2) to see women as males, (3) to focus on the patriarchical, ideological, discursive structures, and (4) to look at the hidden, subversive ways in which women exercise their agency. Kumar questions the understanding of "women as subjects". She pleads for replacement of the masculine, rational, free subject by a feminine entity in all walks of life. For inferior and subordinate status of women, our value system, loopholes in the Constitution and law, violence, aggression and crimes against women are also responsible. Dowry, child marriage and prohibition of widow remarriage continue to lower down the position of women in Indian society. Patriarchy and caste-class hierarchy have combined with a consequence of gendering of social life.

Education and employment among women of the urban middle classes have raised their socio-economic status. More than employment, women are demanding autonomy by seeking their identity as persons/members of society equal to male members. More representation in jobs and reservation in civic bodies, state legislatives and Lok Sabha are being sought. Demand for representation in PRIs and civic bodies has been accepted under the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, respectively. For state legislatures and Lok Sabha, the demand has been in doldrums for quite some time.



Did u know? Marxist and Patriarchy thoughts differ on the question of women consisting a class. Patriarchy makes men systematically privileged and demonstrates gender relations a form of stratification in society.

Some women have also taken up entrepreneurship and other independent economic activities. In most cases, however, they remain *secondary earners*. Real empowerment, equal to men, is yet to

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come to women even in the metropolises and big towns. Women continue to have *real* and *imagined* faces because of the overarching patriarchal nature of Indian society. How to reduce "gendering" of relations, work, decision-making in everyday life ? Women do not need sympathy or mercy of the male members in the family and society. What they need is right to own and control resources equal to men. "Statization" and patronage to provide employment, education and health care for women is a top-down manner to analyse their problems. Effective property rights may reduce women's economic, social and political subordination and bring about more equal gender relations. A resource theory, rather than the reform theory, is the main concern.

9.3 Patriarchy and the Subordination of Women

Patriarchy literally means rule of the father in a male-dominated family. It is a social and ideological construct which considers men (who are the patriarchs) as superior to women. Sylvia Walby in "*Theorising Patriarchy*" calls it "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (Walby, 1990). Patriarchy is based on a system of power relations which are hierarchical and unequal where men control women's production, reproduction and sexuality. It imposes masculinity and femininity character stereotypes in society which strengthen the iniquitous power relations between men and women. Patriarchy is not a constant and gender relations which are dynamic and complex have changed over the periods of history. The nature of control and subjugation of women varies from one society to the other as it differs due to the differences in class, caste, religion, region, ethnicity and the socio-cultural practices. Thus in the context of India, brahminical patriarchy, tribal patriarchy and dalit patriarchy are different from each other. Patriarchy within a particular caste or class also differs in terms of their religious and regional variations. Similarly subordination of women in developed countries is different from what it is in developing countries. While subordination of women may differ in terms of its nature, certain characteristics such as control over women's sexuality and her reproductive power cuts across class, caste, ethnicity, religions and regions and is common to all patriarchies. This control has developed historically and is institutionalized and legitimized by several ideologies, social practices and institutions such as family, religion, caste, education, media, law, state and society, which are discussed in the later sections.



What do you mean by patriarchy?

Patriarchal societies propagate the ideology of motherhood which restrict women's mobility and burdens them with the responsibilities to nurture and rear children. The biological factor to bear children is linked to the social position of women's responsibilities of motherhood : nurturing, educating and raising children by devoting themselves to family. "Patriarchal ideas blur the distinction between *sex* and *gender* and assume that all socio-economic and political distinctions between men and women are rooted in biology or anatomy" (Heywood, 2003 : 248). Gender like social class, caste, race or religion is a significant social cleavage and it is important to analyse it to understand social inequalities, oppressions and unequal relationship between men and women. It has been explained by feminist scholars / thinkers/ writers who believe that the theory of 'sexual politics' and 'sexism' are conscious parallels with theory of 'class politics' and 'racism' to understand oppression of women.

The traditionalist view accepts patriarchy as biologically determined and as the biological functions of men and women are different, the social roles and tasks assigned for women are also different. Sigmund Freud stated that for women 'anatomy is destiny' and it is women's biology which

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primarily determine their psychology and hence their abilities and roles. Similarly the traditional notion of 'public-private divide' which located politics in the public sphere and family and personal relationships in private sphere as non-political, believed that sexual inequality is natural and not political. While the political sphere was preserved for men the private sphere was reserved for women as housewives and mothers who were excluded from politics. These theories of male supremacy have been challenged and opposed by feminists as they lack historical or scientific evidence. Feminists argue that the biological difference might lead to some difference in their roles, but the former should not become the basis of a sexual hierarchy in which men are dominant. The dismantling of these theories enables us to acknowledge that patriarchy is man-made and has developed historically by the socio-economic and political processes in society.

Feminism

"Feminism is an awareness of patriarchal control, exploitation and oppression at the material and ideological levels of women's labour, fertility and sexuality, in the family, at the place of work and in society in general, and conscious action by women and men to transform the present situation" (Bhasin and Khan, 1999 : 3). It is a struggle to achieve equality, dignity, rights, freedom for women to control their lives and bodies both within home and outside. As a cross cutting ideology feminists have different political positions and therefore address a range of issues such as female suffrage, equal legal rights, right to education, access to productive resources, right to participate in decision-making, legalization of abortion, recognition of property rights and abolition of domestic violence. Thus feminism passed through several paradigms which are referred to as first wave and second wave of feminism.

Since the origin of patriarchy and establishment of male supremacy can be traced to different factors and forces feminists differ in their approach to understand patriarchy and adopt different strategies to abolish it. One way to understand the various dimensions of feminist theories and their theoretical approaches to understand patriarchy is to locate them within the broader philosophical and political perspectives that have been broadly classified as Liberal, Marxist, Socialist and Radical. However, despite the ideological differences between the feminist groups, they are united in their struggle against unequal and hierarchical relationships between men and women, which is no longer accepted as biological destiny.

Feminist theorists generally share four concerns (Jaggar and Rothenberg, 1984 in Mandell, 1995 : 4) (i) They seek to understand the gendered nature of all social and institutional relations, which determines who does what for whom, what we are and what we might become. (ii) Gender relations are considered as problematic and as related to other inequalities and contradictions in social life. "Family, education and welfare, worlds of work and politics, culture and leisure are socially structured through relations of gender, power, class, race and sexuality".

(iii) Gender relations are not viewed as either natural or immutable but as historical and socio-cultural productions, subject to reconstitution. In particular feminist analysis deconstructs errors and myths about women's empirical realities, and constructs theories by and about women, (iv) Feminist theorists tend to be explicitly political about their advocacy about social change. They challenge the traditional race-class-sexuality-power arrangements which favour men over women, white over non-whites, adults over children and their struggle to embrace inclusivity continues.

Approaches to Understand Patriarchy

Liberal Feminism : Liberal feminists have championed equal legal and political rights for women to enable them to compete with men in the public realm on equal terms. The philosophical basis of liberal feminism lies in the principle of individualism and they campaigned for all individuals to participate in public and political life. Several women's movement demanded female suffrage during the 1840s and 1850s in United States and United Kingdom. The famous Seneca Falls

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Convention in 1848 marked the birth of women's rights movement which among other things called for female suffrage. Women were granted the right to vote in the US Constitution in 1920. In UK though franchise was extended to women in 1918 for a decade they did not exercise equal voting rights with men. Mary Wollstonecraft's "*Vindication of the Rights of Women*" (1972) was the first text of modern feminism which campaigned for women's right to vote/ female suffrage. Wollstonecraft claimed that if women gained access to education as rational creatures in their own right the distinction of sex would become unimportant in political and social life. John Stuart Mill in collaboration with Harriet Taylor in "*The Subjection of Women*" (1970) proposed that women should be entitled to the citizenship and political rights and liberties enjoyed by men. It indicts traditional arrangements of work and family as tyrannizing women and denying them freedom of choice (Mandell, 1995 : 6). Thus, liberal feminists believed that female suffrage would do away with all forms of sexual discrimination and prejudice. Walby contends that "first wave feminism was a large, multi-faceted, long-lived and highly effective political phenomenon" (Walby, 1997 : 149).

Betty Friedan's "*The Feminine Mystique*" marked the resurgence of liberal feminist thought in the 1960s and is often credited as stimulating the emergence of 'second wave' feminism. She referred to the cultural myth that women seek security and fulfillment in domestic life and that their feminine behaviour serves to discourage women from entering employment, politics and public life in general. In "*The Second Stage*" (1983) Friedan "discussed the problem of reconciling the achievement of personhood by making it possible to open up broader opportunities for women in work and public life while continuing to give central importance to family in women's life which has been criticized by radical feminists as contributing to 'mystique of motherhood"(Heywood, 2003 : 254). Therefore, liberal feminism is essentially reformist and does not challenge the patriarchal structure of society itself. Critics suggest that the liberal reforms to increase opportunities for women, prohibit discriminations and to increase public consciousness of women's rights have not been shared equally by all women because these changes have not addressed issues of socially structured inequalities (Mandell, 1995 : 8). Thus, while the first wave feminism ended with winning suffrage rights the emergence of second wave feminism in 1960s acknowledged that political and legal rights were insufficient to change women's subordination. Feminist ideas and arguments became radical and revolutionary thereafter.

Marxist Feminism : Marxist feminist believed that both subordination of women and division of classes developed historically with the development of private property. Frederick Engels in "*The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State*" (1884) stated that with the emergence of private property, women's housework sank into insignificance in comparison to man's productive labour. 'The world historical defeat of the female sex with the establishment of capitalism based on private property ownership by men did away with inheritance of property and social position through female line' (also see Bhasin, 1993 : 24-25). Thus maternal authority gave place to paternal authority and property was to be inherited from father to son and not from woman to her clan. The bourgeois families which owned private property emerged as patriarchal families where women were subjugated. Such patriarchal families became oppressive as men ensured that their property passed on only to their sons. Therefore bourgeois family and private property as a byproduct of capitalism subordinated and oppressed women.

Marxist feminists unlike the radical feminists argue that class exploitation is deeper than sexual oppression and women's emancipation essentially requires social revolution which will overthrow capitalism and establish socialism. Engels believed that "in a socialist society marriage will be dissolvable and that once private property is abolished its patriarchal features and perhaps also monogamy will disappear". Therefore Marxist feminists like many socialist feminists connect structural changes in kinship relations and changes in the division of labour to understand women's position in society. They argue that it is not women's biology alone but, private property and

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monogamous marriage, economic and political dominance by men and their control over female sexuality which led to patriarchy. However, the Marxist feminists have been criticized for differentiating working class women and bourgeois women and also for the focus on economic factors to explain subordination of women. Recent socialist feminists critique traditional Marxist feminists as the later emphasize only on economic origins of gender inequality and state that female subordination occurs also in pre-capitalist and socialist systems (Mandell, 1995 : 10). In fact socialist feminists accuse Marxists feminists of being 'sex blind' and only adding women to their existing critique of capitalism (Hartmann, 1979).

Socialist Feminism : Unlike the liberal feminists, socialist feminist argue that women do not simply face political and legal disadvantages which can be solved by equal legal rights and opportunities but the relationship between sexes is rooted in the social and economic structure itself. Therefore women can only be emancipated after social revolution brings about structural change. Socialist feminists deny the necessary and logical link between sex and gender differences. They argue that the link between child bearing and child rearing is cultural rather than biological and have challenged that biology is destiny by drawing a sharp distinction between 'sex and gender'. Therefore, while liberal feminist takes women's equality with men as their major political goal, socialist feminism aim at transforming basic structural arrangements of society so that categories of class, gender, sexuality and race no longer act as barriers to share equal resources (Mandell, 1995 : 9). Gerda Lerner's (1986) explains how control over female sexuality is central to women's subordination. She argues that it is important to understand how production as well as reproduction was organized. The appropriation and commodification of women's sexual and reproductive capacity by men lies at the foundation of private property, institutionalization of slavery, women's sexual subordination and economic dependency on male.

Most socialist feminists agree that the confinement of women to the domestic sphere of housework and motherhood serves the economic interests of capitalism. Women relieve men of the burden of housework and child rearing, and allow them to concentrate on productive employment. Thus unpaid domestic labour contributes to the health and efficiency of capitalist economy and also accounts for the low social status and economic dependence of women on men. But, unlike the Marxist feminists, socialist feminists look at both relations of production as well as relations of reproduction to understand patriarchy. Unlike orthodox Marxists who have prioritized class politics over sexual politics, modern socialist feminists give importance to the later. They believe that socialism in itself will not end patriarchy as it has cultural and ideological roots.

Maria Mies, in her paper "*The Social Origins of the Sexual Division of Labour*" refers to women's labour as 'shadow work'. She suggests that we should no longer look at the sexual division of labour as a problem related to the family, but rather as a structural problem of a whole society. The hierarchical division of labour between men and women and its dynamics form an integral part of dominant production relations i.e. class relations of a particular epoch and society and of the broader national and international divisions of labour. She argues that the asymmetric division of labour by sex, once established by means of violence was upheld by such institutions as the family and the state and also by the powerful ideological systems. The patriarchal religions have defined women as part of nature which has to be controlled and dominated by man.

Thus, socialist feminists have advanced theoretical boundaries by analyzing the ways class and gender relations intersect. Economic class relations are important in determining women's status but gender relations are equally significant and therefore eradicating social class inequality alone will not necessarily eliminate sexism. Patriarchy existed before capitalism and continued to exist in both capitalism and other political-economic systems (Mandell, 1995 : 11). However, patriarchy and capitalism are concretely intertwined and mutually supportive system of oppressions. Women's subordination within capitalism results from their economic exploitation as wage labourers and their patriarchal oppression as mothers, consumers and domestic labourers.

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Sylvia Walby in '*Patriarchy at Work*' (1986) attempts to conceptualise. Domestic labour is a distinct form of labour and core to patriarchal mode of production which is essential to exploitation of women by men and is independent of exploitation of proletariats by the capitalists (Walby, 1986 : 52). Within the household women provide all kinds of services to their children, husband and other members of the family, in other words in the patriarchal mode of production, women's labour is expropriated by their husbands and others who live there. The control over and exploitation of women's labour benefit men materially and economically. "Patriarchy is a system of interrelated social structures through which men exploit". She states that gender relations need to be explained at the level of social relations and not as individuals. Within the patriarchal mode of production, the producing class comprises of women and domestic labourer and husbands are the non-producing and exploiting class. And domestic labourer works to replenish/ produce his/ their labour power, she is separated from the product of her labour and has no control over it, while the husband always has control over the labour power which the wife has produced. She is separated from if at every level, physically, in the ability to use it, legally, ideologically etc. Thus the domestic labourer is exploited as the husband has the control over the wage he receives from the capitalist in exchange of his labour. The relations of production in such a mode of production are personalized relations between individuals. When the patriarchal mode of production articulates with the capitalist mode, women are prevented from entering paid work as freely as men and are reinforced by patriarchal state policies.

The state is a site of patriarchal relations which is necessary to patriarchy as a whole as it upholds the oppession of women by supporting a form of household in which women provide unpaid domestic services to male. Thus capitalism benefits from a particular form of family which ensures cheap reproduction of labour power and the availability of women as a reserve army. Patriarchy is also located in the social relations of reproduction and masculinity and femininity are not biological givens but products of long historical process. Thus, socialist feminists combine both marxist and radical approach and neither is sufficient by itself. Patriarchy is connected to both relations of production and relations of reproduction.

Radical Feminism : Unlike the liberal and socialist traditions, radical feminists developed a systematic theory of sexual oppression as the root of patriarchy which preceded private property. They challenge the very notion of femininity and masculinity as mutually exclusive and biologically determined categories. The ideology of motherhood subjugates women and perpetuates patriarchy, which not only forces women to be mothers but also determines the conditions of their motherhood (Bhasin, 199 : 8). It creates feminine and masculine characteristics, strengthens the divide between public and private, restricts women's mobility and reinforces male dominance. "While sex differences are linked to biological differences between male and female, gender differences are imposed socially or even politically by constructed contrasting stereotypes of masculinity and femininity" (de Beauvoir, 1970 : 258). Simone de Beauvoir in "*The Second Sex*" (1970) pointed out that women are made and not born. She believed that greater availability of abortion rights, effective birth control and end of monogamy would increase the control over their bodies. Judith Butler turned the sex-gender distinction on its head : by making sex the effect of gender, a legitimization subsequently imposed in order to fix the socially contingent through recourse to an unquestioned biology, "the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all".

Eco-feminists accept women's attitudes and values as different from men. They believe that in certain respects women are superior to men and possess the qualities of creativity, sensitivity and caring which men can never develop. Vandana Shiva in her conception of ecofeminism critiques development and establishes the connection between ecological destruction and capitalist growth as a patriarchal project.

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Postmodern feminists claim that there is no fixed female identity. The socially constructed identities can be reconstructed or deconstructed. Thus the distinctions between sex and gender are criticized from two perspectives : (i) 'difference feminists' who believe that "there are essential difference between men and women and the social and cultural characteristics are seen to refer the biological differences" and (ii) 'postmodern feminists' who "questioned whether sex is a clear-cut biological distinction as is usually assumed". In other words the features of biological motherhood do not apply to women who cannot bear children. Thus "there is a biology-culture continuum rather than a fixed biological/cultural divide and the categories male and female become more or less arbitrary and the concepts of sex and gender become hopelessly entangled".

Black feminists have prioritized differences based on race and challenge the tendency within feminism to ignore it. They portray sexism and racism as interlinked systems of oppression and highlight the particular range of gender, racial and economic disadvantages that confront "women of colour". Black feminists argue that women are not subject to common forms of oppression due to their sex but 'women of colour 'in particular are more vulnerable to oppression and subjugation. They criticize the liberal, Marxist, socialist and radical feminists for ignoring race as a category of oppression and analysis. By assuming that gender is primary form of subordination, oppression of class, sexuality and race become extensions of patriarchal domination. Radical feminists' insistence that the elimination of sexism is key to the elimination racism is inadequate to "women of colour" as they experience racism from white women as well as from men (Grant, 1993 in Mandell, 1995 : 18). Thus an analysis of the intersection of class, caste, race, sexuality and gender is important.

Therefore while earlier feminists struggled for a legally equal position for women and demanded democratic rights, which included right to education and employment, right to own property, right to vote, right to birth control, right to divorce, today feminists have gone beyond demanding mere legal reforms to end discrimination between men and women. They have raised issues of violence against women, rape, unequal wages, discriminatory personal laws, the sexual division of labour, distribution of power within the family, use of religion to oppress women and negative portrayal of women in media. Emancipation of women necessarily calls for challenging patriarchy as a system which perpetuates women's subordination. Several structures of society such as kinship and family, class, caste, religion, ethnicity, educational institutions and state reinforce patriarchy. Some of the experiences of multiple patriarchies can be illustrated by analyzing the dynamics and interface of, social forces which institutionalize and legitimize patriarchy in society.

Structures of Patriarchy

The first lessons of patriarchy are learnt in the family where the head of the family is a man/father. Man is considered the head of the family and controls women's sexuality, labour or production, reproduction and mobility. In a patriarchal family the birth of male child is preferred to that of a female. The former is considered as the inheritor of the family while the later is considered as *paraya dhan*. The Indian joint family is the "patriarchal family" and it was constituted by a group of persons related in the male line and subject to absolute power of the senior most male member. In the South Asian context kinship systems are largely based on patrilineal descent which is the foundation of a pervasive patriarchal ideology that rationalizes the differential access of men and women to the material and symbolic resources of society.

According to Gerda Lerner, family plays an important role in creating a hierarchical system as it not only mirrors the order in the state and educates its children but also creates and constantly reinforces that order. Family is therefore important for socializing the next generation in patriarchal values. The boys learn to be dominating and aggressive and girls learn to be caring, loving and submissive. These stereotypes of masculinity and femininity are not only social constructs but also have been internalized by both men and women. While the pressure to earn and look after the

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family is more on the man, the women are supposed to do the menial jobs and take care of their children and even other members of the family. It is because of these gender stereotypes that women are at a disadvantage and are vulnerable to violence and other kinds of discriminations and injustices. Systemic deprivation and violence against women : rape, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, female foeticide, infanticide, witch-killing, sati, dowry deaths, wife-beating, high level of female illiteracy, malnutrition, undernourishment and continued sense of insecurity keeps women bound to home, economically exploited, socially suppressed and politically passive.

Patriarchal constructions of knowledge perpetuate patriarchal ideology and this is reflected in educational institutions, knowledge system and media which reinforce male dominance. More subtle expressions of patriarchy was through symbolism giving messages of inferiority of women through legends highlighting the self-sacrificing, self-effacing pure image of women and through ritual practice which emphasized the dominant role of women as a faithful wife and devout mother. Laws of Manu insist that since women by their very nature are disloyal they should be made dependent on men. The husband should be constantly worshiped as a god, which symbolized that man is a lord, master, owner, or provider and the shudras and women were the subordinates. It legitimized that a woman should never be made independent, as a daughter she should be under the surveillance of her father, as a wife of her husband and as a widow of her son. While in ancient India (Vedic and Epic periods), women were by and large treated as equal to men, the restrictions on women and patriarchal values regulating women's sexuality and mobility got strengthened in the post-vedic periods (Brahmanical and Medieval periods) with the rise of private property and establishment of class society.

Patriarchal constructions of social practices are legitimized by religion and religious institution as most religious practices regard male authority as superior and the laws and norms regarding family, marriage, divorce and inheritance are linked to patriarchal control over property biased against women. A person's legal identity with regard to marriage, divorce and inheritance are determined by his or her religion, which laid down duties for men and women and their relationship. Most religions endorse patriarchal values and all major religions have been interpreted and controlled by men of upper caste and class. The imposition of parda, restrictions on leaving the domestic space, separation between public and private are all gender specific and men are not subject to similar constraints. Thus the mobility of women is controlled. They have no right to decide whether they want to be mothers, when they want to be, the number of children they want to have, whether they can use contraception or terminate a pregnancy and so on and so forth Male dominated institutions like church and state also lay down rules regarding women's reproductive capacity.

Similarly caste and gender are closely related and the sexuality of women is directly linked to the question of purity of race. The caste system and caste endogamy retained control over the labour and sexuality of women. Anuloma and pratiloma marriage by definition denigrate women. Caste not only determines social division of labour but also sexual division of labour. Ideologically concepts of caste purity of women to maintain patrilineal succession justified subordination of women. The prohibition of sacred thread ceremony for both women and sudhra, similar punishment for killing a women and sudhra, denial of religious privileges are illustrations which indicate how caste and gender get entrenched.

Therefore it is important to emphasize the substantive question of sub-ordination of certain sections of society and the structures that make their sub-ordination. For feminist scholars the issue is no longer whether the status of women was low or high but the specific nature and basis of their subordination in society (Chakravarti, 2006 : 25). Hence the historical developments of patriarchy/ies and how they have come to stay is important.

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Patriarchy not only in terms of the complexity of relationships of gender but also subtleties of interconnections of patriarchy with capitalism, which is a relationship of tension and conflict and not of harmony and mutual accommodation.

Thus feminist theories provide explanation for a wide range of particular issues and have been enriched by different approaches and perspectives. The feminist movements need to draw on the strength of all feminist theories as each one on its own is incomplete. In fact, feminism will survive as long as patriarchy persists and 'the challenge is to establish a viable and coherent third wave feminism', which will explain the changing nature of gender relations and explore the 'myth of post-feminism' that society is no longer patriarchal as the most obvious forms of sexist oppression have been overcome.

Subordination : A Conceptual Analysis

The dictionary meaning of the term 'subordination' is to give secondary status. The term 'subordination' is generally used as a noun. It is used with reference to human beings. But it cannot be called as an essential quality that belongs to human beings. Goodness, kindness, rationality, generosity and such other qualities can be sensibly talked about as the qualities or Predicates of humans but subordination cannot be a predicate because it does not form a necessary part of human nature. One cannot make a generalization that all human beings have a tendency to give secondary status to others or to subordinate others.

In its important sense, although used as a noun it refers to a relation between two individuals or groups of individuals which are not on par with each other. This relation can hold (1) between one individual and another individual. The owner may subordinate the worker or the manager in the office may subordinate the clerk. (2) The same relation can hold between one individual and the group of individuals on the other hand. The leader or the kind may subordinate his followers or subjects. (3) Thirdly, such a relation may also hold between a group and an individual. Thus the community or group may subordinate or even pressurize the individual member. The Nazi rule subordinated single individuals. (4) Fourthly one group may subordinate the other group. The super powers may not only subordinate but exploit the third-world countries. Or one racial group may dominate and subordinate the other racial group. The Whites have subordinated the Africans countries. Or one racial group may dominate and subordinate the other racial group. The Whites have subordinated the Africans.

In all these cases, even though the relation are different, the relation is of the same kind. It is a relation between two (unequals) and as such it is unidirectional. It cannot be reversed. It is a transitive relation in the sense if A subordinates B, there is a possibility that B may subordinate C and C may subordinate D.... and ad infinitum. Yet one who subordinate and one who is being subordinated do not belong to the same level.

When 'subordination' operates as a relation in socio-cultural world it is expressed in and through human action that forms the basis of human life. It is connected with the human praxis that includes the actual fact of subordination and the evaluation that justifies the fact of subordination.

As a fact 'subordination' refers to all those actual ways of (i) giving secondary status to persons in terms of ascribing animal properties to human beings, (ii) treating human beings as objects and (iii) denying the power of decision and freedom of will to others.

However, in its simplest sense it may take the form of followership. Children do follow their mother on whom they are physically and psychologically dependent. Men and women follow their leader whom they look upon as an example. The cinema world and the advertisement

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technique presuppose the innumerable ways of following actors and actresses. These are simplistic ways of accepting subordination, perpetuating it as a form of life. In its most complicated sense, subordination may result into the institution of slavery and in this case subordination becomes legitimized. In between these two extremes, there could be various levels and degrees of subordination.

As a fact, it is something which is universal land ipso facto real. The more important issue is the justification of subordination. The justification of subordination consists in evaluating that somebody is a lesser being and hence a subordinate being. Every act of subordination implicitly or explicitly presupposes such an evaluative claim. This claim accompanies the fact of subordination. The evaluation that somebody is a subordinate being stands in need of explanation. Such an evaluation cannot be explained in terms of cause-effect relation because it is not an event of the physical world. It is a kind of action carried out by human beings in their inter-personal relationship with the social world. Every human action is purposive and it springs from certain intentions on the part of the actor.

It is the intentional aspect of the action that confers meaning to the action. The logic of human action is different from the logic of event. The physical event follows the laws of the physical world and it can be explained in terms of cause-effect relation. The human action although a part and parcel of the larger context of the physical world follows the laws made by human will that is free. The human action, therefore, cannot be explained in terms of causation. It can be explained in terms of meaningfulness. The meaning given to action is not something really subjective but the agent shares the meaning along with the other members of the inter subjective world. Thus the meaning of an action has to be understood or captured and not explained in the real sense of the term. This does not mean that action has no consequences at all. Every human action has both the aspects (i) intentions and (ii) consequences. Both may not be the same. To understand the intentional aspect one has to undertake an inquiry into the meaningfulness of 'subordination'. To understand the consequences one has to undertaken an inquiry into the casual explanations in terms of the factual conditions that provide basis for the evaluative claim. The intentions refer to the belief systems and meaning supplied by real individuals in their confrontation with the social world.

The subordination of woman as a part of human history has to be understood from both these aspects. It is not my aim to consider the question whether all women across the world are subordinated or not, or the extent to which they are subordinated or the issue of suggesting practical devices and strategies to put an end to subordination. I am concerned with the question as to why in every culture woman is looked upon as a subordinate being, why such an evaluation has been a part of every culture. The answer to this question will lead us to the reasons or justifications of the subordination of woman.

Different Arguments for the Subordination of Woman

The subordination of woman has been one of the important issue for the social sciences and for feminism. The defenders of women's subordination and the propounders of woman's liberation both have tried to explain the phenomenon of subordination in terms of various theoretical formulations. These theories refer to the biological, psychological material, economic and ethical aspects of human life. These arguments can be classified into two types— (1) biological and (2) social. Some theories attempt to explain the phenomena of subordination of woman from the biological and psychological point of view. Some trace the root of subordination in terms of the social structure.

From the biological point of view it is argued that a female is physically weaker than the male who has more physical power and it is because of the physical power that the male always dominates the female. This is the cause of her subordination. The anthropological illustration of this claim is given by the theory that woman is the gatherer and man is the hunter. The biological

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point of view is also explicitly present in the belief that on the biological level a female has a peculiar function to perform—namely the reproductive function and that is her sole function. Her physiology is such that it is intimately related to the continuation of the species of life. From this point of view woman is nearer to nature and man is nearer to culture. It is nature which is the single cause of men's domination.

The same biological determinism is operative at the psychological level wherein certain specific tendencies are attributed to woman and certain others to man. It is believed that there are necessary, unique and exclusive qualities of men and women. Freudian theory has been considered as the example of this view by the feminists.

The second kind of theories emphasize the social aspect of human life and they explain the subordination of women in the context of socio-culture environment. Engels holds that woman became subordinate because of the rise of the institution of private property. Levi Strauss's theory too states that woman's subordination is the result of the social dynamics.

Let us have an overview of the arguments given by these theories.

Man the Hunter and Woman the Gatherer

The concept of 'Man the Hunter' has been developed by Sherwood Washburn and C. Lancaster. Washburn and Lancaster hold that : males who hunt and that hunting is not just an economic activity but a way of life. They argue that 'The biology, psychology and customs that separate us from the apes-all these we owe to the hunters of time past'.

It is said that even though hunting is not economically necessary in modern days many modern men still hunt and that indicates the importance of the activity of hunting. The data for evidence includes the assumption that the protonomonid ancesters of Homosapiens developed in a continuous fashion from a base of characteristics similar to those of living non-human primates. The human primates are similar in some respects to non-human primates and they also have points of difference. The living in groups, mother-infant bond, capacity for learning and non-symbolic capacity for communication and such other characteristics are shared by both. On the other hand longer gestation period, absence of body-hair, long period of infant dependency, year-round sexual receptivity of females, ability to create new symbolic systems, languages and cultures are the distinctive characteristics of humans.

It is suggested that erect bipadalism led to freeing of hands for food carrying and tool use and this led to the manipulating the activities for hunting and gathering food. The need for more skill in organization and communication in hunting provided for the increased brain size which made learning possible and new ways of behaviour evolved.

It is said that women could not follow the hunt because they had to take care of the infants. They stayed home gathering food they could and males developed new techniques of hunting and thereby new communicative skills of organization. They brought the meat to the females and the young ones. Thus the human social and emotional bonds can be traced back to the hunter who brought food for the female and the young ones who were dependent on him for survival.

This theory has been criticized in many respects. Salley Slocum raises a number of objections against this claim some of which are as follows.

She points out that even if we hold that the human species has evolved from the non-human primates, the claim that hunting would explain the shift from the primate individual gathering to human food-sharing is incorrect. She argues that it is more logical to assume that as soon as the period of infant's dependence lengthened the mothers would begin to increase the field of their gathering so that they would have more food that would be provided for dependent infants. The mother-infant bond thus would extend over a longer time and that increased the scope of social relationship and resulted into first sharing of food. It was not hunting but food-gathering that was a natural form of life.

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Secondly, the picture that a male could choose a female and exert control over her and her offspring is also false because development of male-female pairing emerged much later. A temporary relationship between male and female must have been prevalent. There was no permanent bond that could give rise to a patriarchal family relationship.

Thirdly, the earliest form of family must have been a family of mother and her children. Even when the hunting became a part of life, the male would not share food with his wife and children (this is the modern concept of the family) but with his mother and siblings. Thus Sally Slocum concludes 'the emphasis on hunting as a prime moving factor in hominid evolution distorts the data. It is simply too big a jump to go from the primate individual gathering pattern to a hominid cooperative 'hunting-sharing' pattern without some intervening changes.

Man the Culture, Woman the Nature

The natural difference and the opposition between a woman's nature and a man's culture has been central to some feminist attempts to explain the universal subordination of woman.

Arguments focussing on nature/culture fall into two broad categories : (1) the anthropological and (2) the radical feminist Sherry Ortner's discussion in 'Is Female to Male as Nature to Culture' provides with one of the influential presentation of the anthropological argument. Sherry Ortner argues that every culture looks upon woman as belonging to the lower level of existence. Woman symbolizes nature and man symbolizes culture. Every culture devalues 'nature' and proudly believes that the creation of culture consists in having victory over nature. It is believed that the human beings are not only conscious of nature at large but they are aware of their own existence. It is human beings who can transcend the 'nature' and create different forms of living, thinking and doing. In other words that could be called as culture is itself superior to nature and it takes for granted its ability to culturalize, humanise nature.

Women are looked at as the beings closer to nature, performing the function of reproduction so that species would survive. Sherry Ortner quotes a passage from Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex 'A female to a greater extent than the male, is the prey of the species, she is more enslaved to the species than the male, her animality is more manifest'. She further points out that the major processes of woman's body serve no function except the organic function and they are the source of discomfort and painful experience. In the words of Beauvoir, 'many of the ovarian secretions function for the benefit of the egg, promoting its maturation and adapting the uterus to its requirements; in respect to organism as a whole, they make disequilibrium rather than for regulation—a woman is adapted to the needs of the egg rather than to her own requirement, Menstruation is uncomfortable, many times painful, childbirth is painful, many times dangerous.


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Thus, a woman's body dooms her to mere reproduction of life, the male on the other hand because he lacks the natural creative function, has to assert his creativity externally through technology and symbols. He tries to create eternal, lasting and transcendental objects but the woman creates only perishable human beings.

Ortner declares that it is not killing that is the valuable aspect of hunting but it is the transcendental nature of these activities that is more valued. It is not giving the life but risking the life that raises mankind over the animal world. In this way a male is superior to female.

Woman's physiological functions also limit her social movement and confine her to certain social contexts which are again seen as closer to nature. Woman's body, like that of all female mammals, generates milk and after pregnancy for the feeding of the newborn baby. The relationship of the nursing mother and the child is also seen as a natural bond. Mothers and children belong together.

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Similarly, children beyond infancy also require constant care and supervision and this work becomes the extension of her natural bond with the children. Hence she is confined to family and home. This gives rise to the opposition between two domains— domestic and public. The domestic unit is the family and home. The public unit is the society and its network of relationships. The public unit is considered as more important and a part of culture.

Thirdly, it is also believed that woman has a different psychic structure. Nancy Chodorow shows that women are seen to be more practical and this worldly than men. They get involved with concrete feelings, things and people rather than with abstract entities. Men are more objective and inclined to relate in terms of abstract categories. Women are more subjective and inclined to relate in terms of concrete phenomena.

Sherry Ortner remarks that the so-called distinction between nature and culture is itself a product of culture. She goes on to argue that this postulate can be viewed simply as a middle position on a scale from culture down to nature and in that case it accounts for the lower status of woman. If it may be read as a mediating element in culture-nature relationship then it may account for cultural tendency to devalue woman and restrict her function. If it is read as an ambiguous status between the two, it can help to account for woman's specific alignment with culture. In reality woman is not any closer to nature than man. Hence the revision of various institutions and customs and traditions is necessary.

In order to show that nature-culture distinction is a product of culture, it is necessary to show that men and women are social and cultural beings. This has not been argued out by Ortner. Similarly the dichotomy of nature/culture does not prove the universality of the fact of subordination in universal terms.

Another attempt to explain the dichotomy of nature/culture is made by S. Firestone. She reduces the history of the relation between nature/culture to the opposition between female and male. She argues that it is biology—procreation and the basic natural inequality that is the basis for woman's subordination and man's power. Women are confined to home and men create and control culture.

Irrespective of many good suggestions in The Dialectics of Sex, Firestone does not show as to how a biological phenomenon is appropriated by either the scientific community or by cultural conditions.

Freud's Theory of Psychoanalysis

Of Freud's 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality', his essay on 'Female Sexuality' is widely known for his views regarding the psychological development of woman. He has tried to understand how a human animal becomes a human being. According to him this transformation does not take place all of a sudden but it is a long process in which a child has to pass through various successive phases which do not resemble one another. The psychological development of a child is thus several times repeated like that of caterpillar into a butterfly. These phases through which a child passes are oral stage, anal stage, genital stage, latency stage, puberty and adolescence. In the beginning Freud thought that the development of a boy and a girl takes place along the parallel lines and there is not much difference. However, later on Freud arrived at the conclusion that even though the phases are the same the way a boy or a girl experiences these phases is essentially different.

According to Freud during the early infantile period the child is autocratic, it derives erotic or sexual satisfaction from the stimulation of his body or from erogenous zones such as lips, cheeks, nipples or genital organs stimulated by the mother during the activities of feeding, bathing or otherwise. In the oral stage the stimulation of mouth gives rise to pleasurable sensation, in the anal stage libidinal pleasure is derived from the activities of the bowl, and in the early genital stage the erotic pleasure is derived chiefly from the manipulation of the sexual organs. Freud argues that at the oral stage and the anal stage the experiences of a boy and a girl are the same. But

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at the genital stage the experiences are different. Freud says that the development of female sexuality is complicated because she has two sexual zones. A man has only one leading sexual zone, one sexual organ, whereas woman has two sexual organs—the vagina, the female organ proper and the clitoris, which is analogous to the male organ. The vagina possibly does not produce sensations until puberty. Hence the main genital occurrences of her childhood must take place in relation to clitoris. The woman's sexual life is regularly divided into two phases, of which the first has a masculine character (in the sense of being active) while the second is feminine (in the sense of being passive). In her childhood a girl's clitoris takes on the role of a penis entirely. In the proedipal situation, the autoerotic activity of the erotogenic zones is the same in both the sexes. The little girl, like the boy is first very much attached to her mother. But at the genital stage, the child becomes attached to the parent of the opposite sex.



Did u know? Freud calls this 'Oedipus complex' for boys and 'Electra Complex' for girls.

In the case of a boy, his mother becomes his first love-object as a result of her feeding him and looking after him and the mother remains so until she is replaced by someone who resembles her. A female's first love-object is the mother but at the end of her development, her father becomes her new love-object. Thus the change in her own sex (because she becomes famine in the sense of being passive) has to correspond with a change in the sex of her object.

At a later stage a male child has to overcome the oedipal complex (Electra complex in case of a girl child). This phase of overcoming the oedipus complex is a very difficult one and the child makes use of the mechanisms of repression, identification and sublimation in overcoming his incestuous impulses. At this stage, the discovery of the possibility of castration, as proved by the sight of the female genitals forces on the boy the transformation of his oedipic complex and leads to the creation of his super-ego. This initiates him into the cultural community.

The girl on the other hand acknowledges the fact of her castration and with it the superiority of the male and her own inferiority. Freud states that a girl feels greatly at a disadvantage owing to her lack of visible penis. She envies boys for possessing a penis and wishes to be a man rather than a woman. That becomes the hope of her life. But the process of becoming a woman depends on the clitoris passing on the sensitivity to the vaginal orifice in good time and completely. So in the end she takes her father as her love object and finds her way to femininity. In the case of a girl, the Electra complex is not destroyed by the influence of castration but it is created by castration. In the case of a boy the Oedipus complex is destroyed by the fear of castration.

For Freud, femininity is neither inborn nor culturally conditioned but in every culture the process of becoming a woman requires the repression of the active (masculine) side of her sexuality. This repression almost becomes a fact of nature and an inherent attribute of womanhood.

Most of the feminists have criticized Freud and rejected his psychoanalysis as male-oriented. He has said to have taken for granted the inferiority of woman and have tried to provide a pseudo-scientific basis for woman's subordination. Simon De Beauvoir does not criticize psychoanalysis as a whole but examines its contribution to the study of woman. She criticizes Freud for not having much concern with the destiny of woman.

She feels that he has extended his account of the destiny of man to woman. She says that Freud has based his analysis of the Oedipus, the castration and the Electra complexes upon the masculine model and it is derived from the current social practices and values. She feels that in woman the inferiority complex takes the form of rejection of femininity but it is not the lack of penis that causes this complex but rather the total situation in which a woman is placed. In her opinion the

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rejection of choice by psychoanalysis is the real source of its failure to understand the woman's problem in real life.

Freud's psychoanalysis has been criticized from the feminist point of view and Simone de Beauvoir's argument has been taken by Shulamith Firestone and others. Millet's book "Sexual Politics" raises a number of objections against Freudian psychoanalysis. She points out that his circular method consists in formulating penis envy by reporting children's distorted impressions and finally converting the description into a prescription.

The Marxist feminists like Juliet Mitchell are sympathetic to Freud. In her book "Psychoanalysis and Feminism" Mitchell follows Althusser's use of Freud and Lacan and gives more importance to the concept of unconscious. In her opinion the crux of Freud's teaching lies in showing that femininity is neither innate; nor is it the product of cultural conditioning. She insists that we should not ignore the fact that Freud's discussion of femininity operates within the framework of biosexuality. Maculinity and femininity for him were synonyms for active and passivity. She also urges that Freud attempts not a description of woman's nature but an inquiry into how a child with a bio-sexual disposition becomes a woman. She criticizes the revisionist thesis that the biological division of sexes was directly reflected in the mental life of each sex. For her psycho-analysis is a theory about the ways in which culture is assimilated and transferred. It is not a biological theory about masculinity and femininity.

But Janet Sayer charges Mitchell for misunderstanding Freud's true position and for giving an 'analytical' rather than a 'developmental' account of Freud's psychoanalysis. Freud does mention various stages in the development of a child in terms of oral, anal, genital and such other stages. She says that Freud did regard psychology as given by biology.

Amy Gutmann argues that even though Freud's explanatior of a woman's subordination is not a biological one (as Mitchel says) it still requires us to believe that the psychic and socia subordination of woman will persist so long as the family exists. In addition Freud tried to tell us that civilization would be threatened by the breakdown of the patriarchal nuclear family, since the foundation of morality and culture—the male superego would lose its raison de etre. She does not accept the pessimistic implications of Freudian explanation that woman will be secondary as long as the family exists.

Gayle Rubin, following Mitchell, uses psychoanalysis for a general critique of a patriarchal culture which is predicated on the exchange of women by men. Nancy Chodorow shifts from Freud to later Object-Relations theory in order to explain how women's child-caring role is perpetuated through the earliest relationship between a mother and her child and she demands a fundamental change in the organisation of child care.

Thus there are two different ways to interpret Freud's views on femininity. The feminists have charged Freud for defending traditional gender identities. On the other hand, some feminists have maintained that psychoanalysis does provide a powerful critique of patriarchal society and locates the roots of sexual oppression in particular social relations, such as mothering. The contemporary debates in feminism not only include these two types of approaches but highlight other aspects of psychoanalysis also.

Levi–Strauss on the Exchange of Women

Many anthropologists have tried to give a universal theory about the social roles of men and women. Levi-strauss's theory of the Elementary Structures of Kinship is one of such theories.

Levi-Strauss is interested in understanding the deep structures of the human mind. For him the structure and the working of the human mind can be derived from the capacity to form and learn language. Language is a distinctive capacity of the human species and is uniquely human institution. Language is a system that functions in the socio-cultural world. It is with the help of language that

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individuals in a society can communicate with one another. The practice of language is an exchange of words between social subjects. The exchange of words is fundamental a social act. However, there is a continuous exchange of material goods, words, symbols, stories and ideas at various levels. The idea of reciprocity is expressed through the idea of exchange. The exchange is carried out regularly by means of socially accepted ways and norms.

Levi-Strauss states that in the pre-capitalistic society, the kinship is the ordering principle of the society. The kinship relationships are of a ling term nature and in some cases they are immutable. Kinship ties are not only rooted in the biological fact, but provide a flexible language for expressing a wider range of ties that can be genealogically represented. In the simple societies all members are in kinship relation.

Levi-Strauss argues that just as there is an exchange of other objects, there is also an exchange of women. This exchange is based on the fact that there cannot be mating within the same family. Thus people cannot mate with their parents or sons or daughters or brothers or sisters. With the result, they have to establish a relationship with people other than their own kith and kin. Thus the incest taboo is related with the rule of exogamy— namely that people must marry outside the family. The fundamental bonds of society are the bonds between men or groups of men by means of exchange of women. It is men who exchange women and not vice-versa. The overall relationship that is established is not between a man and a woman but between groups of men and a woman who is not a partner but an object of exchange.

The establishment of these extra-familial ties produces social relations and makes possible for people to extend the field of their activities and there by authority, beyond the limits of the family. The gender differences are necessary for recognition of men and women who seek a partner of the opposite sex in order to achieve wholeness of life. These differences are not necessarily related to biological differences but to the social situation. Thus regardless of an individual's natural inclinations or rational choices the fact of his biology has to be developed in socially acceptable ways. The network of the social relations is established through the exchange of women and with the help of the sexual division of labour a reciprocal state of dependency is created among the members of the society. Levi-Strauss's ideas have been incorporated by various feminist writers such as Simone de Beauvoir and Juliet Mitchell. Both of them have made a close connection between Levi-Strauss's theory and Freudian theory.

One of the important critiques of Levi-Strauss's theory of the exchange of women is represented by Gayle Rubin. In her article 'The Traffic of Women : Notes on the Political Economy of Sex'. She has discussed many problems regarding Levi-Strauss's theory. Her main criticism is that the construction of sexuality which is assumed by Levi-Strauss is really more complex and varied. There are societies which have the institution of hetero-sexual marriage and yet they allow homo-sexual relations. She points out that Levi-Strauss's assumptions cannot be generalized.

Kate Young and Oliva Harris question the very comparison of the structure of the society with the structure of the human mind and there by also the comparison of exchange of women with the exchange of words. They argue that Levi-Strauss has implicitly assumed the Freudian theory and the dominance of phallus. He has appealed to facts but does not supply the ground for the exchange of women. They point out that the incest taboo emerged as the evolutionary step in civilization. Even though it is universal, its particular form changes from society to society. In many precapitalist societies there were positive rules regarding marriage and not just the negative rules in the form of incest taboos.

For Kate Young and Oliva Harris, there are other demographic reasons for gaining an access to women of the other groups. Marriage is a political and economic institution and not only an institution for ensuring biological reproduction of the society. Woman has not only erotic value but she has also an economic value as she has a crucial role in the production of wealth. They have cited exactly the opposite principle of endogamy (opposite to exogamy) which requires that women

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should be married within the caste. A clear example of this process is the Indian caste system wherein castes are defined by roles and they are interdependent. Thus in all societies women are not necessarily exchanged outside the group.

It seems that Levi-Strauss assumes that all societies were patriarchal but does not provide an evidence for his assumption. He does not consider the question as to why men are defined as superior beings and are given a superior status in society. He also does not state as to what makes women an exchangeable commodity. He seems to have overlooked the distinction between the sexual access and marital relationship. Sometimes sexual access is allowed but not marriage.

Engels' Theory of the Subordination of Woman

Engels' book "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and State" examines issues which are central to feminism. One such issue is the origin of family and woman's oppression.

Engels argues that the oppression of woman is historically related to the development of class society. He says that in primitive societies all work, whether by men or women had the same social value. Whatever wealth they had, was possessed and shared by the whole community. Until the lower stage of barbarism, fixed wealth consisted of house, clothing, crude ornaments and implements for procuring and preparing food. Breeding goats and sheep yielded rich nutriment in meat and milk. With the increase in the number of cattle pastoral people acquired more and more wealth. As wealth increased, the concept of private ownership of the wealth emerged giving rise to family wherein man had power. It gave man a n important status than the woman and on the other hand created a stimulus to utilize this position in order to overthrow the traditional order of inheritance in favour of his children. As Engels declared the over-throw of mother-right was the world-historical defeat of the female sex. Woman was degraded, enthralled, became the slave of the man's lust, a mere instrument for breeding children.

According to Engles this ultimately resulted into the patriarchal family, an organisation of a family where a number of people are under the paternal power of the head of the family. Secondly, this gave rise to division of work into two types of production-i) production for use and ii) production for exchange. Whatever was produced by women was consumed in the house and it did not create any surplus. Men on the other hand produced for exchange and were able to accumulate surplus wealth and there by gain more social power. The accumulation of surplus wealth led to the division of people into two classes, those who had surplus wealth and those who did not have surplus wealth.

Side by side with the creation of classes, the status of woman in the family and society was lowered resulting thereby into legalized servitude of woman.

As various feminists have pointed out, Engles' analysis of woman's subordination has given rise to various debates within feminism about the determining effects of ideology and of the material world in the contribution of women's subordination.

In the recent years feminists have inverted Engels' thesis in two ways. It is suggested that Engels' explanation that sex-inequality is determined by class-inequality can be doubted. It is the inequality with respect to sex that determines the inequality with respect to classes.

Another such view questions Engels' emphasis on relating production and reproduction. Engels insisted that an analysis must emphasize the interaction between two aspects of material life, the changing organisation of production and the changing form of the family. Engels however, could not keep these two analytically separate and independent because in many pre-capitalistic societies family was the unit of both production and reproduction. Thus both types of production were controlled by kinship relations. Meillasoux C shows that Engels' analysis neglects the importance of human reproduction as having an autonomous structure and reduces it to human production.

Jane Humphries argues that the sexual divisions in the family and social production can be explained as an effect not of wealth but of scarcity. She points out "Historically, except from very

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privileged communities in isolated times and spaces, the key characteristic of most economies has been scarcity : albeit a scarcity which is more or less intense and differently distributed according to the dominant mode of production. At any point in time the productive potential of any specific historical economy has been limited. At the micro level this is experienced in the struggle, more or less intense, to survive. Over time, that is intergenerationally, this means that families cannot produce unlimited numbers of children without involving themselves and their children in deteriorating standards, which in the context of historic poverty may deny survival". She points out that in aristocracy or peasantry, property appears as the material foundation of the family, but the general case is not one of wealth but of scarcity.

Martha Cimenez states that characteristic of Engels' thesis on 'origin' is the tendency to treat family and reproduction as relatively autonomous from production. She says that Engels treated the family of his time and its supposed unchanging battle of the sexes as eternal and explained sexual inequality in abstract and idealist terms rather than the materialist terms.

Moira Maconachie also criticizes Engels' flaws on sexual division of the family. She states that the naturalistic account of the division of labour i.e. men doing social production and women doing the household work is contradicted by ethnographic and sociological data showing that women regularly contribute to subsistence activity and thereby to social production. She comments that it was Engels' neglect of this that led him to overlook the fact that women's entry into social production could not itself transform relations between the sexes.

Kate Young and oliva Harris also stress that the evidence suggests that in primitive societies there was no direct correlation between promiscuity and mother-right and the means of subsistence appropriated by nature. They declare that the incidence of matrilineal societies cannot be used as a proof of an earlier stage of mother-right because matriliny is the system by which inheritance goes from man to his sister's son, not from mother to daughter.

Engels's assumption that once property is socialized individual sex-love will come into its own, thereby liberating women as well as men is taken up and criticized by Mary Evans. She points out that in the patriarchal form of family, liberalization of individual sex-love will not be advantageous to women even though it could be so to men. She also notes that transition to socialism has not brought about full equality and improvement of relations between sexes.

There could be many kinds of criticisms on Engels' explanation of woman's subordination. Engels connects the defeat of the female sex with the rise of patriarchy and to ownership of surplus wealth. It could be seen that in many places there was surplus wealth and yet it did not give rise to patriarchy. Similarly, the claim that at a certain point of time there had been exclusively matriarchy or patriarchy cannot be proved. The complexity of the human situation forbids to make a generalisation either in terms of patriarchy or matriarchy at all placed simultaneously. Similarly, the emergence of either patriarchy or matriarchy is not only related to the material and economic conditions of life but it must be related to various physiological, psychological and ideological constraints. The question as to why women themselves accepted their secondary role and servitude for centuries cannot be explained by Engels' theory.

Woman in the Three Stages of Human Civilization

'Woman is a subordinate being' had not been only an opinion or a belief but a knowledge-claim backed by scientific knowledge at every stage of human civilization. As Feyerabend points out 'Even bold and revolutionary thinkers bow to the judgment of science. Kropotkin wants to break up all existing institutions but he does not touch science. Ibsen goes very far in his critique of bourgeois society but he retains science as a measure of truth. Levi Strauss has made us realize that western thought is not the lonely peak of human achievement it was thought to be - but he excludes science from his realization of ideologies. Marx and Engels were convinced that science would aid the workers in their quest for mental and social liberation'.

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It is therefore necessary to see the various stages of human civilization and the scientific knowledge at that stage and its impact on social conditions so that we come to know one more dimension of human civilization, The stages are (i) the hunting stage; (ii) the cattle breeding stage and (iii) the agricultural stage.

The Three Stages of Evolution of Culture

The Hunting Stage

According to the historians and political theorists of antiquity, all peoples had passed through three successive phases. First they lived by hunting and fishing, next by cattle breeding then by agriculture. However, this was not only a chronological succession but also a social advance. Hunting and fishing were the occupation of primitive people; with very little civilization, not far from the savage state. These were not stages of economic development, but modes of activity destined to survive into higher forms of civilized society. From the hunting stage great effort and progress raised them to the rank of pastoral populations, but to attain the dignity of agriculturists, settled on a cultivated soil was the final stage of progress. The three stages of evolution of culture were not just three chronological phases but three ladders of emergence of civilization.

The conception that man is supernatural set apart from all other animate finds no support in the study of comparative anatomy. On the anatomical grounds it is obligatory to class man, apes and their allies together in a single order of primates. They have the same ancestry. The earliest condition of human life is called as the hunting stage. It was not just a quest for food but a war for security and mastery. The human beings were not solely hunters but they also gathered the fruits and roots of the trees, caught fish from the lakes.

The word 'Hunters' takes us back to the most distant periods - to those men of stone-age. They lived on trees or built fragile huts of branches of which no trace remains. They lived near the streams and carried on their war with animals with flint weapons, heavy clubs or snares and pits for the larger animals. They used stones, thrown at first by hand, then by a sling against the birds. They also used a bow. However, while they wandered from place to place, on the banks of rivers, there flourished vegetation rich in natural produce. The primitive man was omnivorous.

At this stage, the history of man and woman was the same. As pointed out by Mrs. Ray Strachey in her article 'Women : Her Status and its Influence on History', famine, fire and flood must always be the same for men and women. The cold strikes both alike and the Sun warms them, life and laughter, love and sorrow, and death at the end of it all. When these things alone made the history of mankind there was no woman's question'.



What do you mean by hunting stage ?

Will Durant suggests that it is highly impossible that first human beings lived in isolated families even in the hunting stage, because man had inferior physiological organs of defense and this would have left them a prey to wild animals. The individual was not regarded as a separate entity in a natural society. He was primarily a member of a family. Such a family was a natural out growth of animal family of the mother and her litters. The first social institution was the family. Since it was the mother who fulfilled most of the parental functions, the family was organised, on the assumption that the position of man in the family was superficial, but that of the woman was supreme. We cannot say whether the term 'matriarchate' can be used or not but it was certainly a mother-family. William Graham Sumner calls mother-family as a system in which the descent and kin are reckoned through women and not through men. In this form the relation between women and her husband was that of contract. Woman lived in her home, with her kin and the husband

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came to her. The children were hers and remained with her. The physiological role of the male in reproduction must have escaped the notice completely. But even when his function was understood, sex-relations were so irregular that it was difficult to find out the father. The primitive mother did not bother to inquire into the paternity of the child. The child belonged to her and she did not belong to her husband but to her mother, brother and the clan at large. The brother was nearer and dearer to her than the husband. The husband many times lived with his mother and visited his wife occasionally.

The status of woman in mother-family was strong and independent. However, there was no concept of matriarchy or patriarchy in the modern sense of the term.

Thus, at the hunting stage the mother woman dispensed the food and nursed and reared children, kept the hut or home in order, gathered food, cooked, cleaned and made the clothing and the boots. She did almost all the work except the actual capture of the animal. In return for exposing himself to the risk of life, the male rested magnificently. When the tribe moved, men carried their weapons, women carried everything else. The woman was almost equal of man in stature, endurance, resourcefulness, courage. She was not an ornament or a sexual toy. She was robust, able to perform arduous work for long hours.

There was no institution of marriage in the modem sense of the term. The savages acted instinctively or automatically and not rationally. As pointed out by Sumner, all the women of a group had relations with all the men. There were indiscriminate relations between men and women. The restrictions regarding sex were yet to come. The relations between father-daughter, brother sister were also prevalent. The historian Prof. Rajwade refers to similar kinds of relations between people of the Vedic age as mentioned in the Vedas and other Indian treatises.

Cattle Breeding

The next stage is cattle-breeding. There is no antagonism between the various stages of human civilization like hunting, cattle-breeding, agriculture. On the other hand there is an inter–dependence and a necessary connection between them.

Cattle-raising and agriculture are the chief characteristics of Neolithic age. However, cattle-raising evolved out of hunting life itself. While hunting, primitive man captured some animals but it was not just capturing but taming them that became more important. The first step was not only to tame animals but domesticate them and learn to breed more animals. In the older Neolithic period of the shell heaps dogs were the first animals that were domesticated. (After wards in late neolithic period of polished stone, the goat, the sheep, pigs and oxen were domesticated).

The dogs probably had long been following the hunters' camps as scavengers devouring food that was thrown away. When it was found that dogs were useful as watch-dogs men fed them and domesticated them. In late Neolithic period of polished stone, the goat, the sheep, pig and ox were domesticated.

Men realized the advantages of saving some animals instead of killing them. The increased number of cattle ensured the supply of meat for a longer time and many people left hunting and devoted themselves to driving the cattle herds from one place to another. Nomadism was thus the natural result of cattle-raising and was its inseparable companion. With more experience man also discovered that he could get milk, butter and cheese and took to diary farming.

With the primitive man, the flock of animals was more of a reserve than wealth. Cattle raising caused many migrations because animals soon exhausted the pastures and had to be moved to new pastures. During the dry season, the herds had to be brought down to the banks of rivers, streams or lakes. In the rainy season they were to be brought to plateaux far from the stream, This gave them sufficient opportunity to understand the secrets of animal world.

The nomadic life was not a simple life but a very hard life like the military life. The tribe was always organized like an army. The march of the caravan and the operations of loading and

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unloading the animals were effected with order and rapidity. It created a war-like spirit, a sense of discipline and the supreme authority of the tribal chief.

As regards family life the nomads were by no means all alike. Everything dependent on the wealth of the nomads and the environmental demands of the time. The domestication and care of animals was essentially the task of men and this gave them all authority and position in the tribe. It was advantageous to the nomads to have a patriarchal family rule in which the children, the wife and the servants were strictly subordinate to the head of the family who exerted control over women and children. But patriarchy was not a rule among the nomads and it did not necessarily imply subordination in the modem sense of the term. Many a tribes did not brother about the fatherhood of the child. As mentioned by Gautier the Tuargs were all under matriarchy, they said that the womb holds the child and the child belongs to its mother. Thus there was no concept of father because his role in reproduction was not really known.

Self-Assessment

Fill in the blanks

1. Several women's movement demanded female suffrage in United States and United Kingdom during the .....
2. The Seneca Fall convention in ..... marked the birth of women's rights movement which among other things called for female suffrage.
3. Women were granted the right to vote in the US Constitution in .....
4. The book 'The Feminine Mystique' marked the resurgence of liberal feminist thought in the 1960s, composed by
5. The first lesson of patriarchy are learnt in the .....where the head of the family is a man/ father

9.4 Summary

- The sexual division explained by the Marxist thought has less to do with the actual patterns of social interaction or social relationship. From this perspective arose an important question of whether or not female domestic has always had difficulties in formulating a coherent theory of action which could not relate the analysis of objective class position and of system contradictions of class formation.
- Domestic patriarchy has come with the concept of home and home making. Women's right to proper recognition of her work at home has been recognized to a great extent all over the world. Now women go out for work, have their savings, and a control over what they earn. Most men are not hostile towards women's work.
- Gender regimes" refer to inequalities of gender in family, work and state related activities. Gender is reproduced within such a complex of institutions through "male reason" and the dichotomy of "maleness" and "femaleness".
- "Statization" and patronage to provide employment, education and health care for women is a top-down manner to analyse their problems. Effective property rights may reduce women's economic, social and political subordination and bring about more equal gender relations. A resource theory, rather than the reform theory, is the main concern.
- Patriarchy literally means rule of the father in a male-dominated family. It is a social and ideological construct which considers men (who are the patriarchs) as superior to women.
- Patriarchy is based on a system of power relations which are hierarchical and unequal where men control women's production, reproduction and sexuality. It imposes masculinity and femininity character stereotypes in society which strengthen the iniquitous power relations between men and women. Patriarchy is not a constant and gender relations which are dynamic

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and complex have changed over the periods of history. The nature of control and subjugation of women varies from one society to the other as it differs due to the differences in class, caste, religion, region, ethnicity and the socio-cultural practices.

- Patriarchal societies propagate the ideology of motherhood which restrict women's mobility and burdens them with the responsibilities to nurture and rear children. The biological factor to bear children is linked to the social position of women's responsibilities of motherhood : nurturing, educating and raising children by devoting themselves to family. "Patriarchal ideas blur the distinction between *sex* and *gender* and assume that all socio-economic and political distinctions between men and women are rooted in biology or anatomy"
- "Feminism is an awareness of patriarchal control, exploitation and oppression at the material and ideological levels of women's labour, fertility and sexuality, in the family, at the place of work and in society in general, and conscious action by women and men to transform the present situation"
- Mary Wollstonecraft's "*Vindication of the Rights of Women*" (1972) was the first text of modern feminism which campaigned for women's right to vote/ female suffrage. Wollstonecraft claimed that if women gained access to education as rational creatures in their own right the distinction of sex would become unimportant in political and social life.
- Marxist feminist believed that both subordination of women and division of classes developed historically with the development of private property.
- Thus maternal authority gave place to paternal authority and property was to be inherited from father to son and not from woman to her clan. The bourgeois families which owned private property emerged as patriarchal families where women were subjugated. Such patriarchal families became oppressive as men ensured that their property passed on only to their sons. Therefore bourgeois family and private property as a byproduct of capitalism subordinated and oppressed women.
- Most socialist feminists agree that the confinement of women to the domestic sphere of housework and motherhood serves the economic interests of capitalism. Women relieve men of the burden of housework and child rearing, and allow them to concentrate on productive employment. Thus unpaid domestic labour contributes to the health and efficiency of capitalist economy and also accounts for the low social status and economic dependence of women on men. But, unlike the Marxist feminists, socialist feminists look at both relations of production as well as relations of reproduction to understand patriarchy.
- However, patriarchy and capitalism are concretely intertwined and mutually supportive system of oppressions. Women's subordination within capitalism results from their economic exploitation as wage labourers and their patriarchal oppression as mothers, consumers and domestic labourers.
- The state is a site of patriarchal relations which is necessary to patriarchy as a whole as it upholds the oppession of women by supporting a form of household in which women provide unpaid domestic services to male. Thus capitalism benefits from a particular form of family which ensures cheap reproduction of labour power and the availability of women as a reserve army. Patriarchy is also located in the social relations of reproduction and masculinity and femininity are not biological givens but products of long historical process. Thus, socialist feminists combine both marxist and radical approach and neither is sufficient by itself. Patriarchy is connected to both relations of production and relations of reproduction.
- Unlike the liberal and socialist traditions, radical feminists developed a systematic theory of sexual oppression as the root.
- **Eco-feminists** accept women's attitudes and values as different from men. They believe that in certain respects women are superior to men and possess the qualities of creativity, sensitivity

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and caring which men can never develop. Vandana Shiva in her conception of ecofeminism critiques development and establishes the connection between ecological destruction and capitalist growth as a patriarchal project.

- Emancipation of women necessarily calls for challenging patriarchy as a system which perpetuates women's subordination. Several structures of society such as kinship and family, class, caste, religion, ethnicity, educational institutions and state reinforce patriarchy. Some of the experiences of multiple patriarchies can be illustrated by analyzing the dynamics and interface of, social forces which institutionalize and legitimize patriarchy in society.
- The first lessons of patriarchy are learnt in the family where the head of the family is a man/ father. Man is considered the head of the family and controls women's sexuality, labour or production, reproduction and mobility. In a patriarchal family the birth of male child is preferred to that of a female. The former is considered as the inheritor of the family while the later is considered as *paraya dhan*.
- These stereotypes of masculinity and femininity are not only social constructs but also have been internalized by both men and women. While the pressure to earn and look after the family is more on the man, the women are supposed to do the menial jobs and take care of their children and even other members of the family. It is because of these gender stereotypes that women are at a disadvantage and are vulnerable to violence and other kinds of discriminations and injustices. Systemic deprivation and violence against women : rape, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, female foeticide, infanticide, witch-killing, sati, dowry deaths, wife-beating, high level of female illiteracy, malnutrition, undernourishment and continued sense of insecurity keeps women bound to home, economically exploited, socially suppressed and politically passive.
- Laws of Manu insist that since women by their very nature are disloyal they should be made dependent on men. The husband should be constantly worshiped as a god, which symbolized that man is a lord, master, owner, or provider and the shudras and women were the subordinates. It legitimized that a woman should never be made independent, as a daughter she should be under the surveillance of her father, as a wife of her husband and as a widow of her son.
- Patriarchal constructions of social practices are legitimized by religion and religious institution as most religious practices regard male authority as superior and the laws and norms regarding family, marriage, divorce and inheritance are linked to patriarchal control over property biased against women.
- The dictionary meaning of the term 'subordination is to give secondary status. The term 'subordination' is generally used as a noun. It is used with reference to human beings. But it cannot be called as an essential quality that belongs to human beings. Goodness, kindness, rationality, generosity and such other qualities can be sensibly talked about as the qualities or Predicates of humans but subordination cannot be a predicate because it does not form a necessary part of human nature.
- The more important issue is the justification of subordination. The justification of subordination consists in evaluating that somebody is a lesser being and hence a subordinate being. Every act of subordination implicitly or explicitly presupposes such an evaluative claim. This claim accompanies the fact of subordination. The evaluation that somebody is a subordinate being stands in need of explanation. Such an evaluation cannot be explained in terms of cause-effect relation because it is not an event of the physical world. It is a kind of action carried out by human beings in their inter-personal relationship with the social world. Every human action is purposive and it springs from certain intentions on the part of the actor.
- The subordination of woman as a part of human history has to be understood from both these aspects. It is not my aim to consider the question whether all women across the world

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are subordinated or not, or the extent to which they are subordinated or the issue of suggesting practical devices and strategies to put an end to subordination. I am concerned with the question as to why in every culture woman is looked upon as a subordinate being, why such an evaluation has been a part of every culture. The answer to this question will lead us to the reasons or justifications of the subordination of woman.

- The subordination of woman has been one of the important issue for the social sciences and for feminism. The defenders of women's subordination and the propounders of woman's liberation both have tried to explain the phenomenon of subordination in terms of various theoretical formulations. These theories refer to the biological, psychological material, economic and ethical aspects of human life.
- The anthropological illustration of this claim is given by the theory that woman is the gatherer and man is the hunter. The biological point of view is also explicitly present in the belief that on the biological level a female has a peculiar function to perform—namely the reproductive function and that is her sole function. Her physiology is such that it is intimately related to the continuation of the species of life.
- The concept of 'Man the Hunter' has been developed by Sherwood Washburn and C. Lancaster. Washburn and Lancaster hold that : males who hunt and that hunting is not just an economic activity but a way of life. They argue that 'The biology, psychology and customs that separate us from the apes-all these we owe to the hunters of time past'.
- It is said that women could not follow the hunt because they had to take care of the infants. They stayed home gathering food they could and males developed new techniques of hunting and thereby new communicative skills of organization. They brought the meat to the females and the young ones. Thus the human social and emotional bonds can be traced back to the hunter who brought food for the female and the young ones who were dependent on him for survival.
- Women are looked at as the beings closer to nature, performing the function of reproduction so that species would survive. Sherry Ortner quotes a passage from Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex 'A female to a greater extent than the male is the prey of the species, she is more enslaved to the species than the male her animality is more manifest'. She further points out that the major processes of woman's body serve no function except the organic function and they are the source of discomfort and painful experience.
- Thus, a woman's body dooms her to mere reproduction of life, the male on the other hand because he lacks the natural creative function, has to assert his creativity externally through technology and symbols. He tries to create eternal, lasting and transcendental objects but the woman creates only perishable human beings.
- According to Freud during the early infantile period the child is autocratic, it derives erotic or sexual satisfaction from the stimulation of his body or from erogenous zones such as lips, cheeks, nipples or genital organs stimulated by the mother during the activities of feeding, bathing or otherwise. In the oral stage the stimulation of mouth gives rise to pleasurable sensation, in the anal stage libidinal pleasure is derived from the activities of the bowl, and in the early genital stage the erotic pleasure is derived chiefly from the manipulation of the sexual organs. Freud argues that at the oral stage and the anal stage the experiences of a boy and a girl are the same. But at the genital stage the experiences are different.
- The girl on the other hand acknowledges the fact of her castration and with it the superiority of the male and her own inferiority. Freud states that a girl feels greatly at a disadvantage owing to her lack of visible penis. She envies boys for possessing a penis and wishes to be a man rather than a woman. That becomes the hope of her life. But the process of becoming a woman depends on the clitoris passing on the sensitivity to the vaginal orifice in good time and completely.

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- Engels argues that the oppression of woman is historically related to the development of class society. He says that in primitive societies all work, whether by men or women had the same social value. Whatever wealth they had, was possessed and shared by the whole community. Until the lower stage of barbarism, fixed wealth consisted of house, clothing, crude ornaments and implements for procuring and preparing food. Breeding goats and sheep yielded rich nutriment in meat and milk. With the increase in the number of cattle pastoral people acquired more and more wealth.
- 'Woman is a subordinate being' had not been only an opinion or a belief but a knowledge-claim backed by scientific knowledge at every stage of human civilization. As Feyerabend points out 'Even bold and revolutionary thinkers bow to the judgment of science.
- The conception that man is supernatural set apart from all other animate finds no support in the study of comparative anatomy. On the anatomical grounds it is obligatory to class man, apes and their allies together in a single order of primates. They have the same ancestry. The earliest condition of human life is called as the hunting stage. It was not just a quest for food but a war for security and mastery. The human beings were not solely hunters but they also gathered the fruits and roots of the trees, caught fish from the lakes.
- The status of woman in mother-family was strong and independent. However, there was no concept of matriarchy or patriarchy in the modern sense of the term.
- The nomadic life was not a simple life but a very hard life like the military life. The tribe was always organized like an army. The march of the caravan and the operations of loading and unloading the animals were effected with order and rapidity. It created a war-like spirit, a sense of discipline and the supreme authority of the tribal chief.

9.5 Key–Words

1. Matriarchy : It is a society in which females especially mothers, have the central roles of political leadership.
2. Patriarchy : It is a social system in which the male acts as the primary authority figure central to social organisation.

9.6 Review Questions

1. Briefly describe gender and stratification.
2. Discuss gender as a basis of stratification.
3. What do you mean by patriarchy? Discuss the subordination of women.
4. Explain the three stages of evolution of culture.

Answers: Self–Assessment

1. 1840s and 1850s
2. 1848
3. 1920
4. Betty Friedan
5. Family

9.7 Further Readings



1. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Perspectives on Social Stratification, Rawat Publication.
2. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Social Stratification & Mobility, Rawat Publication.
3. Hasnain, Nadeem, 2011 : Indian Society and Culture Continuity and Change, Jawahar Publishers and Distributors.

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Unit 10: Women's Empowerment

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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Describe the Status of Woman : Continuity and Change.
- Discuss the Women and Employment.
- Explain the Women's Empowerment.

Introduction

Empowerment of women, also called gender empowerment, has become a significant topic of discussion in regards to development and economics. Entire nations, businesses, communities, and groups can benefit from the implementation of programs and policies that adopt the notion of women empowerment. Empowerment is one of the main procedural concerns when addressing human rights and development. The Human Development and Capabilities Approach, The Millennium Development Goals, and other credible approaches/goals point to empowerment and participation as a necessary step if a country is to overcome the obstacles associated with poverty and development.

Gender empowerment can be measured through the Gender Empowerment Measure, or the GEM. The GEM shows women's participation in a given nation, both politically and economically. Gem is calculated by tracking "the share of seats in parliament held by women; of female legislators, senior officials and managers; and of female profession and technical workers; and the gender disparity in earned income, reflecting economic independence." It then ranks countries given this information. Other measures that take into account the importance of female participation and equality include: the Gender Parity Index and the Gender-related Development Index (GDI).

One way to deploy the empowerment of women is through land rights. Land rights offer a key way to economically empower women, giving them the confidence they need to tackle gender inequalities. Often, women in developing nations are legally restricted from their land on the sole basis of gender. Having a right to their land gives women a sort of bargaining power that they wouldn't normally have, in turn; they gain the ability to assert themselves in various aspects of their life, both in and outside of the home. Another way to provide women empowerment is to allocate responsibilities to them that normally belong to men. When women have economic empowerment, it is a way for others to see them as equal members of society. Through this, they

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achieve more self-respect and confidence by their contributions to their communities. Simply including women as a part of a community can have sweeping positive effects. In a study conducted by Bina Agarwal, women were given a place in a forest conservation group. Not only did this drive up the efficiency of the group, but the women gained incredible self-esteem while others, including men, viewed them with more respect. Participation, which can be seen and gained in a variety of ways, has been argued to be the most beneficial form of gender empowerment. Political participation, be it the ability to vote and voice opinions, or the ability to run for office with a fair chance of being elected, plays a huge role in the empowerment of peoples. However, participation is not limited to the realm of politics. It can include participation in the household, in schools, and the ability to make choices for oneself. It can be said that these latter participations need to be achieved before one can move onto broader political participation. When women have the agency to do what she wants, a higher equality between men and women is established. It is argued that Microcredit also offers a way to provide empowerment for women. Governments, organizations, and individuals have caught hold of the lure of microfinance. They hope that lending money and credit allows women to function in business and society, which in turn empowers them to do more in their communities. One of the primary goals in the foundation of microfinance was women empowerment. Loans with low interest rates are given to women in developing communities in hopes that they can start a small business and provide for her family. It should be said, however, that the success and efficiency of microcredit and microloans is controversial and constantly debated.

Most women across the globe rely on the informal work sector for an income. If women were empowered to do more and be more, the possibility for economic growth becomes apparent. Eliminating a significant part of a nation's work force on the sole basis of gender can have detrimental effects on the economy of that nation. In addition, female participation in counsels, groups, and businesses is seen to increase efficiency. For a general idea on how an empowered women can impact a situation monetarily, a study found that of fortune 500 companies, "those with more women board directors had significantly higher financial returns, including 53 percent higher returns on equity, 24 percent higher returns on sales and 67 percent higher returns on invested capital (OECD, 2008)." This study shows the impact women can have on the overall economic benefits of a company. If implemented on a global scale, the inclusion of women in the formal workforce (like a fortune 500 company) can increase the economic output of a nation.

Many of the barriers to women empowerment and equity lie ingrained into the cultures of certain nations and societies. Many women feel these pressures, while others have become accustomed to being treated inferior to men. Even if men, legislators, NGOs, etc. are aware of the benefits women empowerment and participation can have, many are scared of disrupting the status quo and continue to let societal norms get in the way of developmental.

The process which enables individuals/groups to fully access personal/collective power, authority and influence, and to employ that strength when engaging with other people, institutions or society. In other words, "Empowerment is not giving people power, people already have plenty of power, in the wealth of their knowledge and motivation, to do their jobs magnificently. We define empowerment as letting this power out (Blanchard, K)." It encourages people to gain the skills and knowledge that will allow them to overcome obstacles in life or work environment and ultimately, help them develop within themselves or in the society.

To empower a female "...sounds as though we are dismissing or ignoring males, but the truth is, both genders desperately need to be equally empowered." (Dr. Asa Don Brown) Empowerment occurs through improvement of conditions, standards, events, and a global perspective of life.

Empowerment may also have a negative impact on individuals, corporations and productivity depending on an individuals views and goals. It can divide the genders or the races. Strong skills

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and critical capabilities are often held back to open doors for those who meet the empowerment criteria. Those who use empowerment as a selfish advantage tend to become difficult, demeaning and even hostile colleagues.

10.1 Status of Women : Continuity and Change

Inequality between men and women is one of the most crucial disparities in many societies, and this is particularly so in India. Any assessment of the status of women has to start from social framework. Social structures, cultural norms, and the value systems influence social expectations regarding the behaviour of both men and women, and determine women's role and her status in the society.

The status of women in India is culture, region and age specific. The social status of women in our country is a typical example of the gap between the status and role accorded to them by the constitution and the laws, and those imposed on them by social traditions. Based on the patriarchal institutions and values, women are socialised to be good, obedient and sacrificing daughters, wives and daughters-in-law. They are culturally trained, through the process of socialization, not to challenge discrimination, subordination, exploitation and subjugation within the social structure. The extreme sense of security, protectiveness and patrionising attitude of the males often inhibit the development of their personality and individuality. "The status of women in the family and society is largely determined by the socio-economic cultural, political, religious and geographical factors in different regions of the country"*National Profile on Women, Health and Development*, *2000*.

The most common family organization, the joint family, is composed of a group of patrilineally related males who have equal rights to property, sharing a common budget, residence and hearth. Though considerable changes have come in this pattern of living through the imapct of industrialization, urbanization and modernization, joint family norms still prevail to a great extent. A woman is placed under severe restrictions under this type of family structure and has little or no say in decision making and is directly subordinate to her mother-in-law. Her status in the family largely depends on her husband's contribution to the family economy and on the amount of dowry brought by her.

The cultural autonomy and status of women have always been controlled by the caste system. This ideology of ritual purity-impurity have been maintained through rules of commensality and marriage, commitment to caste, occupation and life style. Vegetarianism, abstinance from alcoholism and constraints on women have been important determinants of the degree of purity. *The National Profile on Women* (ibid) says that the ideological and material basis for maintaining the caste system is closely regulated by religious scriptures and the patriarchal patrilineal and patrilocal family ideology. The control on women is exercised through :

(*i*) Disinheritance from property and resources;

(*ii*) Practicing seclusion or *purdah* whereby women are removed from the public sphere and limited to the domestic sphere;

(*iii*) Socialization into the customs and values;

(*iv*) Marriage, ensuring security of the matrimonial home and property; and

(*v*) Menstrual rituals; attitude to the body that inculcate a sense of shame; early arranged marriage; monogamy strictly for woman (polygamy in rare communities) and women's self-worth limited to marriage and family, specially as mother of several sons.

These structures have been enforced most strictly by the upper castes where women enjoy lesser cultural autonomy than their counterparts in lower castes. Largely because of their greater role in family economy, women, among the lower castes and most of the tribal societies, enjoy better rights to visibility and mobility, freedom to choose life partners and to dissolve marriage if it does

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not work. Through the process of Sanskritization a number of lower castes have been trying to climb upward in the status hierarchy by emulating the life style, norms and behaviour patterns of higher castes. Consequently the autonomy of their women folk, too, gets eroded. This is the price a lower caste has to pay for achieving upward social mobility.

Emanating from the normative structure of the family where the male the maintains the continuity of the lineage, there is a strong preference for sons in most sections of Indian society. On nearly all these measures and in most states, male children have a decisive advantage over female children. Son preference is observed to be particularly strong in northern and central India and somewhat weaker in the southern and western region (Mutharayappa, Choe, Arnold and Roy, 1997). In tribal populations, the discrimination against women is not severe. The practice of female infanticide and foeticide also caste aspersion on the status of women.


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The National Family Health Survey (1992-93) has assessed son preference in 19 populous states on aspects such as immunisation rates, period of breast feeding, prevalence of three common childhood diseases and likelihood of treatment, prevalence of chronic under-nutrition among children under age 4, and infant and child mortality rates.

Widowhood has also been a 'social curse' in most segments of our population' and has been most pronounced among the upper caste Hindus. Among the lower castes, tribal population and Muslims widow remarriage has been a popular practice. Report of the *National Committee on the Status of Women in India (1988)* says that the social attitudes towards widows differ at different socio-economic levels but a change in the life style of women after widowhood is characteristic of most sections of Indian Society. Traditionally, widows have been considered in auspicious and their participation in auspicious ceremonies are still considered undesirable in substantial section of the society. Inspite of marginal changes in attitudes, the condition of widows continues to be a blot on our society. The committee came across a large number of widows in a state of distitution in Banaras and Mathura: they had been unshamedly abandoned by their families and were eking out an existence through begging or various petty trades.

Status of Muslim women is not much different from the rest of the population. Though Islam as ideology talks about gender equality and gender justice, the predominantly patriarchal society has taken away what Islam gave to women. Like Hindu women, Muslim women too have little role to play in the decision making process at the family level. Moreover their mobility, specially among the higher social groups, is restricted because of the practice of purdah and that is why their share in the workforce is much lower as compared to others. The overwhelming majority is educationally backward. Their share in productive assets is also low. Though, contrary to popular perception, percentage of polygamy is very low (lower than Buddhists, Jains and Hindus as documented by several reports, surveys and studies) the Muslim males enjoy unfettered rights regarding divorce and get away by paying maintenance after divorce for a short period of time. But Muslim woman is entitled to get her *meher* (dower) in case of divorce. She also enjoys the right to give divorce to her husband. In the midst of reports of the so called triple *talaaq* (pronouncing talaaq by husband thrice in one sitting) among the lower socio-economic strata, it is ignored that the problem and the consequent result of it are still not rampant among them. Moreover, one hardly comes across a case of 'bride burning' among them. This may be explained by the fact that getting divorce among them is much easier and the male can contract another marriage (atleast in theory) without getting divorce from the first wife. As far as widowhood is concerned, there is hardly any problem of widow remarriage. Perhaps that is why the sight of a young marriageable

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widow is rare in Muslim society. Early marriage is common among the lower caste Muslims and this creates hurdles in women's education among them. In the economic and occupational spheres, the position of Muslim women continues to be one of definite subordination to men. But the problem of subordination of women in Muslim community has to be looked at from larger angle of women of all the religious communities, all of them being victim of male subordination, and gender injustice. The need of the hour is not to 'communalise' the situation because it will weaken women's struggle for justice and equality.

Changing Status : The post-independence phase has witnessed a tremendous upsurge for equality and gender justice. The urban women are showing mass awakening for their rights. The State has been forced to come out against discriminatory practices. Female literacy has increased appreciably. Women have been allowed to enter all professions. Gender issues are emerging strongly. Women of contemporary India have multiple roles to play at home, in office, factory, legislature. They are fighting back. They are gradually getting a share in the political process. The 72nd and 73rd amendment is the result of ongoing struggle of women for their rights. They are redefining their role in the family and the larger society. They are gradually and gradually rejecting all customs and traditions supportive of gender discrimination. The male dominated society has decided to play it's last card of religion and God. They have to rise courageously even against religion and God if they create hurdle in their emancipation.

10.2 Women and Employment

The disadvantaged situation of women in the labour market is a consequence of their illiteracy, lack of training and skill, and low position in the social system, including their total exclusion from the structures of decision-making and power.

The Working Women

There has been a remarkable increase in the number of women getting out of the four-walls of the household and becoming workers in both cities and villages, according to the 1991 Report of the Census Commissioner. According to the 1971 Census figures, only 13.0 per cent of Indian women were regarded as workers in the total country's workforce. This percentage rose to 25.89 in 1981 and 28.57 in 1991 (*The Hindustan Times*, April 6,1993) About 80.0 per cent of the working women are indirectly engaged in agriculture. Only 12.0 per cent of the total employees in central and state administrative services and public sector undertakings are women. The Table 10.1 and Table 10.2 below show the total female population and as 'unpaid' workers. In the field of (paid) agriculture labour, the number of women increased from 20.76 million in 1981 to 28.27 million in 1991.

Table 10.1 Female Population and Female Workers in India

Category	Female population (in millions)				Female workers main and marginal (in millions)			Work participation rate of female workers		
	1961	1971	1981	1991	1961	1971	1981	1961	1971	1981
Total	206.2	255.0	318.2	406.5	57.5	36.2	66.3	5.75	3.62	6.63
Rural	170.6	205.6	245.1	304.0	53.6	32.7	58.5	5.36	3.27	5.85
Urban	35.6	49.4	73.1	102.5	3.9	3.5	7.8	0.39	0.35	0.78

Source : *Social Welfare Statistics, 1981.*

The number of women employed in India in 1979 in factories was 5.14 lakh, in mines 0.8 lakh, and in plantations 4.18 lakh.

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Table 10.2 Break-up of Percentage of Female Workers

Category	1961	1971	1981
Cultivators	15.45	3.61	4.77
Agricultural labourers	6.87	6.18	6.58
Other workers	5.61	2.34	3.09
Total female workers	27.93	12.13	14.44

Of the total women in the workforce in India, out of every 100 employed women, 52.59 are illiterate, 28.56 are educated up to primary and middle school, 13.78 are educated upto secondary school, and 5.07 are graduates and above. In the urban areas, out of every 100 employed women, 25.83 are illiterate, 35.49 are educated up to primary and middle school, 25.71 are educated up to secondary school, and 12.97 are graduates and above. In the rural areas, out of every 100 employed women, 88.11 are illiterate, 10.68 are educated up to primary and middle school, and 1.21 are educated above middle school.

Work Motivations

Why do women seek employment? The motivation to work among women is different from that of men. Though the main reason appears to be 'monetary need' but it will be wrong to say that all women pursue a job only with this motive. On the basis of a study of 728 working women, the important factors in seeking jobs are poined out as : insufficient wages of husband, death of husband, illness of husband, non-support by husband, desertion by husband, and preference for work outside the home. Broadly speaking, 89.0 per cent of the women were found to be working due to economic necessity. A study of 225 working women in Jaipur (Rajasthan) in 1989 by Deepa Mathur (1992 : 23) identified six motivational factors in women's employment : economic necessity or augmenting meagre family income (22.7%), security against future contingencies (20.0%), improvement of living standard (20.4%), escape from boredom or social affiliation (17.3%), personal esteem (12.4%), and self-fulfilment (7.2%). Thus, 63.0 per cent women worked for financial reasons and 37.0 per cent for non-financial reasons. When the women were asked that given an option to choose all over again, would they prefer being full-time housewives or full-time employees with householder's role, 52.0 per cent preferred only a domestic role and 48.0 per cent favoured a combination of work and marriage. Thus, a little more than half of the women were found eager to work and a little less than half were found reluctant to work. The measurement of the motivational level pointed out that 47.6 per cent women had a high motivational level (that is, desire for work was sustained and kept up by a composite of several factors), 35.1 per cent had a moderate motivational level, and 17.3 per cent had a low motivational level. The high motivational level was found related to high level of education, higher job satisfaction, and young age. In 29.0 per cent cases, the source of motivation was family of orientation (parents, siblings), in 23.0 per cent cases family of procreation (husband, in-laws), in 9.0 per cent cases friends and teachers, and in 39.0 per cent cases self-inspiration.

Like factors which increase the propensity of motivation to work, there are some factors which mitigate this propensity. The demotivating factors in Deepa Mathur's study were found to be : nonavailability of suitable jobs (49%), lack of skill (20%), lack of desire to work (18%), discouragement from husband/inlaws (8%), and incompatibility with husband's job requirement (5%).

Dual Role Satisfaction

How many women remain satisfied with the dual roles? If an earning woman attempts and succeeds in merging her working role with the general roles of mother and wife, she will be considered as a woman who is satisfied with her dual roles. The 'high' satisfaction implies being

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happy with the performance of both the worker's and home-maker's roles; 'moderate' satisfaction implies marginal imbalance in the equilibrium of the two roles (one coming in the way of other); and 'low' satisfaction implies being dissatisfied with one or both roles to a very large extent. In Deepa Mathur's study, 53 per cent women were found to be highly satisfied (with their dual roles), 18 per cent moderately satisfied, and 29 per cent dissatisfied.

This satisfaction/dissatisfaction with dual roles affects working woman's self-image. 'High'self-image means that woman feels that her work has improved her individuality, while 'low' self-image means that woman feels that her job did not have a positive effect on her personality.

Low self-image and dual role problems create the sociological problem of role-conflict for the working women, which in turn affects the family relations, child-care, and role performance with active and passive involvement. Women with submissive disposition have more problems with dual roles than those having a dominant personality. Deepa Mathur in her study found 21.8 per cent women having high degree of role-conflict, 44.4 per cent having low degree and 33.8 per cent having no problem of role-conflict. Significant or moderate or weak relationship was found between role-conflict and variables like motivational level of working, husband's attitude towards wife's employment, interpersonal relations at work-place, and woman's personality type. The relationship of role-conflict with motivational level and husband's attitude is significant, with interpersonal relations at work-place is *weak*, with personality type (home-oriented, career-oriented, and home-cum-career-oriented) is significant, and with presence of children is moderate.

Ramu (1989) is of the opinion that conflict between the new economic and the traditional domestic roles results in the compartmentalization of activities of women, at least in the initial phases of their marital lives. However, this compartmentalization is short-lived, because the competing demands of the occupational and domestic worlds will make it impossible for many women to address such demand equitably. Sooner or later, many of these women learn either to scale down their occupational aspirations or to curtail their obligations.

Role Adjustment

The working women have to 'adjust' themselves in home as well as working-place. Adjustment is "smooth switch-over from one status to other status, perceiving roles as perceived by others, and performing multiple roles with efficiency and satisfaction." In simple terms, role adjustment depends upon role demands (by the society) and role performance (by the individual).

A working woman has to face innumerable problems. The home-life has to be adjusted with the office routine. The house-work has to be organized on lines different from the traditional ones. According to Lazarns (1961), four main indicators of adjustment are : skilled and intellectual performance of roles, extent of psychological comfort, absence of symptoms of tensions, and social acceptability of behaviour.

The adjustment is measured on a unidimensional continuum. An individual's position can be located on it ranging from the highest point to the lowest point on the continuum. Low adjustment is differentiated from maladjustment as the two are qualitatively different from each other. Maladjustment involves pathological responses but low adjustment indicates incomplete involvement in situations.

Deepa Mathur's research revealed that out of 225 working women studied, 38 per cent had high home adjustment, 43 per cent moderate home adjustment, and 19 per cent low home adjustment. As regards the level of job adjustment, 44 per cent showed high, 30 per cent moderate, and 26 per cent low adjustment. The level of job adjustment was found to be varying with the nature of job, length of service, access to power, and future plans. Against this, the level of home adjustment depends upon the structure of family, size of family, husband's and in-law's co-operation and self-esteem. Taking the two situations (home-life and work) together, it may be stated that the working women generally succeed in developing strategies that allow them to pursue their

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occupational aspirations while simultaneously living up to their domestic responsibilities. Though the working women spend their income mostly on raising the living standards, though they are accused of becoming proud, self-centered, arrogant and negligent, yet they manage to break through the shell of narrow domestic existence and participate in the larger life of the nation and even humanity.



Did u know? The 'home adjustment' and 'job adjustment' include different criteria of evaluation. In the case of working women, generally it is found that the degree of high adjustment is higher in case of job adjustment as compared to home adjustment.

Rights of Women

In a society where about half of the total population and three-fifths of the females are illiterate (1991 Census), orthodox and tradition-bound beliefs and practices cannot be stuffed overnight. Nor it is easy to create a strong public opinion against these practices. Legislation, of course, does make some impact but it can only be introduced very cautiously and in stages. What are the legislations on the statute book at present pertaining to women's rights? To what extent have these social laws revolutionized the Hindu society? To what extent have they tried to bring about social change? We will briefly discuss the rights assured to women through these laws.

The important rights assured by the Constitution of India to women, like men, are :

1. Right to equality, that is, equality of opportunity, equality before law, equal protection of the laws, not discriminating against any person on grounds of sex, and not discriminating against in matters of public employment on the gender grounds.
2. Right to freedom, that is, freedom of speech, expression, residence, occupation, and mobility.
3. Right against exploitation, that is, against forced labour (*begar*).
4. Right to freedom of religion, that is, professing, practicing and propagating religion freely.
5. Right to property, that is, acquiring, holding and selling property.
6. Cultural and educational rights, that is, conserving one's culture and seeking admission to educational institutions.
7. Right to constitutional remedies, that is, approaching courts for enforcing fundamental rights.

Besides assuring these fundamental rights, the state has also been empowered to enact special laws for protecting the interests of and giving preferential treatment to females (and weaker sections). On this ground, the state has been taking legislative measures from time to time for performing its obligations of bringing in a social order in which justice prevails.

During the last three to four decades, a number of laws have been enacted/amended to ensure equality of status and opportunity for women. These laws may be examined at three levels : social, economic, and political.

Social Laws

The major issues relevant to women and relating to social laws are: marriage, adoption, guardianship, and abortion. The important issues pertaining to marriage are : (a) mate selection, (b) age at marriage, (c) polygamy, (d) invalid marriage, (e) defective or void marriage, (f) divorce, (g) restitution of conjugal rights, (h) alimony and maintenance, (i) custody of child, (j) dowry, and (k) remarriage. The important laws, already referred to in earlier pages, pertaining to these issues are : the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955; the Special Marriage Act, 1954; and the Widow Remarriage Act, 1856.

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The law pertaining to the adoption of children was passed in 1956, called the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act. Not only a married woman but an unmarried woman, a widow, and a divorcee are also given the right to adopt a child. Only such children are permitted to be adopted who are unmarried and less than fifteen years of age.

Abortion was legally treated as a criminal offence till 1970. In 1971, the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act was passed which legally permitted both pregnant woman and abortionist to cause miscarriage. The legislation, which came into force in April 1972, permits the termination of pregnancy by a registered doctor if it does not exceed twelve weeks. The pregnancy is to be terminated if it involves risk to the life of the pregnant woman, grave injury to her physical/ mental health, and the risk that if the child is born, he would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities so as to be seriously handicapped. The termination of pregnancy is also permitted where it is caused by rape or failure of contraceptive device.

Economic Laws

The issues pertaining to economic laws include : right to property or inheritance, equal wages, working conditions, maternity benefits, and job security. The right to property of a woman refers to her right as a daughter, as a wife, as a widow, and as a mother. According to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, not only a daughter is given a right in her father's property equal to her brothers, but a widow also gets a share in her deceased husband's property equal to her sons and daughters. The legislation has also removed the distinction between *stridhan* and non-*stridhan*.

As regards the equal wages, the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 does not permit wage discrimination between male and female workers. The legislation prescribes penalties for those employers who disobey the rules.

The working conditions during employment are governed by the Factory Act, 1948. Besides including provisions dealing with working hours, weekly rest, standards of cleanliness, ventilation, temperature, fencing of machinery, first-aid facilities, and rest rooms, the legislation provides for the establishing of creches for children (if the factory employs thirty or more women), separate toilets for females and lays down a maximum work of nine hours in a day for women and no employment of women between 10 : 00 p.m. and 5 : 00 a.m.

Political Rights

The two important rights in the political field sanctioned to women by the Indian Constitution are : female enfranchisement and eligibility for the legislature. The demand for women's suffrage was first made in 1917 but was rejected by the Southborough Franchise Committee in 1918. In 1919, the government permitted the states to enact their own laws for granting franchise to women. Such laws were enacted by Rajkot in 1923, Travancore and Cochin in 1924, Madras and Uttar Pradesh in 1925, Punjab and Assam in 1926, and Bihar and Orissa in 1929 (Jane Matson, 1971 : 108-110). The Government of India Act, 1935 granted female enfranchisement on the basis of educational qualifications. Subsequently, fifty-six women entered the legislatures in the 1937 elections. After the independence, the number of women voters and women's representatives in assemblies and parliament has increased sufficiently.

Consciousness of Rights

Though women in India have more rights than women of other countries, but are our women conscious of all these rights? Do they actually enjoy these rights? This author conducted a study a few years ago in eight villages of a district in Rajasthan among 753 women belonging to 18-50 years age-group. The main object of the study was to assess the degree of awareness and measure the level of satisfaction among women of rights sanctioned by the Constitution and the various laws. The conceptual model conceived for this research assured that the level of awareness of rights by a woman in a specific domain (economic, social, political or religious) is dependent on

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four things : her individual background (educational level, aspiration level, and personal needs), her social environment (including expectations of kins, husband's values and family members' perceptions), her subjective perception (of her status and roles), and her economic base (that is, level of class-membership). Our analysis pointed out the following facts pertaining to the awareness of varied types of rights and the level of satisfaction with the enjoyment of rights.

Consciousness of Social Rights

- Awareness of the marriage laws among women is very low. Only about one-tenth women in our survey were aware of the right to choose their own life-partners, about one-fiftieth were aware of the correct legal age for marriage, little less than one-fifth were aware of the right to divorce, little less than one-tenth were aware of legal stipulation of getting alimony after divorce, less than one-fifth were aware of the legal right of widows to remarry, and little less than one-fifth were aware of the dowry law. Taking all the aspects together, it could be said that only about one-tenth women have some awareness of the marriage laws.
- Women play a marginal role in decision-making in the family. Consultation with wife by husband exists only in insignificant areas of domestic life.
- Conjugal relationship has not achieved any significant importance in husband-wife relationship.
- Women do not find their position in family frustrating; rather they find their life experience satisfying.
- About two-thirds women are satisfied with their marriage and family life.
- Level of satisfaction with housework varies inversely with age, education and income. Poor, illiterate and less educated women as also the middle-aged women are more satisfied with house-work than rich, educated and young women.
- Women are least liberated from the traditional values and age strongly oriented to the existing norms.

Consciousness of Economic Rights

- Though only a small number of women (about one-fourth) are aware of the right of a share in father's property, a large number (about four-fifths) are aware of the right of a share in husband's property.
- A small number of women (about one-third) inherit husband's property and a negligible number of them (0.5 per cent) get a share of the father's property.
- Only about one-tenth women are working and earning in villages and are economically independent.
- The working women evaluate the roles of housework and homemaker as positively as the non-working women despite the burden which the role of wage-earning imposes on them.
- About nine out of every ten working women are dissatisfied with their wage-earning work. This dissatisfaction, however, is caused by the nature of work they do and the wages they get rather than by the idea of the work itself.
- Women who contribute to family economy are not free to spend their earnings according to their own choice.

Consciousness of Political Rights

A very small number of women (less than one-fifth) have political awareness.

- Of the women having franchise, about three-fourths exercise it. Interestingly enough, a sense of an outing rather than a real interest in politics motivates women to vote.

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- Voting behaviour of women is neither linked with political mobilization nor with political socialization but with their husbands' political beliefs and attitudes.
- The liberal theory of elections emphasizing the rational choice or preference of the candidate or the party for which an individual voter votes is not valid in describing the voting behaviour of women.
- Women generally are not the active members of any political party; only a few women support some party.

From the above findings, the conclusion seems to be that the awareness of rights does not *ipso facto* raises women's status, nor unawareness lowers their feeling of satisfaction (with their status). The main barriers in the awareness of rights are : illiteracy, excessive involvement in domestic chores, household constraints (that is, attitudes of husband and in-laws), and economic dependence on males.

Plan of Action

If males deny due rights to women in the family either because it is culturally approved, or because the women themselves tolerate it and do not revolt, or because no punishment is given to the violators of the social laws, or because the advantages of denying rights outweigh the costs, how do we break this cycle of injustice on the part of males? How do we protect the interests of women? What programmes and policies will make males liberal and just? The remedies appear to be legal, social and economic.

Legal Remedies

Justice to women has to be recognized publicly so that human service professionals could respond with proper action. In the first decade after independence, gender equality was recognized as a significant problem and a greater amount of effort went into assuring that exploitation of women would be identified and responded to with proper measures. Between 1952 and 1962, several laws were designed to bring about equality to women. Prior to the enactment of these laws, professionals and politicians were extremely reluctant to identify the necessary legal measures needed to boost equality of the sexes. But after India became a republic, our new power-holders came to believe that woman's equality was no longer a 'family matter' but a social problem. Several state laws were, therefore, drafted with the aim to treat women on par with men. But as expected, social laws have not been fully implemented. The courts continue to be traditional in perspective while interpreting social laws. The criminal justice system has to approach woman's exploitation from a sociological perspective, instead of remaining bogged down to legal technicalities. Some laws have also to be amended so that the police need not wait for surgical sutures for arresting a man for 'hurting' a woman. Many police officials point out numerous instances where women fail to press charges and actually drop charges at the trial. Consequently, the police and the prosecutors cannot advise women victims for taking legal action against their brothers who refuse to give them a share in paternal property or against their fathers who marry them against their wishes, or against husbands who compel them to go for abortion. Women's co-operation with the law is extremely necessary. Organized women's groups or voluntary organizations have to help women seeking protection through legal measures.

Social Remedies

Social remedies include women welfare services, encouraging the establishment of voluntary organizations, and legal literacy of women through mass media. The voluntary organizations have to identify women in need of services. The help of the neighbours has to be sought in reporting cases of 'abused' women to human service agencies. The public education and awareness programmes will help women in taking injustice to them seriously and seeking the help of social workers and women's organizations in getting their due rights. The optimal situation for women

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welfare agencies is to be able to respond to women's problems of injustice quickly, effectively, and in a manner that treats the causes of injustice and abuse, not just the symptoms. The males have also to be made to reanze their new roles in the changed times and understand the necessity of their own contribution to family life and housework.

Economic Remedies

Education and vocational training for women will enable them to seek jobs and become economically independent. The independence will reduce their stress, bring fundamental changes in their values and beliefs and make them bold enough to demand and stand-up for their rights.

Women need resources to help them to shape better conditions of life for themselves and their families. Following Elise Boulding (1977 : 132), ten resources may be suggested for women in our society : technological aids which will be labour-saving devices and will lighten women's burden of heaviest daily tasks, basic community facilities, encouraging girls to join schools and get education and training, non-formal education, specialists who may train women, opportunities for paraprofessional training, credit facilities, legal protection of rights, voluntary organizations, and programmes of placing women in important positions at various levels.

It may be concluded that making women aware of their rights in the rural areas requires a different type of planning and approach than making women aware of rights in the urban areas. At the same time, we have to concede that legislative sanctions by themselves cannot raise the status of women. This effort has to be coupled with other efforts suggested earlier. It is only this conjunctive approach that can get justice to women in our society.

Constitutional Provisions, Special Laws and Women's Empowerment

The Indian Constitution has several articles designed to secure gender equality and non-discrimination. In specific terms, they provide for :

- Equality before law and equal protection of laws (Article 14).
- Non-discrimination, inter alia, on ground of sex-specifically in the matter of gaining free access to places of public resort; and State having authority to make special provisions for women (Article 15).
- Equality of opportunity in public employment (Article 16).
- Equal rights for men and women to adequate means of livelihood (Article 39-a).
- State directing its' public policy towards securing the health and strength of workers, men and women (Article 39 - e and 0-f).
- Human conditions of work and maternity relief for women (Article 42).
- State endeavouring to establish a Uniform Civil Code (Article 44).
- Fundamental duty of every citizen to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women [Article 51 - A(e)].

In pursuance of the constitutional provisions, the Government have also enacted specific laws for the protection of women and for up gradation of their status.

- **Special Marriage Act, 1954 :** Any girl of 18 years of age or boy of 21 years can take recource to this law irrespective of caste or religious considerations.
- **Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 :** Marriage is deemed to be solemnized on the performance of certain rites, especially Saptapadhi; while first marriage subsists, second marriage is forbidden : right to judicial separation and divorce is made available on certain grounds like, for example, unsoundness of mind, conversion to a different religion, incurable or communicable diseases etc.
- **Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 :** Giving, abetting or taking dowry is a cognizable, non-bailable

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offence against the State and is punishable with not less than five years of imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 15000 or the amount representing the value of dowry.

- **Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, 1976 :** The age of marriage was raised to 18 years from 15 years in the case of girls and to 21 years in the case of boys.
- **Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1955 :** An unmarried woman, widow or a divorcee of sound mind can also take a child in a adoption.
- **Hindu Succession Act, 1956 :** It vested women with rights in the matter for inheritance as well as alienation of property at par with males.

Besides these, several laws have been enacted to give labour protection for women workers. The *Maternity Benefit Act,* 1961 and the *Equal Remuneration Act*, 1976 are two exclusive and substantive laws providing respectively for (i) leave with wages for six weeks following child birth; non-exposure to work of arduous nature for one month immediately preceding six weeks before delivery and (ii) payment of remuneration equal with men for work of equal value. Protective provisions under other laws provide for facilities such as creches, time off for feeding the children, separate toilets etc. The *Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act*, 1971 permits abortions, if found justified from the medical point of view. *Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act*, 1994 regulates investigation for sex determination of foetus. Sex determination tests are often conducted to identify female foetus and abort the same illegally. "Violence against the human body is generally a penal offence, whether it be the man or the woman who is affected. The provisions of laws affecting women in this regard have been periodically reviewed and amendments carried out, especially to make the relevant penal provisions more deterrent and effective. Rape, kidnapping, homicide for dowry, torture, molestation, sexual harassment at workplace, are all women related offences which have come under public debate and scrutiny very frequently" (Sarla Gopalan, 2000).

10.3 Women's Empowerment

The concept of *empowerment* flows from that of power. In the popular sense, the term 'power' is understood as the capability to do anything. In the societal context, 'power' is understood as authority, right to command, right to govern or rule, capability to influence etc. Thus, empowerment simply means vesting power where it does not exist or exist inadequately. "Empowerment has become a fashionable buzz word. It essentially means decentralization of authority and power. It aims at getting participation of deprived sections of people in decision making process. In other words, giving voice to the voiceless. Activists want government to empower poor people including women by legislative measures and welfare programmes. Unless capacity is built in these sections in reality, the power is used by others rather than the section for which it is meant (K.D. Gangrade, 2001).

Women's empowerment as a phenomenon is not something new. It has been there throughout the history in all societies. What could be considered new is its increasingly coming out in public, used as a social movement and being looked as an ideology. Now it has been reshaped from women's welfare to their development to empowerment and is being discussed, reported and critically evaluated. What is rather new is the identification of the girl children and women as a special group and the acknowledgement, internationally, of the importance of specific focus on the critical and key issues related with the empowerment of women. What is further new is the increasing realization and recognition that empowering women is absolutely essential, rather imperative, for familial, societal, national and international development and progress. It has also been realized and accepted that genuine commitment and efforts have to be made at the governmental, non-governmental and individual levels to work towards establishing women's empowerment.

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The empowered women should be able to participate in the process of decision making. Education would play the most crucial role in empowering women.



Notes Empowerment of women would mean equipping women to be economically independent, self-reliant, have a positive esteem to enable them to face any difficult situation and they should be able to participate in development activities.

Institutional Framework

A separate Department for Women (and Child Development) was created as part of Ministry of Human Resource Development in 1985. The objective was to have a nodal arm of the Government so as to secure the all round development of women as well as children by formulating necessary policies, plans and programmes and by coordinating with governmental and non-governmental organizations. Over the years, there have been several policy shifts at the Government level in the matter of caring for the concerns of women. The approach in the 70s was welfare; in the 80s it was development; and in the 90s it was empowerment and inclusion of women in decision making. Now the emphasis is on women's participation and capacity building.

The scheme of hostel facilities for working woman and day care centres for their children and scheme of short stay homes for women and girls with family problems were welfare oriented. The programme of Support for Training-cum-Employment (STEP) which was designed to enhance skills and employment opportunities for women below poverty line was development oriented. *The Mahila Samridhi Yojna* aimed at promoting thrift amongst rural women, the *Indira Mahila Yojana* aimed at organization of women at grassroots level and the *Rashtriya Mahila Kosh* created to meet the credit need of poor women, especially in the informal sector, were empowerment oriented. The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) was the earliest institution to be established at the national level to care for women. It was created in 1953. It's operational style is one of networking with non-governmental organizations. Socio-economic programmes, vocational training, awareness generation, creation of hostel infrastructure for working women, family counselling etc. are the important activities of Board. Similarly, at the state level too, programmes have been designed for women's empowerment.

Proactive Institutions for Empowerment

The judiciary also has contributed to furthering the cause of women's empowerment through important judicial pronouncements from time to time. The National Commission for Women (NCW) and it's counterparts at state level are also working to investigate and examine the constitutional and legal safeguards for women and their effective implementation. They also make interventions in specific cases of individual complaints on atrocities against women and recommend remedial action. They also conduct programmes for creating legal awareness amongst women.

Some political parties, especially communist and other leftist parties, and their women's organizations such as All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) and Janwadi Mahila Samiti are also fighting and organizing movements for women's empowerment.

In 1992, the 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendments were carried out in respect of Panchayats and Municipalities. Now, more than one million women have secured political space in these bodies. Though, as the reports suggest, men especially husbands, are exercising power by proxy in place of their Pradhan wives but in days to come women definitely would be asserting their new found political power.

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Human Development Perspective

There is no doubt that in the empowerment of women, the human development perspective is very crucial. Concerns of women's nutrition and health, education, employment, environment and above all else, their basic human right to life free from violence need to be factored into public policy.

Education is basic for empowerment of women. It is education that provides knowledge, awareness in regard to social, civic, political, economic and environmental issues and skills for securing gainful employment and means of livelihoods. Through governmental and non-governmental efforts substantial progress has been made in this sector. Some of the vital factors inhibiting education of women are outdated values held by people regarding the role of women are outdated values held by people regarding the role of women consequent on which there is a definite preference for the purpose of imparting education.

As compared to men, women have a significantly lesser rate of work participation, though of late, their participation rate has been increasing faster than that of men. As per 1991 census, women's work participation was 22.27 per cent. The employment of women is mostly in the organized sector. However, the strength of women in the All India Services is not indicative of any significant degree of empowerment of women. While the higher judiciary should stand credit with it's landmark judgements, in its structure, it continues to be a male bastion.



What is Indira Mahila Yojana ?

Women and Media

Media in any society serves as the mirror of the society in reflecting concerns for women. Mostly, it is *not* playing any proactive role in championing their causes. Media persons express their view that they should not adopt the role of advocacy for the sake of objectivity. The mainstream cinema in Hindi and other vernacular languages is still trapped in the stereotyped image of women as week, submissive and conformist type. With the advent of Cable TV and serials being telecast by popular channels heavy doses of religiosity and ritualism are being pushed down the throat. All sorts of superstitions and anti-emancipation themes are being promoted. It is only the so called 'parallel cinema' and some television programmes seem to be interested in women's liberation and empowerment. The saga of women's empowerment has been that of a war in which several battles have been fought against male domination and many more battles have to be fought. India cannot progress without proper and true empowerment of women.

Feminism and Feminist Movement

Feminism concerns itself with women's inferior position in society and with discrimination encountered by women because of their sex. Feminism is thus a term that emerged long after women started questioning their inferior status and demanding an amelioration in their social position. Even after the word 'feminism' was coined, it was still not adopted as a term of identification by many of those who campaigned for women's rights organizations in the late 1960s and early 1970s did not call themselves feminist. It is only more recently that the label 'feminist' has been applied to all women's rights groups in discriminately.

The term 'feminism' embraces a variety of movements and ideologies concerned with the emancipation or liberation of women, the establishment of equal rights for women, and opposition to forms of male dominance. It may be looked as a movement to gain for women equal rights with

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men in social, political and economic fields. It grew in the west as a sequel to the *industrial, revolution* and the tradition in western democracies of denying voting rights to women. In it's extremist form feminism promoted a militant women's liberation movement in the second half of the twentieth century based on the premise that all of society is organised along sex lines to ensure male dominance. Some of the liberationist's acts, such as 'bra-burning' and use of such phrases as 'male chauvinist pig' were manifestations of rebellious spirit but these also proved counter-productive. But this women's liberation movement in the west also inspired the oppressed and dispossessed women of the third world countries. Some of the leaders of the western feminist movement such as Gloria Steinheim and Germaine Greer became household names among the educated women of Asia, Africa and South American countries.

Most feminist thinking and research draw upon one or more of three related but distinct perspectives : (i) Liberal, (ii) Socialist or Marxist and (iii) Radical. Within this field there are a great diversity of feminist movements and positions. In the third world, feminist movements have also taken a variety of forms, though a similar division into marxist or socialist feminist ideologies and bourgeois feminism can be made. Marxist or socialist ideologies focus on feminism as a part of overall political programmes opposing the capitalist system; bourgeois feminism concentrates more deeply on ideologies of male dominance and on the subjective liberation of the middle class women.

Indian Scenario

Feminist movement in India is not of recent origin. It also did not originate on the streets of Delhi and Mumbai. It's beginning may be seen in thousands of places and through hundreds of forms. Yet, this is also true that an organized 'feminist movement may be traced back to he freedom struggle and the period immediately after we secured freedom.

The social reform movements of the 19th century calling for widow remarriage, ban on sati and child marriage and promotion of women's education may be taken as the first wave of feminist movement. The active participation of women in the freedom movement and the emergence of several national level women's organizations such as All India Women's Conference, National Federation of Indian Women and Women's India Association may be seen as the next wave of feminist movement. They raised the issues of women's education, right the movement began after 1947. As Dipti Priya Mehrotra (2001) rightly points out, women's movement between 1947-1970 was characterized by lethargy as compared to the period before and after it. Perhaps, most of the women activists thought that with India getting independence their problems would be solved. Organizations such as All India Women's Conference thought that they had nothing to do with political issues and hence turned their attention to social welfare. During this period most of the women's organizations worked in the field of social service and welfare.

The period immediately after independence witnessed two leftist movements - Taibhaga Movement in Bengal and Telengana Movement in Andhra Pradesh. Led by the Communist Party the poor peasants fought against the landlords and capitalist forces. The women took active part in these movements alongwith men. The Telangana Movement threw up, for the first time, radical and militant women's leadership. They also organized Andhra Mahila Sabha, Andhra Yuvati Mandal and Mahila Sangam. They fought against not only military power but also against gender inequality, domestic violence, child marriage, polygamy and restriction on their movement outside the fourwalls of household.

After the promulgation of Indian Constitution and enactment of various laws for women, the feminist movement went from strength to strength. The Hindu Marriage Act, the Hindu Succession Act and other legislative measures prepared ground for further struggle. A number of schemes and programmes were formulated for women. The decade of 1960s witnessed a number of economic and political crises. The Naxalite Movement emerged with full force especially in Bihar and Bengal. Though the Naxalite Movement, led by Marxists and Leninists, was primarily a peasant

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movement and never led by women but the level of participation of women in the movement was quite high. Many women provided strategic support to the Naxalite revolutionaries. The participation of women in this movement provided them an opportunity to understand the political process in the country and the politics of gender inequality and suppression of women's rights.

Women's movement took new shape after 1970. By this time women's mass movements had realized that women's issues and problems could not be solved through patchwork type of social problems could not be solved through patchwork type of social reform and social welfare and the basic issues had to be confronted head on. This realization pushed them to the forefront of all the major social-economic, political and environmental issues. Women's involvement in Chipko movement focussed on preservation of forests and related environmental issues shows their increasing understanding of core issues. It was followed by similar movements in Karnataka and elsewhere. Between 1970-90 women also fought against liquor and liquor lobby in Kumaon and Garhwal (now in Uttaranchal), Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and elsewhere. They had realized that excessive consumption of liquor, especially among the poor, not only brings economic hardship but also promotes domestic violence.

Gail Omvedt (1993) has traced the origins of the contemporary women's movement to the early 1970s when rural and working women were first trained as leaders. "But there were few linkages at that time to the urban, intellectual women who could articulate the oppression of rural and working women in feminist terms" (Geraldine Forbes, 1998). The United Nation declaration of *International Women's Year* and the *International Women's Decade* (1975-85) led to the appointment of the Guha Committee and it's subsequent report, *States of Women in India*, a landmark study on women's status in India.

'Emergency' was imposed in the country in 1975. A number of civil liberties and democratic rights groups were organized. Women also played important role in these people's movements. Around the same period, the Progressive Women's Organization was created in Hyderabad by some leftist women. The years of working in people's movement had equipped them with an ideology to fight against discrimination and exploitation. On the whole, the period between 1970-2000 saw the emergence of a number of autonomous women's organizations. Though coming from different ideological backgrounds they were unanimous in their view that the membership of such organization should be restricted to women only and they did not require the patronage and interference of males in these issues. To name a few such organizations - *Forum Against Oppression of Women in Mumbai, Saheli* in Delhi, *Asmita* in Hyderabad, *Vimoehana* in Bangalore, *Penuramma Eyakkam* in Chennai and many others point to a new found confidence and consciousness. Some other women's organizations with stronger networking and organizational capabilities are related with political parties especially Congress Party and Communist Parties. They may be serving as women's wings of these parties especially the strongest among them - All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) related with CPI (M). Mahila Congress is an affiliate of the Congress Party and Durga Vahini with BJP. Unfortunately women's organizations related with right wing political parties like BJP take up only caste and communal issues, divide the women's power and serve as 'legitimisers' of policies and actions of their parent organizations. The role of Durgavahini in Ayodhya Movement is a case in point. "The new visibility of women in the right wing movement appropriating the issues of the contemporary feminist movement in their demonstrations against Muslims, and Christians is disturbing. It has had a dampening effect on the women's movement that was so buoyant and optimistic in the 1980s. It demonstrates that the present day availability of women for a variety of causes is also part of the historical legacy. There is now a complicated mix of women playing public roles - leftist women, moderates, conservatives, right wing women all appropriating the trappings of feminism" (Forbes, ibid).

The decade of 1980, was largely dominated by anti-dowry movement throughout the country. It also included such issues as dowry related atrocities, domestic violence, commercialization of

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women and lack of property rights. Through writings, *Nukkad Natak* (Street play) rallies and seminars millions of women were mobilized into action. Public debate on sexual harassment and rape was also the result of this movement against dowry. Before 1980 or so girls were very reluctant and hardly vocal on this type of harassment and violence but now such issues may be discussed without inhibitions. One of the important contributions of leftist women's organizations was to highlight the dangers of communalism in the fight for women's rights. If the society is divided and polarised on the basis of religion women's movement gets weakend. The recent carnage in Gujarat and communal violence in other parts of the country provides ample evidence of it. The decade 1990's witnessed deep concern for Muslim women and their problems alongwith movement against female foeticide and infanticide. Women's movement in India is now an important part of the worldwide movement of women for justice, equality and empowerment.

Women's Studies

The discipline of 'Women's Studies' has yet to establish firm roots in Indian academia. Yet, it has made significant progress in the last ten years with a number of universities and research organizations introducing it as one of the subjects mainly at post-graduate level. It is interdisciplinary in nature drawing upon the literature of sociology and anthropology, history, political science, psychology, social geography etc alongwith oral and visual media.

The concern for public awareness of women's movement and it's issues have always been part of the movement. In the decades of 1970s, 80s and 90s a number of magazines, information brouchures and teaching and research centres emerged. Thus 'Women's Studies' came into being first as a subject or discipline and then various other disciplines such as history, political science, sociology, literature and philosophy incorporated it in varying degrees. 'Indian Association of Women's Studies' was also established which conducts meets from time to time. As Malashri Lal and Sukrita Paul Kumar (2002) rightly points out, "women's studies practitioners, inside and outside universities, are becoming increasingly anxious about their academic identity and forsee the imperative to carve out a structural space. Failing this, Women's Studies may be erased out of existence by the mainstream traditional subjects on one hand and the new market oriented variety on the other". Women's Studies is priviledge for being neither the one nor the other, and stands to gain immensely by it's position as the academic arm of the women's movement in India.

Welfare Programmes and their Impact

Women who number 498.7 million according to 2001 census, represent 48.2 per cent of country's population of 1,027.01 million. The development of women has always been the central focus in developmental planning since Independence. The Department of Women and Child Development since its inception has been implementing special programmes for holistic development and empowerment of women with major focus to improve the socio-economic status of women. The major programmes implemented by the Department, and initiatives undertaken in the area of women's empowerment are given below.

Welfare and Support Services

The scheme of Hostel for Working Women seeks to provide reasonable rented and safe accommodation to working women belonging to low-income groups who migrate to cities for employment. In some hostels, day-care centres for children of these women are also attached. During 2001-02, 13 additional hostels were sanctioned to provide accommodation to 840 working women. This brought the total number of hostels to over 881, benefiting over 62,308 working women since inception.

The Government of India launched a programme in 1969 in the Central Sector called Short-Stay Homes for women and girls for the protection and rehabilitation of those women and girls who are facing family problems, mental strains, social ostracism and exploitation and who need shelter

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while they adjust and cope with their personal situations. The scheme envisages the provision of services/facilities, viz., medical care, psychiatric treatment, counselling, occupational therapy, education, vocational and creational activities and social facilities for adjustment. The new Homes are sanctioned by the Department, but maintenance of the existing Homes is looked after by the Central Social Welfare Board through the State Board.

Employment and Training

The programme of Support to Training-cum-Employment for Women (STEP) was launched in 1987 to strengthen and improve the skills for employment opportunities for women below poverty-line, in traditional sectors of agriculture, small animal husbandry, dairying, fisheries, handlooms, handicrafts, cottage and village industries and sericulture, social forestry and waste land development where women are employed on a large scale. The focus is mainly on marginalised and assetless women, female-headed households and women of other dispossessed groups. Since the inception of the programme about 5,63,983 women have been covered under 131 projects in different parts of the country.

The schemes of Training-cum-Employment Production centres was launched in 1982-83 with assistance from Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). Under this programme, financial assistance is given to Women's Development Corporations, Public Sector Corporations, autonomous bodies and voluntary organisations to train poor women mostly in non-traditional trades to ensure their employment in these areas. Some of the trades are computer programming, electronics, watch assembling, radio and television repairs, garment making, secretarial practices, community health workers, embroidery and weaving. Financial assistance is given to the grantee organisations. Since the inception of the programme, 3.03 lakh women have been benefited through 2,895 projects in different parts of the country.

Under the scheme, grant is given to voluntary organisations for conducting courses of two-year duration for preparing candidates for primary, middle and matric-level examinations and one-year duration of matric failed candidates. During the year 2001-02, the CSWB has sanctioned Rs. 381 crore (Central Board/States Board level) for 9,665 women at a total cost of Rs. 388.26 lakh.

Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) had started the Scheme of the Vocational Training Programme in the year 1975 and 1997 to train women in marketable trades and also to upgrade their skills. The Training Programme is organised in rural, tribal, backward, urban slum areas through voluntary organisations in the traditional and non-traditional trades like computer training, community health workers, paramedical vocations, typing and shorthand, to enable them to get employment. The organisations are identified through State Social Welfare Advisory Boards in all States/UTs. And implementation of the training programme is monitored through field machinery. During 2001-02 Rs. 1,172.22 lakh was sanctioned to 556 voluntary organisations benefiting 24,830 women.



The scheme of Condensed Course of Education for Women was started by the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) during the year 1958 for providing basic education and skills to needy women.

Socio-Economic Programme

The Socio-Economic Programme endeavours to provide employment opportunities to destitute women, widows, deserted and the physically handicapped. Besides, women entrepreneurs are encouraged to exhibit and sell their products. The Central Social Welfare Board assist voluntary organisations for setting up agro-based units like dairy, poultry piggery, goatary, etc., for poor

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and needy women. However, for the past two years proposals for Agro-based Units were not considered. Voluntary organisations are encouraged to set up production units. Project proposals are to be cleared by District Industrial Centres, KVICs, etc., who look into viability of the projects. A grant is provided by the Central Social Welfare Board to set up a production unit. The grant is finalised on case-to-case basis subject to a limit of Rs. 3 lakh.

Swayamsiddha

This scheme of Swayamsiddha was launched in March 2001 in 650 blocks (including the 238 erstwhile Indira Mahila Yojana blocks). The vision of Swayamsiddha is to develop empowered women who will demand their rights from family, community and government, have increased access to, and control over, material, social and political resources, have enhanced awareness and improved skills; and are able to raise issues of common concern through mobilisation and networking.

The immediate objectives of the scheme are establishment of self-reliant women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs), creation of confidence and awareness among numbers of SHGs strengthening and institutionalising the savings habit in rural women and their control over economic resources; improving access of women to micro credit; involvement of women in local level planning; and convergence of services of DWCD and other Departments. This scheme will be implemented by the State Governments through the identified nodal departments and project implementing agencies.

Swashakti Project

The Swashakti Project (earlier known as Rural Women's Development and Empowerment Project) was sanctioned on 16 October, 1998 as a Centrally-sponsored Project for a period of five years with an estimated outlay of Rs. 186,21 crore. In addition, an amount of Rs. 5 crore is being provided for setting up of revolving funds in the project states for giving interest bearing loans of beneficiaries groups primarily during their initial formative stage. The objectives of the project are: (i) Establishment of more than 16,000 self-reliant women's Self-Help-Groups (SGHs) having 15-20 members each, which will improve the quality of their lives, through greater access to, and control over, resources; (ii) Sensitising and strengthening the institutional capacity of support agencies to pro-actively address women's needs; (iii) Developing linkages between SHGs and lending institutions to ensure women's continued access to credit facilities for income generation activities; (iv) Enhancing women's access to resources for better quality of life, including those for drudgery reduction and time-saving devices; and (v) Increased control of women, particularly poor women, over income and spending, through their involvement in income generation activities.

The project has since December 2001 expanded in 19 new districts and two states, increasing the project coverage to 56 districts in the States of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh. The project has now accomplished more than its initial estimate of group formation and has formed approximately 15,800 SHGs in total. The emphasis is now being on (i) convergence with other Government Schemes; (ii) micro-enterprise development; (iii) community asset creation; (iv) networking; and (v) credit linkages.

Balika Samridhi Yojana

Balika Samridhi Yojana was launched on 2 October, 1997. The scheme covers up to two girls born on or after 15 August, 1997, in a family below the poverty line, in rural and urban areas. A grant of Rs. 500 is given to the mothers of new born girl children. A grant of Rs. 500 will be deposited in the name of the new born girl in a post office/bank account. The girl will also get scholarship for each completed year of schooling in Class I to X which will also be deposited in the same account. The matured value of the account will be paid to the girl on her attaining the age of 18 years and having remained unmarried till then.

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Swadhar

Swadhar is a new scheme launched by the Department during the year 2001-02 in the Central sector for the benefit of women in difficult circumstances, like destitute widows deserted by their families in religious places like Vrindavan. Kashi. etc; women prisoners released from jail and are without family support; women survivors of natural disaster who have been rendered homeless and are without any social and economic support; trafficked women/girls rescued or runaway from brothels or other places or women/girls who are victims of sexual crimes and disowned by family or those who do not want to go back to respective families for various reasons; women victims of terrorist violence who are without any family support and without any economic means for survival; mentally disordered, women who are without any support of family or relatives, etc.

The package of assistance that will be available under the scheme shall include provisions for shelter, food clothing, health care and counselling for such women; measures for social and economic rehabilitation through education; awareness, skill upgradation and personality development through behavioural training, etc.; help line or other facilities to such women in distress; and such other services as will be required for the support and rehabilitation to such women in distress. The implementing agencies can be the Social Welfare/Women and Child Welfare Department of State Governments, Women's Development Corporations, urban local bodies, reputed public/private trust or voluntary organisations who are willing to take up the responsibility of rehabilitating such women on a project basis.

Plan of Action to Combat Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children

The Supreme Court in a case passed an order on 9 July, 1997, directing inter alia the constituting of a committee to make an in-depth study of the problem of prostitution, child prostitutes and children of prostitutes and to evolve suitable schemes for their rescue and rehabilitation. Accordingly the Committee on Prostitution, Child Prostitutes and Children Prostitutes was constituted to evolve such schemes as are appropriate and consistent with the directions given by the Supreme Court. A Plan of Action was prepared by the Government of India in 1998.

The plan of Action would guide the actions of the Ministries/ Departments of the Central Government, NGOs, the public and private sectors and other sections of society. The Plan of Action consists of action points grouped under: prevention, trafficking, awareness generation and social mobilisation, health care services, education and childcare, housing, shelter and civic aminities, economic empowerment, legal reforms and law enforcement, rescue and rehabilitation, institutional machinery and methodology. The report of the Committee and the Plan of Action to combat trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of women and children has been sent to the concerned Central Ministries/Departments and State Governments/UT administrations for implementation of the action.

Women's Empowerment Year

The year 2001 was observed as the year of women's empowerment in order to create large-scale awareness about women's rightful place in the mainstream of the nation's development. During the year, a landmark document has been adopted - the 'National Policy for the Empowerment of Women'. An exhaustive review of nearly 22 laws pertaining to the lives of women was undertaken by the Task Force under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission.

National Commission for Women

The National Commission for Women was constituted as an autonomous statutory body on 31 January, 1992 in pursuance of the National Commission for Women Act, 1990 to protect and promote the interest and safeguard the right of women. The main task of the Commission is to study and monitor all matters relating to the constitutional and legal safeguards provided for

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women, to review the existing legislations and suggest amendments, wherever necessary. It has also to look into the complaints and take *suo moto* notice of the cases involving deprivation of the rights of women in order to provide support, legal or otherwise, to helpless and needy women. Ensuring custodial justice is another important function. The Commission is also empowered to monitor the proper implementation of all the legislations made to protect the rights of women so as to enable them to achieve equality in all spheres of life and equal participation in the development of the nation. The Commission has undertaken different activities such as review of laws and legislative measures, inquiries related to violence against women, sexual harassment at work place, empowerment of women, speedy justice to women through *Parivarik Mahila Lok Adalats and Custodial Justice*.

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh

The National Credit Fund for Women (Rashtriya Mahila Kosh) was set up on 30 March, 1993 with corpus fund of Rs. 31 crore with the major objective of meeting the credit needs of poor women, particularly in the informal sector. The RMK is managed by a Governing Board comprising 16 members. The Minister of State for Women and Child Development is the Chairperson of the Kosh. The Kosh has sanctioned upto 30 April, 2002 loans amounting to Rs. 11,092.87 lakh to benefit 4,23,125 women through 1,016 NGOs.

National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development

National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) (New Delhi) is an autonomous organisation under the ageis of the Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development. The objects of the Institute are to develop and promote voluntary action in social development; take a comprehensive view of child development and develop and promote programme in pursuance of the National Policy for Children; develop measures for coordination of governmental and voluntary action in social development; and evolve framework and perspective for organising children's programmes through governmental and voluntary efforts.

In order to achieve the objectives, the Institute conducts research and evaluation studies; organises training programmes, seminars, workshops, conferences; and provides documentation and information services in the fields of public cooperation and child development. The Institute is the apex body for training of functionaries of the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) programme. It provides technical advice and consultancy to government and voluntary agencies in promoting and implementing policies and programmes for child development and voluntary action. In addition, it collaborates with regional and international agencies, research institutions, universities and technical bodies. The Institute has four Regional Centres at Bangalore, Guwahati, Indore and Lucknow.

Central Social Welfare Board

The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) was set up in 1953 with the objective of promoting social welfare activities and implementing welfare programmes for women, children and handicapped through voluntary organisations. It was the first organisation in post-Independence era to achieve people's participation for implementation of welfare programmes for women and children through non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In 1954 the State Social Welfare Boards were set up in the States and UTs. The programmes implemented by the Board include; socio-economic programme for needy/destitute women, condensed courses of education and vocational training courses for women and girls, awareness generation projects for rural and poor women, family counselling centres/voluntary action bureau, holiday camps for children, welfare extension projects in boarder areas are balwadis, creches and hostles for working women etc.

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Food and Nutrition Board

The Food and Nutrition Board (FNB), a non-statutory ministerial wing of the Ministry of Food was transferred to the Department of Women and Child Development on 1 April, 1993 in pursuance of the National Nutrition Policy which was adopted by the Government in 1993 under the aegis of this Department. The FNB has four Regional Offices in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai and 43 Community Food and Nutrition Extension Units (CENEUs) located in 29 States/UTs. Some of the important areas of FNB activities are nutrition education and orientation, training in home-scale preservation of fruits and vegetables, monitoring of supplementary feeding under ICDs, development and distribution of educational/training material, mass awareness campaigns, development and promotion of nutritious foods, fortification of foods, food analysis and standardisation, research and development and follow up action on National Nutrition Policy.

Information and Mass Education

Concerted efforts are being made to disseminate information about issues relating to the development of women and children through all available modes of communication to target groups and community in general. Outdoor publicity activities are also undertaken to inform, educate and motivate people for bringing about attitudinal changes to achieve social development goals. Specific objectives include the mobilisation of public opinion on issues pertaining to girl child, holistic development of children, empowerment of women, early child development, nutrition, equal status for women and social evils like child marriage, dowry, sexual abuse of girl child, exploitation of women and children, etc.

Pension and Pensioner's Welfare

The Department of Pension and Pensioner's Welfare is the nodal agency of the Government of India for formulation of a general policy on pension and other retirement benefits, as also for redressal of grievances on retirement benefits. A number of steps have been taken in the last few years for streamlining the pension administration system. In pursuance of the recommendation of the Fifth Central Pay Commission the rates of pension, family pension, etc., have revised as under:

(i) Minimum pension/Family pension has been fixed at Rs. 1,275 per month subject to condition that the actual amount of pension/family pension should not be less than 50 per cent and 30 per cent respectively of the minimum of revised scale of pay of the post from which the pensioner has retired; (ii) The commutation may be allowed up to 40 per cent of pension; (iii) The ceiling of gratuity has been raised to Rs. 3.5 lakh; (iv) The definition of the family has been broadened to include parents, for entitlement to family pension with effect from 1 January, 1998; (v) The ceiling of amount payable under the Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme has been enhanced from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 60,000; (vi) A fixed medical allowance of Rs. 100 per month has been sanctioned to all Central Government Pensioners who are residing in areas not covered by the Central Government Health Scheme; (vii) CPF retires of the period from 18 November, 1960 to 31 December, 1985 who have completed 20 years of service prior to superannuation have been allowed exgratia at the rate of Rs. 600 per month with effect from 1 November, 1997; (viii) In pursuance of observations made by the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Ministry of Home Affairs in para 61 of its 44th Report, detailed instructions have been issued for timely payment of pension and retirement dues to the retiring employees of Union Government. The O.M. also makes a provision for fixing responsibility for recovery of penal interest paid on delayed amount of gratuity to the retiring employees from the salary of concerned dealing official/supervisor and Head of Office in proportion; (ix) Employed family pensioners have been allowed Dearness Relief (D.R.) on their family pension with effect from 18 July, 1997. In the case of re-employed pensioners D.R. on pension is payable only if pay on re-employment has been fixed at the minimum of the scale of re-employed post, and (x) Central Government servants who had drawn lump sum payment on absorption in PSUs/ Autonomous Bodies are entitled to restoration of l/3rd commuted portion of

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pension duly revised as per Supreme Court judgement dated 15 December, 1995 D.R. was also allowed on this restored and consolidated amount of pension. As a result of Supreme Court judgement dated 26 April, 2000 the D.R, has now been allowed on full pension instead of l/3rd commuted portion of pension. The Government have decided to issue Identity Cards to air civilian Central Government pensioners.

Perhaps 2002 will be remembered, above all, for the violence inflicted on innocent women in Gujarat during the communal carnage in March and April. Of the estimated 2000 victims of killing, many were women. Of these, an unknown number were raped and then killed. Those who survived were either afraid or intimidated by social attitudes to report the rapes. This highlights the continuing vulnerability of women in India to violence of the most brutal kind. Women in India continue to face violence outside their homes too - as victims of rape, sectarian, caste related and communal violence and economic and sexual exploitation. *India Book of the Year 2003*, a joint venture of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and *The Hindu* in it's study of 'Gender and Society' reports that every 26 minutes, a woman is molested, every 34 minutes a woman is raped, every 42 minutes an incident of sexual harassment takes place, every 43 minutes a women is kidnapped, and very 93 minutes a women is burnt to death over dowry.

The preference of a male child remains unchanged despite growing literacy and other changes that have taken place in the Indian Society Kalpana Sharma (2003, ibid) reports on the basis of a range of studies that a poor woman's contribution to the family income, in terms of hours of work, is far in excess of that of men. The burden of physical labour has a direct impact on women's health status. Traditionally, women eat last and least. An estimated 50 to 70 per cent of rural women are anaemic. While the data on education shows an improvement with female literacy rates now touching 45.4 per cent, there are huge variations within the country. However, the concerted efforts at both adult literacy and enrolment of girl children in, school has begun to make impact. It is expected that this will also affect the fertility rate as more and more women get educated. Changes in economy have also affected women adversely. The closure of industries has pushed men out of jobs. In turn, these men have taken the jobs that were accessible to women. Women, then, are left with no choice but to survive on jobs or trades that provide even lower returns. Displacement from large developmental projects such as dams, has also affected millions of women. Despite laws and efforts to check flesh trade, thousands of young girls are being sold and forced into prostitution. To compound the tragedy, it is these young girls who are contracting and dying of HIV/AIDS which is spreading at a frightening rate in the country.

The most positive development in the last few years has been the growing involvement of women in the Panchayat Raj Institutions. Though many of these women are just proxies for male politicians, women are increasingly coming into their own. This is happening particularly in states where two or more rounds of elections for Panchayats have been held or where non-governmental organizations working in the area of health, literacy, or human rights have educated the women about their rights. Studies have convincingly established that such woman are making a far more positive contribution to development than their male counterparts. In sum, although some progress has been made and the governmental and non-governmental efforts have borne some fruits, the basic attitude of Indian society towards women has not changed much. Globalization, if allowed unhindered, may also become counter-productive to women.

Self-Assessment

Fill in the blanks

1. As per special marriage Act ..... , any girl of 18 years of age or boy of 21 years can take recource to this law.
2. Dowry prohibition Act was made in .....

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3. Empowerment of women mean (Tick ✓ the correct options)
   (*a*) Socially independent (*b*) Economically independent
   (*c*) Physical strong (*d*) Educational independent
4. Taibhaga movement was active in
   (*a*) Andhra Pradesh (*b*) West Bengal
   (*c*) Uttar Pradesh (*d*) Madhya Pradesh
5. Telengana movement was popular in the state of
   (*a*) Chhatisgarh (*b*) Madhya Pradesh
   (*c*) Tamil Nadu (*d*) Andhra Pradesh

10.4 Summary

- The status of women in India is culture, region and age specific. The social status of women in our country is a typical example of the gap between the status and role accorded to them by the constitution and the laws, and those imposed on them by social traditions. Based on the patriarchal institutions and values, women are socialised to be good, obedient and sacrificing daughters, wives and daughters-in-law. They are culturally trained, through the process of socialization, not to challenge discrimination, subordination, exploitation and subjugation within the social structure. The extreme sense of security, protectiveness and patrionising attitude of the males often inhibit the development of their personality and individuality.
- A woman is placed under severe restrictions under this type of family structure and has little or no say in decision making and is directly subordinate to her mother-in-law. Her status in the family largely depends on her husband's contribution to the family economy and on the amount of dowry brought by her.
- Emanating from the normative structure of the family where the male the maintains the continuity of the lineage, there is a strong preference for sons in most sections of Indian society. The National Family Health Survey (1992-93) has assessed son preference in 19 populous states on aspects such as immunisation rates, period of breast feeding, prevalence of three common childhood diseases and likelihood of treatment, prevalence of chronic under-nutrition among children under age 4, and infant and child mortality rates.
- Status of Muslim women is not much different from the rest of the population. Though Islam as ideology talks about gender equality and gender justice, the predominantly patriarchal society has taken away what Islam gave to women. Like Hindu women, Muslim women too have little role to play in the decision making process at the family level. Moreover their mobility, specially among the higher social groups, is restricted because of the practice of purdah and that is why their share in the workforce is much lower as compared to others.
- Women have been allowed to enter all professions. Gender issues ar emerging strongly. Women of contemporary India have multiple roles to play at home, in office, factory, legislature. They are fighting back. They are gradually getting a share in the political process. The 72nd and 73rd amendment is the result of ongoing struggle of women for their rights. They are redefining their role in the family and the larger society. They are gradually and gradually rejecting all customs and traditions supportive of gender discrimination. The male dominated society has decided to play it's last card of religion and God. They have to rise courageously even against religion and God if they create hurdle in their emanciption.
- The motivation to work among women is different from that of men. Though the main reason appears to be 'monetary need' but it will be wrong to say that all women pursue a job only with this motive. On the basis of a study of 728 working women, the important factors in seeking jobs are poined out as : insufficient wages of husband, death of husband, illness

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of husband, non-support by husband, desertion by husband, and preference for work outside the home.

- The 'high' satisfaction implies being happy with the performance of both the worker's and home-maker's roles; 'moderate' satisfaction implies marginal imbalance in the equilibrium of the two roles (one coming in the way of other); and 'low' satisfaction implies being dissatisfied with one or both roles to a very large extent. In Deepa Mathur's study, 53 per cent women were found to be highly satisfied (with their dual roles), 18 per cent moderately satisfied, and 29 per cent dissatisfied.
- The working women have to 'adjust' themselves in home as well as working-place. Adjustment is "smooth switch-over from one status to other status, perceiving roles as perceived by others, and performing multiple roles with efficiency and satisfaction." In simple terms, role adjustment depends upon role demands (by the society) and role performance (by the individual).
- A working woman has to face innumerable problems. The home-life has to be adjusted with the office routine. The house-work has to be organized on lines different from the traditional ones.
- The 'home adjustment' and 'job adjustment' include different criteria of evaluation. In the case of working women, generally it is found that the degree of high adjustment is higher in case of job adjustment as compared to home adjustment.
- The issues pertaining to economic laws include : right to property or inheritance, equal wages, working conditions, maternity benefits, and job security. The right to property of a woman refers to her right as a daughter, as a wife, as a widow, and as a mother. According to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, not only a daughter is given a right in her father's property equal to her brothers, but a widow also gets a share in her deceased husband's property equal to her sons and daughters. The legislation has also removed the distinction between *stridhan* and non-*stridhan*.
- The conceptual model conceived for this research assured that the level of awareness of rights by a woman in a specific domain (economic, social, political or religious) is dependent on four things : her individual background (educational level, aspiration level,, and personal needs), her social environment (including expectations of kins, husband's values and family members' perceptions), her subjective perception (of her status and roles), and her economic base (that is, level of class-membership).
- The working women evaluate the roles of housework and homemaker as positively as the non-working women despite the burden which the role of wage-earning imposes on them.
  - About nine out of every ten working women are dissatisfied with their wage-earning work. This dissatisfaction, however, is caused by the nature of work they do and the wages they get rather than by the idea of the work itself.
- Social remedies include women welfare services, encouraging the establishment of voluntary organizations, and legal literacy of women through mass media. The voluntary organizations have to identify women in need of services. The help of the neighbours has to be sought in reporting cases of 'abused' women to human service agencies. The public education and awareness programmes will help women in taking injustice to them seriously and seeking the help of social workers and women's problems of injustice quickly, effectively, and in a manner that treats the causes of injustice and abuse, not just the symptoms.
- Non-discrimination, inter alia, on ground of sex-specifically in the matter of gaining free access to places of public resort; and State having authority to make special provisions for women (Article 15).
- "Violence against the human body is generally a penal offence, whether it be the man or the woman who is affected. The provisions of laws affecting women in this regard have been

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periodically reviewed and amendments carried out, especially to make the relevant penal provisions more deterrent and effective. Rape, kidnapping, homicide for dowry, torture, molestation, sexual harassment at workplace, are all women related offences which have come under public debate and scrutiny very frequently".

- The concept of *empowerment* flows from that of power. In the popular sense, the term 'power' is understood as the capability to do anything. In the societal context, 'power' is understood as authority, right to command, right to govern or rule, capability to influence etc. Thus, empowerment simply means vesting power where it does not exist or exist inadequately. "Empowerment has become a fashionable buzz word. It essentially means decentralization of authority and power.
- Women's empowerment as a phenomenon is not something new. It has been there throughout the history in all societies. What could be considered new is its increasingly coming out in public, used as a social movement and being looked as an ideology.
- The scheme of hostel facilities for working woman and day care centres for their children and scheme of short stay homes for women and girls with family problems were welfare oriented. The programme of Support for Training-cum-Employment (STEP) which was designed to enhance skills and employment opportunities for women below poverty line was development oriented.
- The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) was the earliest institution to be established at the national level to care for women. It was created in 1953. It's operational style is one of networking with non-governmental organizations. Socio-economic programmes, vocational training, awareness generation, creation of hostel infrastructure for working women, family counselling etc. are the important activities of Board.
- Media in any society serves as the mirror of the society in reflecting concerns for women. Mostly, it is *not* playing any proactive role in championing their causes. Media persons express their view that they should not adopt the role of advocacy for the sake of objectivity. The mainstream cinema in Hindi and other vernacular languages is still trapped in the stereotyped image of women as week, submissive and conformist type.
- The term 'feminism' embraces a variety of movements and ideologies concerned with the emancipation or liberation of women, the establishment of equal rights for women, and opposition to forms of male dominance. It may be looked as a movement to gain for women equal rights with men in social, political and economic fields. It grew in the west as a sequel to the *industrial, revolution* and the tradition in western democracies of denying voting rights to women.
- Women's movement took new shape after 1970. By this time women's mass movements had realized that women's issues and problems could not be solved through patchwork type of social problems could not be solved through patchwork type of social reform and social welfare and the basic issues had to be confronted head on.
- "The new visibility of women in the right wing movement appropriating the issues of the contemporary feminist movement in their demonstrations against Muslims, and Christians is disturbing. It has had a dampening effect on the women's movement that was so buoyant and optimistic in the 1980s. It demonstrates that the present day availability of women for a variety of causes is also part of the historical legacy. There is now a complicated mix of women playing public roles - leftist women, moderates, conservatives, right wing women - all appropriating the trappings of feminism".
- In the decades of 1970s, 80s and 90s a number of magazines, information brouchures and teaching and research centres emerged. Thus 'Women's Studies' came into being first as a subject or discipline and then various other disciplines such as history, political science, sociology, literature and philosophy incorporated it in varying degrees. 'Indian Association of Women's Studies' was also established which conducts meets from time to time.

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- Swadhar is a new scheme launched by the Department during the year 2001-02 in the Central sector for the benefit of women in difficult circumstances, like destitute widows deserted by their families in religious places like Vrindavan. Kashi. etc; women prisoners released from jail and are without family support; women survivors of natural disaster who have been rendered homeless and are without any social and economic support; trafficked women/ girls rescued or runaway from brothels or other places or women/girls who are victims of sexual crimes and disowned by family or those who do not want to go back to respective families for various reasons; women victims of terrorist violence who are without any family support and without any economic means for survival; mentally disordered, women who are without any support of family or relatives, etc.
- The National Commission for Women was constituted as an autonomous statutory body on 31 January, 1992 in pursuance of the National Commission for Women Act, 1990 to protect and promote the interest and safeguard the right of women. The main task of the Commission is to study and monitor all matters relating to the constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women, to review the existing legislations and suggest amendments, wherever necessary.
- The Food and Nutrition Board (FNB), a non-statutory ministerial wing of the Ministry of Food was transferred to the Department of Women and Child Development on 1 April, 1993 in pursuance of the National Nutrition Policy which was adopted by the Government in 1993 under the aegis of this Department.
- The Department of Pension and Pensioner's Welfare is the nodal agency of the Government of India for formulation of a general policy on pension and other retirement benefits, as also for redressal of grievances on retirement benefits. A number of steps have been taken in the last few years for streamlining the pension administration system.

10.5 Key–Words

1. Seclusion : Purdah (hidden from other people).
2. Meher : Dower Derogatory remark: Have low opinion for others.

10.6 Review Questions

1. Write a note on the status of women.
2. Discuss the women and employment.
3. What do you mean by women's empowerment? Discuss.
4. What is the perspective of human development? Discuss.

Answers: Self–Assessment

1. 1954 2. 1961 3. (*b*) 4. (*b*) 5. (*d*)

10.7 Further Readings



1. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Perspectives on Social Stratification, Rawat Publication.
2. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Social Stratification & Mobility, Rawat Publication.
3. Hasnain, Nadeem, 2011 : Indian Society and Culture Continuity and Change, Jawahar Publishers and Distributors.

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Unit 11: Social Mobility

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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Explain the Social Mobility and Determinants of Social Mobility.
- Discuss the Patterns of Mobility in Caste and Class.

Introduction

In every society, people are placed in ordered unequal social places. Differential distribution of skills, knowledge, access to opportunities and resources creates bindings for the people to remain in high and low positions. They see to it that what is enjoyed by them in terms of high positions and privileges remain with them and not shared by the aspiring climbers. In some cases, it takes several generations for people to change their social statuses. A closed or ascriptive system of stratification would create barriers in social mobility of the people of low status, whereas an open system would have a high incidence of social mobility. Three grounds could be mentioned with regard to social mobility : merit, egalitarianism, and historicity. Those who have requisite abilities would change their status and move upwardly. All people should have equal access and no hinderances may be in their way to higher status. The human history shows that over a period of time economic and demographic factors would force a rearrangement of individuals, families and society in general.

A more pronounced and widespread mobility is *geographic*, in which the individual may move from rural to urban or vice versa, from one part of a city to another, from one part of a country to another and from country to country. Such movements have great sociological implications, particularly in case of movement from rural to urban. Also, the other forms are : movement from one job to another in the same firm, movement to the same or a different position in another firm and movement to another industry or labour market in the same or different position. There are also cases of mobility though not with change in one's economic or social position. As such, mobility involves a significant movement in an individual's or stratum's economic, social and political position.

The following points are noteworthy regarding the study of social mobility :

1. A concern with a description of a society to know its rigidity and/or fluidity.
2. A concern to know the opportunities open to individuals to utilize their talents.

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3. To know the movement into the elite positions in society.
4. To have a concern with the movement of the working classes of the society.
5. The effects of mobility upon class attitudes and class consciousness, particularly in the working class.
6. The effects of mobility upon class attitudes and attributes on an individual's or group's possibilities for moving.
7. The effects of mobility upon the mobile individual.

"Mobility is measured as that of a family or that of an individual." In the case of a family, it is *intergenerational mobility*. In the case of an individual, it is *intragenerational mobility*. *Stratum mobility* remains generally neglected. However, in Indian society, caste mobility implies group/stratum mobility. Mobility can be measured in terms of frequency, stability and height. In terms of these criteria of measurement of mobility, economic, social and political mobility are taken into consideration. *Occupational mobility* remains prominent in all societies as the key yardstick, but its measurement in terms of income, skill and direction, position/office, prestige and subjective concerns, is a quite difficult task.

11.1 Social Mobility

P.A. Sorokin's classical work *Social and Cultural Mobility* provides a vivid conceptualization of social mobility and its ramifications. According to Sorokin, there are two principal types of social mobility — *horizontal* and *vertical*. By *horizontal social mobility* is meant the transition of an individual (or social object) from one social group to another situated on the same level. By *vertical social mobility* is meant the relations involved in the transition of an individual (or a social object) from one social stratum to another. There are also two types of vertical social mobility : *ascending* and *descending* or *social climbing* and *social sinking*. Depending upon the nature of stratification, one can see ascending and descending currents of economic, political and occupational mobility.


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"By social mobility is understood any transition of an individual or social object or value - anything that has been created or modified by human activity–from one social position to another."

The *ascending currents* exist in two main forms : (i) as an infiltration of the individuals of a lower stratum into an existing higher one; and (ii) as a creation of a new group by which individuals, and the insertion of such a group into a higher stratum instead of or side by side with the existing groups of this stratum. Similarly, *descending currents* have also two forms : (i) dropping of individuals from a higher social position into an existing lower one; and (ii) degradation of a social group as a whole, in an abasement of its rank among other group, or in its disintegration as a social unit. The first case is of sinking of an individual, and the second implies the sinking of a stratum/unit. Thus, there are two patterns : (i) ascending/descending of an individual, and (ii) ascending/descending of groups.

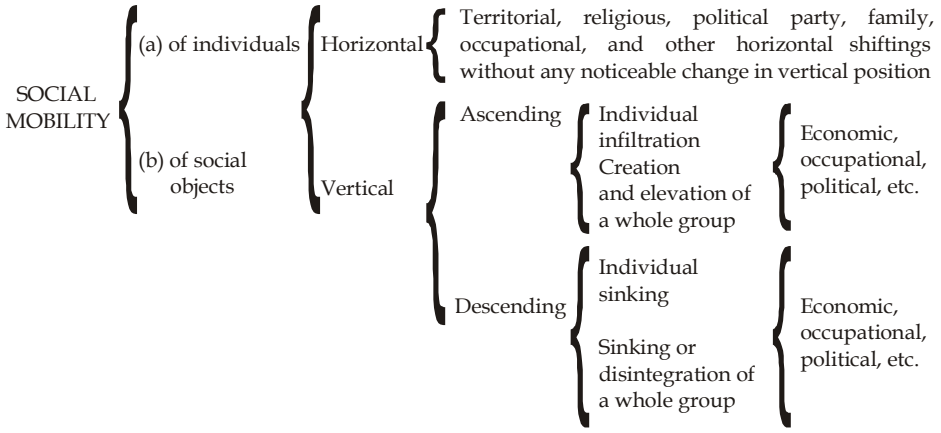
Sorokin also makes a distinction between the *intensiveness* and the *generality* of the vertical mobility. By the intensiveness is meant the vertical social distance, or the number of strata -economic or occupational or political - crossed by an individual in his upward or downward movement in a definite period of time. By the generality is meant the number of individuals who have changed their social position in the vertical direction in a definite period of lime. This could be further distinguished as the *absolute generality* and the *relative generality* of the vertical mobility in terms of

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the absolute number of mobile individuals or the proportion of the given individuals to the total population, respectively. Based on the data of intensiveness and relative generality of the vertical mobility in a definite field, the aggregate index of the vertical economic mobility of a particular society may be obtained. This can facilitate comparison in terms of space and time between societies and in a specific society.

SOCIAL MOBILITY

The situation is summed up in the following scheme :



Based on the nature of horizontal or vertical mobility or intensiveness and generality, a particular society may be observed. If there is no ascending or descending, no circulation of its members, that a person is attached to a stratum based on his birth, "such a type of stratification may be as absolutely closed, rigid, impenetrable, or immobile". Opposite to this may be a type of society in which the vertical mobility is very intensive and general. One can move from one stratum to another both upwardly and downwardly. "Such a type of social stratification may be styled open, plastic, penetrable, or mobile." "Between these two extreme types there may be many middle or intermediary types of stratification."

Democratic societies have more intensive vertical mobility compared to autocratic, and dogmatic societies. Birth-based ascriptive status does not find a place of significance in a democratic society. There is openness and equality of opportunities. There are more holes and elevators to go up and down. The following are general principles of vertical mobility as formulated by Sorokin :

1. There has scarcely been any society whose strata were absolutely closed or in which vertical mobility in its three forms - economic, political and occupational - was not present.
2. There has never existed a society in which vertical social mobility has been absolutely free and the transition from one social stratum to another has had no resistance.
3. The intensiveness, as well as the generality of the vertical social mobility, varies from society to society (fluctuation of mobility in space).
4. The intensiveness and the generality of the vertical mobility - the economic, the political and the occupational - fluctuate in the same society at different times.
5. As far as the corresponding historical and other materials permit seeing, in the field of vertical mobility, in its three fundamental forms, there seems to be no definite perpetual trend toward either an increase or a decrease of the intensiveness and generality of mobility. This is proposed as valid for the history of a country, for that of a large social body, and, finally, for the history of mankind.

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Thus, according to Sorokin, the principal forms of social mobility are : horizontal and vertical. *Vertical mobility* exists in the form of ascending and descending currents. Both have individual infiltration and collective ascent or descent of the whole group within the system of other groups. Based on the degree of circulation, we can distinguish between immobile and mobile types of society. But there is no absolutely closed society. Vertical mobility is not easy and there are generally obstacles in its way. Based on time and space, intensiveness and generality of vertical mobility, there is no perpetual trend toward increase or decrease. Generally, the democratic societies are often more mobile than the autocratic ones.

Vertical mobility functions to some degree in any society. There must be the membranes" (thin layers) between the "strata", "holes", "staircases", "elevators" or "channels", which permit individuals to move up and down, from stratum to stratum.

The most important channels of social circulation are :

1. Army
2. Church
3. School
4. Family
5. Political, economic and professional organizations

These channels have always been the most common and convenient elevators which have carried up and down the streams of people travelling in the vertical plane. For example, the army plays a great role in the period of war and social disturbances, and a moderate one in the period, of peace. The church had a great importance in the Middle Ages. Today, at times, Islam, Christianity and Hinduism influence social positions and mobility of the people in Indian society. Similarly, today, wealth accumulation and participation in politics are considered as important factors in going up in socio-economic and political hierarchies.



The persons, who occupy superior and lucrative positions, try to create barriers to the upward mobility of the lowly placed members of the society.

Horizontal Mobility

Sorokin provides territorial circulation of individuals, circulation of things and values, intra-occupational circulation of individuals, inter-family circulation, shifting of citizenships among individuals, interreligious circulation, and inter-political party circulation as principal examples of horizontal mobility in western societies. *Horizontal mobility* implies a very high degree of dynamism. The main point in horizontal mobility is that it does not affect the system of social stratification as such. People can move up or down within the broad normative framework of the social stratification. This is possible due to education, occupation, migration, new opportunities and desire for betterment of lifestyles. Horizontal mobility is said to be intra-systemic : it is a change in the system, and not of the system. It is a *positional* change in relation to a given individual. Such a mobility is characterized by upwardly movement in social positions. Logically, there are also downwardly mobile people, When people are unable to keep pace with changing situations, they slide down in social estimation, and also get less benefits compared to their former "equals". Some people move up in many ways in their own lifetime, whereas some take more than a generation or two in moving upwardly. These two patterns are called *intra generational mobility* and *intergenerational mobility*, respectively.

Besides, vertical and horizontal mobility, *downward* mobility is also found though in much less proportion in comparison with the normal patterns of vertical and horizontal mobility. In western

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societies, downward mobility is generally caused by psychological problems and anxieties, where individuals become unable to sustain the lifestyles to which they have become accustomed. Redundancy is another main source of downward mobility. In India, calamities and catastrophes, epidemics and disasters cause destruction and affect adversely the social arrangements. The man-made macro-structural changes, such as the abolition of feudalism, withdrawal of the privilege of the traditionally entrenched people and families, constitutional provision relating to adult franchise, fundamental rights, etc., have also resulted into egalitarianism and downward mobility of the formerly better-off sections of society.

11.2 Determinants of Social Mobility

Social mobility is therein every society. It has far reaching consequences for society and social stratification. There are several factors that affect social mobility. Some factors facilitate for social mobility and some act as barrier and restrict mobility. It has been argued that industrialization has increased the rates of social mobility. Consequently, most of the mobility research has focused on the study of social mobility in industrial societies, and the factors affecting mobility there. But there are differences among scholars, on what are seen as the factors affecting social mobility.

Russian sociologist P.A. Sorokin argued that no society can be called completely closed nor it can be completely open. He said that there are two varieties of factors affecting social mobility. One is primary factors that affect mobility in all societies and other one is secondary factors that are specific to particular societies at particular time. He identified four primary factors, they are :

1. Demographic factor,
2. Talent and ability,
3. Change of the social environment,
4. Faulty distribution of individuals in social positions.

Demographic Factor

The demographic factor has a bearing on social mobility in all societies. Fertility decline and decline in population are very crucial factors in affecting the rate of social mobility. It has been observed that the birth rate of higher strata population is lower than the lower strata population. Likewise the death rate of lower strata population is higher than the upper strata population. Decline in fertility rate provides scope for mobility of women.

There is decline in death rate, increase in life expectancy and decline in birth rate. With these, emerges new institutions like hospitals, old age homes, family welfare centres etc. All these created new vacancies and thus facilitated for social mobility.


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The rate of mobility is higher in urban areas then the rural areas. With advance in medical care and other factors have affected the demographic composition.

Talent and Ability

At the individual level, two factors facilitate for social mobility. One is achievement motivation and other one is individual talent. People can achieve mobility with the help of their talent like excellence in sports, arts, music etc. In ascriptive based societies, talent and ability has little to do with mobility. Lipset and Bendix state that there are always new supplies of talent which must be absorbed somewhere or the other. Even in societies with inherited status positions, there are always opportunities for talented individuals for upward mobility. But an achievement oriented society may not really be as open as it thought to be.

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According to the functionalist theorists like Davis and Moore, different positions in society are filled by efficient human resource. They hold the view that stratification is a device by which social placement and motivation takes place. But this is not true in present situation. Inequality of opportunity means that even able individuals from the less privileged groups will not be able to rise. Various studies suggests that the class of origin is still very important in placement of individual on different positions. The top most positions and the lowest positions experiences a very little change. Therefore talent and ability as a factor in social mobility plays limited role.

Elite theories : Vilfredo Pareto, one of the important exponent of elite theorists argued that talent and ability are very important factors of social mobility. Over generations people may lost elitist talent and that talent may be exhibited by persons from lower strata. Thus mobility will be there. The old elites will be replaced by the people those who would have talent. This theory is popularly known as 'circulation of elites' Max Gluckman has referred to this as 'repetitive change' , in the context of changes in African chiefdoms. Maurice Duverger has referred to this as the difference between conflict 'within the regime' and conflict 'over the regime'.

Change in the Social Environment

This is a very important factor which can influence all other factors of social mobility. A major factor for mobility is social change. One of the important economic changes that believed to have major impact on social mobility is industrialization.

Industrialization : Lipset and Bendix argued that industrialization leads to increase in rate of mobility and that once all societies have reached a certain level of industrialization, there is a similarity in their rates of social mobility. According to Kerr, propounder of the convergence thesis, all industrial societies converge towards a common pattern of mobility. On the basis of their study, Bendix and Lipset pointed five main factors of social mobility in industrial societies.

- Changes in the number of available vacancies,
- Different rates of fertility,
- Changes in the rank accorded to occupations,
- Changes in the number of inheritable status positions, and
- Changes in the legal restrictions pertaining to potential opportunities.

Because of industrialization, the occupational structure of the society changed. Vacancies were created in the industrial sector. Service sector started growing. Industrialization followed by urbanization lead to migration of people from rural areas. New white- collar jobs were created. All this led to expansion in the number of available vacancies. Thus social mobility was there to fill up these vacancies.

Industrial societies are characterized by democratic system of governance. The democratization of political systems, with all its noble values removed the barriers to social mobility. With the introduction of universal adult franchise, panchayti raj system, constitutional, political and social rights etc., social mobility was further facilitated in India. Traditional occupational specialization got replaced by industrialization. Education came to play vital role in changing the stratification system. Ascriptive position became irrelevant. Due to re-ranking of some occupation there happened shift in nature and esteem of some jobs. Some occupations came to occupy less importance which had more value earlier.

The Convergence Hypothesis : The convergence hypothesis is one view point regarding the relationship of industrialization and stratification. The hypothesis states that all industrial societies converge towards a common pattern of mobility. Kerr, an exponent of this hypothesis, stated that in today's world, industrialization was a common denominator which would impact all industrialized societies towards a common future society which he called a pluralistic industrialist society. Here, the mobility pattern would be same. The rate of mobility would be high. The

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proponent of this hypothesis also implied that there would be a continuous increase in mobility rates.

But Goldthorpe, on the basis of empirical findings of Miller, rejected this hypothesis because he found that there is a lack of convergence between the rates of mobility of industrial societies. Thus, it is not a industrialization but all other factors as identified by Goldthorpe political and ideological differences that are important determine the rate of social mobility.

Barriers to Mobility : There are several factors which act as barrier to social mobility. Poverty, lack of access to education, lack of information of opportunities, traditional upper strata people, uneven development etc. act as a barrier to social mobility. It is believed that industrialization provides avenues to upward mobility, but the industrial societies are not as open as it is believe. The class of origin is still important to gain opportunity. In India some groups are denied equality of opportunity even today. Though the legal barriers have been removed, social inequalities still exists and are acting as barrier to mobility.

Marxist Approach to Social Mobility : Marx explained the stratification of society on the basis of 'class' division. He believed that where capitalism develops there would be polarization of classes. Intermediate classes will come down to the lower class groups. Thus, there would be downward mobility. From the Marxist perspective, the factors causing mobility are those that are basic to the system of capitalism, and the opportunities for upward mobility are negligible.

Subjective Factors : Subjective factors are those factors which motivate people to be mobile. There are some factors which forbid mobility but some factors encourages mobility. Usually individuals aspire for upward mobility. Veblen in his book '*The Theory of Leisure Class*' revealed that every stratification system is automatically a source of mobility. Achievement motivation is very important for mobility of an individual. The process of Sanskritization is also a source of aspiration for mobility in the caste hierarchy.

Andre Beteille pointed out that the upwardly aspiring groups, once arrived at the higher position try to retain their position and often they restrict the entry of other people into the higher strata. In the words of Weber, this idea is social closure. For instance, in caste system, both the process of inclusion and exclusion, co-exist.

R.K.Merton through the concept of 'reference group' tried to explain the motivation for mobility. When one individual follows the norms and values of the group in which he aspire to be a member, that is called 'anticipatory socialization' this is an instance of mobility motivation.

Social Mobility and Social Changes : A major factor for mobility is social change. The process of social mobility can bring about change in the system of stratification. When social mobility is restricted, then also it will help for change because discontent with the existing system led to change of the system. Some times mobility comes as a result of revolutions, reform movements, rebellions etc. in such case mobility accompany change. In this regard Marx, Merton, Giddens, Pareto contributed a lot.

Facilitating Factors of Social Mobility : According to P.A. Sorokin, there are two varieties of factors affecting social mobility. One is, primary factors that affect mobility in all societies and other one is secondary factors that are specific to particular societies at particular time. Primary factors include demographic factor, talent and ability, faulty distribution of individuals in social positions and most importantly the change in environment. He emphasized that fertility decline and decline in population are very crucial in affecting the rate of social mobility. People can achieve mobility with the help of their talent like excellence in sports, arts, music etc. Another major factor for social mobility is social change. Lipset and industrial societies in comparison to pre-industrial one. Industrialization encourages urbanization, democratization and mobility. So occupation multiplies and urban centres grow at a very faster rate. Thus, chances of mobility also got multiplied. Access to education along with democratization facilitates social mobility in

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industrial society. This theory argues that the rate of mobility and the degree of equality tend to increase over lime. Theorists like P.M. Blau and O.D. Duncan are the propounders of this theory.

11.3 Patterns of Mobility in Caste and Class

Four viewpoints about mobility in caste structure could be ascertained. Firstly, Srinivas (1966) has emphasized the need for sanskritization and westernization as conceptual tools for understanding mobility in caste system. He holds that 'corporate mobility' still remains basic at the caste or *jati* level, as familial mobility does not obtain public recognition. Secondly, on the contrary, Stein (1968) points out that the mobility of families and individuals was pronounced in medieval South India, and this should help to analyze and understand the present-day mobility in caste structure. Thirdly, Marriott (1968) thinks that caste could be understood within the frames of reference, such as the rural versus metropolitan and traditional *varna* versus modern national frames of reference for ranking. And fourthly, Lynch (1968) and Damle (1968) apply *reference group* theory to understand caste and individual mobilities in India.

These approaches to caste mobility are singularistic and do not encompass the totality of mobility taking place today in caste system. One would agree with Lynch's observation that there was no agreement about the conception of caste and the units that structure it. If such an ambiguity persists, then the units which move, remain unclear. I would further agree with Lynch that mobility within the caste system is not really distinguished from change of the system. Change within or between castes does not necessarily constitute mobility within the caste system, unless one accepts mobility as the only significant kind of change in Indian society. A more meaningful form of mobility should entail changes in ritual hierarchy than the enhanced power position of a particular caste.

The above approaches to caste mobility are inadequate as none of them is singularly adequate enough to explain the entire gamut of mobility in the caste system. Sanskritization covers only socio-cultural aspects of change and confines to 'group mobility' of a caste. It does not take a note of individual frontiers of mobility and the motives and factors that underlie such mobility. Stein's analysis of mobility in medieval India is no doubt quite meaningful and adds a new dimension to the understanding of caste system, but it has undermined the strength of caste ethnocentrism or group solidarity based on caste allegiance. Marriott's approach is, in fact, 'confusing', and its application remains ununderstandable in terms of rural versus metropolitan caste categories. The analyses of Lynch and Damle are undoubtedly an addition to the analysis of caste mobility, but how to transform a 'culture bound', ad–hoc concept of sanskritization into a structural one, and how to explain structural changes and their implicit and explicit repercussions on caste mobility through the reference group theory, remain unclear.

Here it could be proposed that mobility in caste structure could be understood better if we analyze it at different levels namely, family, group and individual. This would also remove the ambiguity about the units which move or do not move. This further helps in delineating the extent of mobility and also the quality and quantum of mobility. A distinction between caste and non-caste structures (Heibert, 1969) also becomes relevant in this context, and their interrelationship becomes understandable. These three levels of mobility encompass the entirety of mobility in the caste system. Mobility at the familial level could be better explained in terms of repercussions of structural reforms. Reference group theory helps in the analysis of mobility at the level of individual, and corporate mobility is better understandable by the concept of sanskritization and other related concepts.

Levels of Mobility

There are three important levels at which mobility takes place in caste structure : (1) mobility of one or a minority of families within a caste to a higher/lower position; (2) mobility of a group or

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majority of families within a caste to a higher or lower position; and (3) mobility of individual members within a family belonging to certain caste(s). These levels of mobility in the caste structure indicate that mobility takes place at individual, family and group levels. Mobility in caste structure at these levels takes place simultaneously. Mobility at one level is not in contrast with the same process at other levels. The same family may bear mobility at all the three levels. This is also true for other two levels. Thus, mobility in caste structure is both interrelated and discrete.

Mobility of a Minority of Families within a Caste

Mobility at the level of family is inspired by differential privileges and positions that families and individuals enjoy in the village community. Families of the same caste, of other castes in the same village and of other villages and towns may operate as reference points for mobility at the family level. All the families belonging to a caste do not possess a common set of attributes which may enable them equally to have mobility. Thus, the families within the same caste witness differential patterns of mobility without any change in caste structure. Such a mobility accentuates 'class-like' differentiation (Leach, 1960) within the hitherto same social group (caste). These increased distinctions of status and prestige may be termed as 'positional' changes (Srinivas, 1966) within the segments of the village community. These changes in the direction of upward status mobility are basically achievement-oriented, however, role of ascriptive determinants, such as, caste rank, family background, landed property, etc. cannot be overlooked and undermined.



Mobility at the family level depends basically upon the attributes of the family concerned without necessarily being determined by the rank of a caste.

Improvement of economic and social position through more agricultural production, business, prestigious occupations and education contribute to enhancement of status of certain families. In our study of six villages in Rajasthan, we have noted that some families of the Brahmins have taken up higher income providing and lucrative jobs by achieving higher education. In Bawari village, a science graduate is an agriculture extension officer. Three families from Bhutera village have established business at Delhi. In Harmara, three families have got educated all the adult male members and secured white-collar jobs for them. This is true for some families of Roopgarh and Murwara as well.

Similarly, some families of Rajputs, Charans and Banias in Roopgarh, Sabalpura and Harmara have elevated their positions in terms of both improvement in economic position and higher education. In Roopgarh, for example, leaving aside the families which have graduates and matriculates, there are families which having engineers, university teachers and persons in all-India services. In Harmara, a Bania is a medical doctor, and a Charan is an engineer. Such a mobility based on higher education and consequent higher occupation and income is mainly confined to the upper castes and class people.

Mobility at the level of family among the intermediate castes, however, is of a slightly different nature. It is not higher education and corresponding higher occupation, income and prestige that determine mobility in the case of the families of the Jats, Gujars, Malis, Khatis, Ahirs and Gadarias. Enhancement of economic position in the case of these castes is through more land and more income providing occupations. For example, fifteen families of the Jats have manoeuvred more than 100 acres of land at the time of the abolition. These families have built up *pucca* houses and spent conspicuously on marriages and other occasions during the last fifteen years. Some families of these castes run petty shops in towns and this has enhanced their economic status. There are, however, some families which have a few members as school teachers, police constables, and the like.

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Such a mobility is, however, relatively absent among the lower and 'untouchable' castes. This is mainly due to their poor family background and low caste ranks. The exceptions are of a Nai telephone operator and a school teacher in Roopgarh and a Gadaria railway inspector in Murwara. Mobility at group level is more pervasive and pronounced among these castes.

As a result of mobility in caste structure at the level of family, horizontal status distinctions have increased and some significant patterns in regard to dress, use of utensils, house type, hospitality, expenditure on marriages and food, etc. have emerged. Use of costly clothes, *saris* (in place of traditional dress), stainless steel utensils, furniture have become a status symbol for these families.

Mobility at this level does not bear a corporate basis. In fact, some families have mobilized their respective resources individually to improve their status. They might have felt frustrated regarding their status comparing it with their own status in the past or to the status of other communities and families in the other villages and towns. The families which did not have resources to enhance their status enjoyed lower status within the same caste. Such status polarizations refer to a class-like horizontal distinctions (Majumdar, 1958). Status mobility of such a character cannot be termed as 'vertical mobility', because vertical mobility implies lessening of status distinctions. Vertical mobility brings about perceptible reduction in hierarchical distance as the lower takes the place of its immediate higher castes. Such a process of mobility in course of time generates hopes for an equalitarian character of society. But this is not happening in India. Caste structure remains more or less the same in spite of structural changes induced through structural innovations.

Mobility at the family level, which is of horizontal (class-like) nature, cannot be explained with the concepts of sanskritization and westernization or secularization. Because these concepts do not take a cognizance of motivations and aspirations of these few families. Sanskritization is essentially an analytical tool in the context of group mobility and particularly with reference to 'dominant caste' (Srinivas, 1959). As we have made clear that at this level mobility is not of a 'group' and 'even' character, and as such sanskritization does not help in understanding mobility at the level of family. Westernization too does not provide a basis for taking a note of resources, capabilities and aspirations of these families. Westernization implies only 'references' for mobility, but it lacks a provision for understanding the motivations and aspirations of the 'climbing' families. As such varied forms of reference group, for example, membership (own caste families) and non-membership groups and both 'negative' and 'positive' (Merton, 1962) help analysis of such a mobility.

Mobility of a Group or a Majority of Families of a Group

Mobility of a group or a majority of families of a caste is not essentially in contrast with mobility at the level of family. The same family may have mobility simultaneously at both the levels. The major distinction between the two levels is that the 'corporate' (group) interests are given priority at the caste level, whereas at the family level the interests of family concerned predominate. In the former, collective striving is involved, while in the latter individualistic-achievement is stressed for status upgrading. Another distinction is that mobility at the caste level generally operates with regard to socio-cultural customs or matters regarding pollution-purity while mobility at the family level takes place in the socio-economic and political domains, and it is concerned with real power and influence in the village community.

In the six villages studied by the author, Khatis, Nais, Meenas, Chamars, Naiks and Brahmins have tried to improve their caste positions by discarding certain practices and occupations attached to their respective castes which they considered impure and degrading. For example, the Khatis (carpenters) in Roopgarh, Sabalpura and Harmara used to accept *kucha* food and water from most of the clean peasant castes, such as Jats, Malis, Gujars, Kumhars and Ahirs about fifteen years ago. But now they refuse to take *kucha* food from these agricultural castes and claim a higher caste rank equivalent to the Brahmins, and label themselves as the 'Jangir' Brahmins—the direct descendants of the Lord Viswakarma (the creator of the world) and have started putting on the sacred thread.

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The Nais (barbers), with the exception of two families, have discarded cleaning of defiled (*jutha*) plates for the last ten years considering that this lowered down their caste rank. The Jats (peasants) of Roopgarh, Sabalpura and Bhutera have started naming themselves 'Singh' (a Rajput style of nomenclature) since the abolition of the *zamindari* and *jagirdari* systems. Likewise, the Meenas (watchmen) have left chowkidari and committing thievery up with a view to upgrade their caste rank. The Chamars ('untouchable' leather-workers) have discarded their traditional occupations such as disposal of carcass, skinning the dead animals, mending old shoes and other menial and 'forced' labour with the exception of three families, one each in Roopgarh, Sabalpura and Bawari. Chamars in two villages of Bharatpur now name themselves as 'Jatav'—a name resembling with 'Jat'—a landowning caste in the area.

Among the Naiks (another 'untouchable' caste) women performed as midwives about fifteen years ago in Roopgarh and Sabalpura. As midwives they had to attend the mothers of the newly-born children and clean the dirt including excreta and urine of both child and mother. Considering these services polluting and status degrading, the Naiks decided collectively to discard mid-wifery.

The above illustrations are of the castes which have tried to sanskritize their behaviour patterns by discarding polluting and degrading callings and practices and by adopting occupations of the superior castes which guaranteed higher social status. Here we can say that mobility in caste structure is generally of a corporate nature. Efforts are collectively made to upgrade caste position, however, individuals also try to upgrade their socio-cultural position within the caste by discarding eating meat and drinking wine or by having regular bath, worship and the sacred thread.

We would like to make here a reference about the concepts of sanskritization and dominant caste as they are helpful in understanding of corporate mobility in caste structure in spite of their ad hoc character. It has been pointed out that sanskritization is a group process and it helps in understanding of group mobility. Sanskritization does not reduce 'economic inequalities' nor it challenges the dominant caste(s). Bailey (1960) points out that sanskritization is a corporate activity and it is an attack on hierarchy, and therefore, it is a process towards 'general levelling of culture.' But the dominant castes are not so ignorant and unaware about the movements of the sanskritizing castes. They take defensive mechanisms and maintain/create rather more status distinctions than what existed before through articulation of new status bases which are generally beyond the reach of the lower caste and class people. As such sanskritized castes hardly get higher recognition by the privileged caste groups. The non-privileged sanskritizing castes do not possess material means and mechanisms to compete with the dominant caste groups. As such sanskritization increases generally ineffective status distinctions within the same caste without attacking the caste structure as such. For example, the Nais who do not clean *jutha* plates consider themselves superior to those who continue to adhere to the traditional occupation. Such intracaste distinctions are found in all the sanskritized castes. The privileged sections do not constitute a homogeneous status group, but they are generally superior to those who have not been privileged, and the former continue to be influential because of their bigger landholdings, higher education, and prestigious jobs, which are beyond the reach of the non-privileged sections of rural society. Therefore, we can firmly say that sanskritization does not reduce economic inequalities, but it may enhance cultural levelling.

In political sphere, sanskritization is not by rule a corporate activity. Status conflicts within the same castes are found between the dominant families. As such sanskritization is a misfit for political analysis in the village community.

Thus, it is not correct to say that sanskritization does not apply where caste hierarchy is disputed and hazy, and where dominant caste does not exist or does not inspire the members of other castes to sanskritize their behaviour patterns (Srivastava, 1969). Srivastava suggests that the 'progressive family' is a more viable reference group for understanding mobility. He refers to the Koiris of Barigaon who did not imitate the behaviour patterns of the dominant caste of the Chhatris

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and imitated behaviour patterns of their own caste from a nearby village. About another village Asalpur he mentions that there is no dominant caste in the village and the Raigars imitated the Raigars who lived in Ahmedabad.

Our view is that sanskritization helps in the understanding of group mobility. But group mobility does not encompass totality of mobility in caste structure. There is group mobility, and this is mainly in socio-cultural aspects. The prevalence of hierarchy supports the existence of dominant groups, castes or sub-castes, however, there may be decisively one or more dominant castes/sub castes. The sanskritizing castes generally cannot imitate the ways of twice-born dominant castes or other higher castes, as this is influenced by the rank of the dominant caste. The lower castes imitate the life-ways of the immediate higher castes and this pattern applies to all the sanskritizing castes. Sanskritization is thus a contextual phenomenon (Singh, 1968).

In the context of group mobility, sanskritization is not a futile concept. Srivastava's argument that the 'progressive families' of the Koiris and the Raigars were *reference groups* for their respective castes. But from where and how these reference group families borrowed superior status indices. Srivastava probably means that 'complex culture' of towns and cities provided superior contexts to these reference families. This is not a correct view, as the reference to a Koiri family was in a nearby village, and if this family was affected by industrial-urban complex culture, other families of the Koiris could have also been affected by this 'external culture'. The Raigars of Asalpur have taken up mythical king Raghu as their ancestral figure.

These examples prove imitation of the Kshatriya and the Brahmanic cultures. Besides this, imitation of the higher castes is not a difficult adventure in the cities. The impact of complex culture could be observed more in terms of higher education, removal of untouchability, migration, etc. instead of religious adaptations. What Srivastava analyzes is very much sanskritization in reality. His reference is for socio-cultural adaptations and corporate activities which are essence of sanskritization.

Thus, sanskritization is applicable to the understanding of group mobility vis-a-vis caste structure particularly with reference to socio-cultural behaviour patterns. Sanskritization is to be used as a tool of analysis regarding dominant castes or groups and caste ranking and ranks of the sanskritizing castes. Sanskritization does not necessarily reduce 'economic inequalities' nor does it challenge caste hierarchy, however, it symbolizes an increased sense of awareness among the non-privileged sections.

Mobility of an Individual within a Family

The mobility of an individual within family implies enhancement or degradation of status of an individual without necessarily affecting the social position of his family and caste to which he belongs. Caste (group) mobility and family mobility are, however, interrelated, and therefore, this distinction between family mobility and individual mobility within the context of caste is devised mainly for analytical purposes.

Mobility at the level of individual is more concerned with psychological processes, such as aspirations, ambitions, frustrations, etc. and therefore, it can be better explained by the *theory of reference group behaviour*. Individual mobility is observable when we find that some individuals are esteemed high irrespective of their caste, class and family statues. It is a mobility in personal status of an individual which is a combination of his caste status and non-caste status. A particular member in a family is highly respected, whereas his real elder brother and cousins are not, sometimes including his own sons. The aspirations of individual members thus differ even when they belong to the same joint family. Such examples of mobility at the individual level are a few only, that, however, indicate a class-like pattern of mobility within an organically closed stratification system. These individuals are invariably social workers, men of integrity and character and generally educated. While observing these individuals, we may find individuals to whom we could label as 'negative' reference individuals in Mertonian sense.

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Education and sanskritization are two main factors responsible for mobility at the individual level. We find that in all the six villages of Rajasthan studied by us, the graduates and matriculates are respected more than other members of their families and their age-groups irrespective of their caste and economic status. Similarly, vegetarian, teetotaler, regular worshiper and bathtaker are esteemed more than the non-vegetarian and non-believer in God and non- worshiper. Thus, sanskritized individuals are rated higher than the non-sanskritized ones.

The mode of orientation in the mobility at the individual level is essentially achievement-oriented, and therefore, such a mobility is least corporate in character and action. Individualism prevails over collectivism within the family, however, the latter is generally benefited by the achievements of its individual members.



What do you mean by reference groups ?

Patterns of Mobility in Caste Structure

Structural enforcements that were brought to mitigate the caste distinctions have been proved ineffective so far. The legal enactments have strengthened caste sentiments and loyalties. Some changes, particularly land reforms, have, however, brought significant class-like changes within the caste structure. Horizontal status distinctions within the caste have considerably increased. The processes, though not considerably effective to change the caste structure, are of 'proletarianization' and 'bourgeoisiefication' (Sharma, 1969). Some former Zamindars have become petty peasants and the former tenants have become big peasants. Economic inequalities are thus reduced in some cases. But to achieve an egalitarian pattern of society such more effective radical changes are needed. As such decentralization of power, abolition of untouchability and caste system and adult suffrage have almost been infructuous.

The following patterns of mobility may, however, be discerned in caste structure on the basis of foregoing analysis :

(*a*) Marginally going up

Some families and groups of families have raised their status marginally within their own castes. This change is reflected through changes in their customs, practices, occupations, education and income. These changes essentially imply a social climbing.

(*b*) Marginally going down

The reverse of the pattern of marginally going up is the pattern of marginally going down. Adherence to the so-called defiling and degrading callings and practices lowers down status compared to those who have discarded the degrading occupations and taken up the clean and prestigious occupations and practices. This applies to some families of several lower and upper castes.

(*c*) Maintaining status quo

There are families and castes which have faced a number of attacks on their caste ranks. The landowning and priestly castes, such as the Rajputs, Brahmins and Jats have been facing new challenges and situations since Independence, but they have been adjusting themselves in such a way that no significant shifts have taken place in their caste ranks. The loss they had suffered has been compensated with regard to high education, lucrative jobs, cash income and political power.

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Patterns of Mobility in Class

Class is a very significant element in stratification system. Class mobility is a very important process in present industrial society. Mobility along class line exhibits meritocratic, open nature of society. Study of class mobility reveals the impact of class of origin on the life-chances. Besides this, study of people undergoing mobility are important for analyzing social stability and expansion. High rates of class mobility in industrial society shows the openness of society. Class mobility helps in understanding class formation also.

Class Mobility and Class Formation : The rate of social mobility have significant effects on class formation. So, number of scholars have shown interest in study of this aspect. For example, Anthony Giddens has suggested that if the rate of social mobility is low, class solidarity and cohesion will be high. Most individuals will remain in their class of origin and will provide for the production of common life experiences over generations. As a result, distinctive class subculture and strong class identification will tend to develop. Marx, through the concept of proletarianization, explained the process of class formation as a result of class mobility. Expansion of middle class also indicates class mobility in advanced industrial society. Weber emphasized immobility as a chief determinant of social and cultural identity of a class. Westergaard and Resler recognized the importance of mobility and lack of it as a factor influencing peoples response to their class situation, class consciousness and class organisation. Parkin argued that mobility rates and patterns are important in determining class solidarity.

Industrialization and Mobility : Industrialization has brought a lot of changes in economic, political, cultural and most importantly in social sphere. Industrial society is characterized by meritocracy and openness. This facilitates for occupational and social mobility. Therefore, Lipset Zetterberg feel that industrialism creates uniform mobility pattern. Duncan and Blau discussed number of factors generated by industrialization that have bearing on mobility patterns. Industrialization led to breakdown of kinship ties, increase in division of labour, growth in rationalistic attitudes, emphasis on achievement based occupation etc. New professional class, working class and managerial class came to play significant role in industrial societies.

Education and Mobility : Education is a key factor in facilitating mobility in modern industrial society. Through education and training, people from lower strata can move to the higher one because these are open in present society. Earlier education was restricted to few groups so mobility was also restricted but its role has changed today. Today, it is a major determinant of career mobility and it affects the pace of mobility too.

Intergenerational and Intra-generational Mobility : The first major study of intergenerational mobility in England and Wales was conducted by David Glass and his associates in 1949. The study showed that upward mobility was more frequent than downward mobility, most mobility was short range and nearly two-third of men interviewed were in different status category from that of their fathers. His study also revealed a significant degree of inequality of opportunity.

Assecs study in 1984 found that opportunity for mobility has increased within industrialization but inequality exists. Inequality further increases in case of women as it includes gender inequality also. Family background and educational attainment have bearing on mobility patterns. According to Lipset and Bendix, poverty, lack of education, lack of exposure, lack of access are other factors that affect mobility. Intergenerational mobility are more than the intra-generational mobility. Hauzer and Hout have found that work life mobility decreases with age. Lipset and Bendix found self-employment to be one of the few means of acquiring higher positions and mobility among manual workers.

Social Mobility and Classes in India

Classes in India is the result of social mobility. In present situation castes and classes coexist in India. Following are the different classes which are identified in India :

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1. **Social Mobility in Agrarian Classes :** Agrarian societies are experiencing mobility continuously since the very beginning of agriculture. British rule made the land a private property. That brought significant changes in the agrarian class. After independence, introduction of land reforms and abolition of intermediaries, there occurred both upward and downward mobility. The landless labour could get land and the Zamindars lost control over their vast landed properties further in 1960's.

   The introduction of green revolution brought mobility in class structure. As a result of this the big farmers could gain more profit and small landholders lost their land. The pauperization of poor farmers in agrarian society generated conflict and all this resulted in agrarian movements. This continues even today.

2. **Social Mobility in Urban Classes :** In India, there are four major classes in the urban centres. British rule and rapid industrialization in post- independence period affected these social classes largely. These classes include the following :

   (*a*) **Capitalists :** With industrialization and free trade, wealthier people started their industries. Traditional merchant class was the first who become capitalist. Even today, a large number of industrialists are from trading castes like Marwaris of Rajasthan. The expansion of industries of diverse fields generated an observable capitalist class in urban India.

   (*b*) **Traders and shopkeepers :** As a result of urbanization, demand of goods and services increased in urban areas. So, a new service providing entrepreneurs class emerged to meet the increasing demand. This class included property dealers, dry cleaners, vegetable vendors, parlours, restaurateurs etc.

   (*c*) **Professional class :** British rule introduced modern education in India to get group of professionals to be employed in various jobs. Thus emerged a professional class that included doctors, lawyers, managers, bureaucrats, technocrats etc., With expansion of service sector, the size of this class enlarged. All of them are the salaried employee. Today they constitute the largest class in urban areas.

   (*d*) **Working class :** Working class population is comprised of landless agricultural labourers, seasonal workers, industrial workers, plantation workers etc. In urban areas these people are found in slums. They are mobilized by the trade union. Both vertical and horizontal mobility can be observed in this working class.

Self-Assessment

Fill in the blanks

1. The principal forms of social mobility are .....and .....
2. The talent and ability are very important factors of social mobility according to .....
3. The book 'The Theory of Leisure Class' written by .....
4. Vertical mobility exists in the form of ascending and .....currents.

11.4 Summary

- "Mobility is measured as that of a family or that of an individual." In the case of a family, it is *intergenerational mobility*. In the case of an individual, it is *intragenerational mobility*. *Stratum mobility* remains generally neglected.
- Democratic societies have more intensive vertical mobility compared to autocratic, and dogmatic societies. Birth-based ascriptive status does not find a place of significance in a democratic society. There is openness and equality of opportunities. There are more holes and elevators to go up and down.
- *Vertical mobility* exists in the form of ascending and descending currents. Both have individual infiltration and collective ascent or descent of the whole group within the system of other

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groups. Based on the degree of circulation, we can distinguish between immobile and mobile types of society.Vertical mobility functions to some degree in any society. There must be the membranes" (thin layers) between the "strata", "holes", "staircases", "elevators" or "channels", which permit individuals to move up and down, from stratum to stratum.

- The persons, who occupy superior and lucrative positions, try to create barriers to the upward mobility of the lowly placed members of the society.
- *Horizontal mobility* implies a very high degree of dynamism. The main point in horizontal mobility is that it does not affect the system of social stratification as such. People can move up or down within the broad normative framework of the social stratification. This is possible due to education, occupation, migration, new opportunities and desire for betterment of lifestyles.
- The demographic factor has a bearing on social mobility in all societies. Fertility decline and decline in population are very crucial factors in affecting the rate of social mobility. It has been observed that the birth rate of higher strata population is lower than the lower strata population. Likewise the death rate of lower strata population is higher than the upper strata population. Decline in fertility rate provides scope for mobility of women.
- At the individual level, two factors facilitate for social mobility. One is achievement motivation and other one is individual talent. People can achieve mobility with the help of their talent like excellence in sports, arts, music etc. In ascriptive based societies, talent and ability has little to do with mobility. Lipset and Bendix state that there are always new supplies of talent which must be absorbed somewhere or the other.
- Industrial societies are characterized by democratic system of governance. The democratization of political systems, with all its noble values removed the barriers to social mobility. With the introduction of universal adult franchise, panchayti raj system, constitutional, political and social rights etc., social mobility was further facilitated in India. Traditional occupational specialization got replaced by industrialization. Education came to play vital role in changing the stratification system. Ascriptive position became irrelevant. Due to re-ranking of some occupation there happened shift in nature and esteem of some jobs. Some occupations came to occupy less importance which had more value earlier.
- There are several factors which act as barrier to social mobility. Poverty, lack of access to education, lack of information of opportunities, traditional upper strata people, uneven development etc. act as a barrier to social mobility. It is believed that industrialization provides avenues to upward mobility, but the industrial societies are not as open as it is believe. The class of origin is still important to gain opportunity. In India some groups are denied equality of opportunity even today. Though the legal barriers have been removed, social inequalities still exists and are acting as barrier to mobility.
- A major factor for mobility is social change. The process of social mobility can bring about change in the system of stratification. When social mobility is restricted, then also it will help for change because discontent with the existing system led to change of the system. Some times mobility comes as a result of revolutions, reform movements, rebellions etc. in such case mobility accompany change. In this regard Marx, Merton, Giddens, Pareto contributed a lot.
- These approaches to caste mobility are singularistic and do not encompass the totality of mobility taking place today in caste system. One would agree with Lynch's observation that there was no agreement about the conception of caste and the units that structure it. If such an ambiguity persists, then the units which move, remain unclear. I would further agree with Lynch that mobility within the caste system is not really distinguished from change of the system. Change within or between castes does not necessarily constitute mobility within the caste system, unless one accepts mobility as the only significant kind of change in Indian

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society. A more meaningful form of mobility should entail changes in ritual hierarchy than the enhanced power position of a particular caste.

- Marriott's approach is, in fact, 'confusing', and its application remains ununderstandable in terms of rural versus metropolitan caste categories. The analyses of Lynch and Damle are undoubtedly an addition to the analysis of caste mobility, but how to transform a 'culture bound', ad–hoc concept of sanskritization into a structural one, and how to explain structural changes and their implicit and explicit repercussions on caste mobility through the reference group theory, remain unclear.
- Mobility at the familial level could be better explained in terms of repercussions of structural reforms. Reference group theory helps in the analysis of mobility at the level of individual, and corporate mobility is better understandable by the concept of sanskritization and other related concepts.
- Mobility at the level of family is inspired by differential privileges and positions that families and individuals enjoy in the village community. Families of the same caste, of other castes in the same village and of other villages and towns may operate as reference points for mobility at the family level. Mobility at the family level depends basically upon the attributes of the family concerned without necessarily being determined by the rank of a caste. Improvement of economic and social position through more agricultural production, business, prestigious occupations and education contribute to enhancement of status of certain families. Mobility at the level of family among the intermediate castes, however, is of a slightly different nature. It is not higher education and corresponding higher occupation, income and prestige that determine mobility in the case of the families of the Jats, Gujars, Malis, Khatis, Ahirs and Gadarias. Enhancement of economic position in the case of these castes is through more land and more income providing occupations.
- Such a mobility is, however, relatively absent among the lower and 'untouchable' castes. This is mainly due to their poor family background and low caste ranks. The exceptions are of a Nai telephone operator and a school teacher in Roopgarh and a Gadaria railway inspector in Murwara. Mobility at group level is more pervasive and pronounced among these castes.
- Vertical mobility brings about perceptible reduction in hierarchical distance as the lower takes the place of its immediate higher castes. Such a process of mobility in course of time generates hopes for an equalitarian character of society. But this is not happening in India. Caste structure remains more or less the same in spite of structural changes induced through structural innovations.
- Mobility of a group or a majority of families of a caste is not essentially in contrast with mobility at the level of family. The same family may have mobility simultaneously at both the levels. The major distinction between the two levels is that the 'corporate' (group) interests are given priority at the caste level, whereas at the family level the interests of family concerned predominate. In the former, collective striving is involved, while in the latter individualistic-achievement is stressed for status upgrading.
- The Nais (barbers), with the exception of two families, have discarded cleaning of defiled (*jutha*) plates for the last ten years considering that this lowered down their caste rank. The Jats (peasants) of Roopgarh, Sabalpura and Bhutera have started naming themselves 'Singh' (a Rajput style of nomenclature) since the abolition of the *zamindari* and *jagirdari* systems.
- Efforts are collectively made to upgrade caste position, however, individuals also try to upgrade their socio-cultural position within the caste by discarding eating meat and drinking wine or by having regular bath, worship and the sacred thread.
- They take defensive mechanisms and maintain/create rather more status distinctions than what existed before through articulation of new status bases which are generally beyond the reach of the lower caste and class people. As such sanskritized castes hardly get higher

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recognition by the privileged caste groups. The non-privileged sanskritizing castes do not possess material means and mechanisms to compete with the dominant caste groups.

- In political sphere, sanskritization is not by rule a corporate activity. Status conflicts within the same castes are found between the dominant families. As such sanskritization is a misfit for political analysis in the village community. The sanskritizing castes generally cannot imitate the ways of twice-born dominant castes or other higher castes, as this is influenced by the rank of the dominant caste. The lower castes imitate the life-ways of the immediate higher castes and this pattern applies to all the sanskritizing castes.
- Sanskritization is applicable to the understanding of group mobility vis-a-vis caste structure particularly with reference to socio-cultural behaviour patterns. Sanskritization is to be used as a tool of analysis regarding dominant castes or groups and caste ranking and ranks of the sanskritizing castes. Sanskritization does not necessarily reduce 'economic inequalities' nor does it challenge caste hierarchy, however, it symbolizes an increased sense of awareness among the non-privileged sections. Mobility at the level of individual is more concerned with psychological processes, such as aspirations, ambitions, frustrations, etc. and therefore, it can be better explained by the *theory of reference group behaviour*. Individual mobility is observable when we find that some individuals are esteemed high irrespective of their caste, class and family statues. It is a mobility in personal status of an individual which is a combination of his caste status and non-caste status. Education and sanskritization are two main factors responsible for mobility at the individual level. We find that in all the six villages of Rajasthan studied by us, the graduates and matriculates are respected more than other members of their families and their age-groups irrespective of their caste and economic status. The reverse of the pattern of marginally going up is the pattern of marginally going down. Adherence to the so-called defiling and degrading callings and practices lowers down status compared to those who have discarded the degrading occupations and taken up the clean and prestigious occupations and practices. This applies to some families of several lower and upper castes.
- Industrialization has brought a lot of changes in economic, political, cultural and most importantly in social sphere. Industrial society is characterized by meritocracy and openness. This facilitates for occupational and social mobility. Therefore, Lipset Zetterberg feel that industrialism creates uniform mobility pattern. Duncan and Blau discussed number of factors generated by industrialization that have bearing on mobility patterns. Industrialization led to breakdown of kinship ties, increase in division of labour, growth in rationalistic attitudes, emphasis on achievement based occupation etc.
- The first major study of intergenerational mobility in England and Wales was conducted by David Glass and his associates in 1949. The study showed that upward mobility was more frequent than downward mobility, most mobility was short range and nearly two-third of men interviewed were in different status category from that of their fathers. His study also revealed a significant degree of inequality of opportunity.
- Reference group theory is certainly a better conceptual frame than the concepts of sanskritization and westernization. The latter concepts are of an ad hoc nature. They lack refinement at conceptual level. Mobility at individual level in terms of aspirations, frustration, morale and commitment can be better understood with the theory of reference group behaviour. Mobility in caste structure at different levels could be explained through the application of a set of perspectives.
- The applicability of the reference group theory, however, still remains to be tested to understand structural (induced) changes emanating from legislation, land reforms, and democratic decentralization etc. which do not involve groups and individuals as such but the systems in existence. Structural changes do not take a cognizance of aspirations and frustrations of the individuals and groups *per se.* The objective is an overhauling of the

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existing systems with a view to reduce or remove structural inconsistencies, inequalities and contradictions and to ensure an egalitarian system of social relationships.

- Sanskritization and westernization can be defined only in cultural terms. But Lynch (1968) maintains that sanskritization can be defined structurally too. The major difficulty of sanskritization is of being 'culture-bound', which could, however, be overcome by an application of a frame of analysis that uses generalized types of reference groups (identification, imitation, negation) and generalized types of status (dominant and salient). With such a frame of analysis sanskritization could be compared with movements of mobility in other societies and their similarities and dissimilarities could be compared and analyzed. But these arguments of Lynch do not stand the test of validity. Sanskritization as a concept is applicable basically within the frame of caste structure. Again, mobility at all the levels as referred above cannot be understood with the concept of sanskritization because there is a gross negligence of realization of the role of initiative and incentive, individual aspirations and resourcefulness. Thus, the structural changes which are induced through extra-caste mechanisms but have definite reper-cussions on caste structure are not understandable either with reference group theory or sanskritization. However, the analysis of mobility in caste structure could be better understood at different levels of mobility as analyzed above.
- Finally, it could be pointed out that if the concept of sanskritization is used in the wider sense as referred to by Lunch, it does not remain sanskritization as defined by either Srinivas or Bailey. It becomes altogether a new concept perhaps unacceptable to Srinivas. Structural changes are understandable through reference group theory or not remains still an unsolved question. Merton has used reference group theory for socio-psychological analysis at intermediate level (middle range). Whether it could also be extended to an analysis of a macro social and psychological phenomena remains an unsolved puzzle.

11.5 Key–Words

1. Defiled : Jutha
2. Chamars : Untouchable
3. Nairs : Barbers

11.6 Review Questions

1. What is meant by social mobility? Explain.
2. What are the determinants of social mobility? Discuss.
3. Discuss the patterns of mobility in caste and class.
4. What is demographic factor? Discuss.

Answers: Self–Assessment

1. Horizontal and vertical
2. Vilfredo pareto
3. Veblen
4. Descending

11.7 Further Readings



1. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Perspectives on Social Stratification, Rawat Publication.
2. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Social Stratification & Mobility, Rawat Publication.
3. Hasnain, Nadeem, 2011 : Indian Society and Culture Continuity and Change, Jawahar Publishers and Distributors.

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Unit 12: Mobility in Closed and Open Systems of Stratification

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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Explain the Open and Closed Systems of Social Stratification.
- Discuss the Social Mobility in India.

Introduction

Stratification is ranking of people in a society. Ranking is made on certain criteria. These criteria include power, status and prestige. The Marxists look at stratification from the perspective of mode of production. As a matter of fact social stratification in contemporary sociology has become a multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional field of study. It is qualified by the adjective *multi* because the disciplines of sociology, rural sociology, social anthropology, psychology, political science and economics also study stratification. Because of its multi-disciplinary nature, its approaches to study are also different. We can categorise them into two parts : (1) Marxist, and (2) non-Marxist or Weberian. As stated above, the Marxist analyse the social stratification in terms of made of production. Such an approach is historical and takes into consideration the conceptual framework of production forces and production relations. The Marxist approach to stratification has several variants but mode of production remains the prime framework.

The Weberian approach to stratification takes into consideration the concepts of wealth, power and prestige. Wealth, for example, may be defined by occupational category and its accompanying ability to produce income, or by inherited valuables such as real estate. Prestige refers to honour and style of life; for example, how elegant one's life-style is. Power refers to the ability to control or dominate the course of events which make up social life. Thus positions in a society are ranked in terms of the amount of those desirables that are attached to them. Stratification, then, involves inequality because the higher the rank of a position, the more desirable one can get by holding that position.

When we look at rural social stratification we either stress on the mode of production that is the owners of the land, types of peasants, role of technology in production, surplus for market and circulation of labourers. By way of example the study conducted by Jan Breman, entitled, *Of*

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Peasants, Migrants and Paupers, in the region of south Gujarat takes into consideration the mode of production as a basic framework for his analysis.

Those who look at stratification from the Weberian point of view accept class, status and power as basic determinants of stratification or ranking, Andre Beteille's study, *Caste, Class and Power* is an excellent example of studying rural stratification from the Weberian perspective. K.L. Sharma's classical work, *The Changing Rural Stratification System* (1974), is another example of employing Weberian approach to the inquiry of rural stratification.

A ranked social order is common in most societies. Another way of placing the people is based on conceptions of difference. Dipankar Gupta writes : "If inequality is the key feature, then, the stratificatory system can be characterized as *hierarchical* one. If *difference* is more important, then, the various social orders face each other as horizontal and equal blocs. A ranked hierarchy does not make that much sense here." "Inequalities of income or rank clearly belong to the hierarchical order of stratification." On the contrary, for example, linguistic differences cannot be placed in a hierarchical order. But, generally speaking, differences between men and women are not seen as horizontal, rather they are perceived as "ranked" vertically. Social stratification, therefore, includes both "inequality" and "difference", and the two impinge upon each other.

Dipankar Gupta explains that "social stratification is not just about categorizing people into diverse strata". "Social stratification provides an analytical basis for comprehending both social order and social mobility." Thus, social stratification tells about the principles of *social statics* and *social dynamics*. We get an understanding of social reality as *static* ranked order and of its flux. What is needed is to know about social order and social mobility. Natural differences become "social" when they are seen as sociological categories. "Hierarchy" is generally a static rank order, whereas "difference" implies "dynamics" in the static social order. Social stratification includes both hierarchy and difference. Social mobility can occur in a hierarchical society, like India, which is characterized by the rigidity of caste system. Class-based societies are generally considered more prone to mobility. Open and closed systems of social stratification are viewed in terms of avenues and possibilities for social mobility.

12.1 Open System of Social Stratification

An open system of stratification is characterized by mobility of an aspiring individual. Opposite to this, a closed system discourages mobility within its rank order. For upward mobility, in both systems, efforts are made by people. In other words, the members who wish to move up challenge the persisting system of social stratification and announce their claims on new positions or those of who have held privileged status and honour in the society. In the open system, by way of mobility, more difference and differentiation occur, and they are justified by the claimants. Gupta observes : "In an open system of stratification it is possible to move up by simply obeying the internal order or rank differentiation."

If a person acquires qualifications of higher positions in his/her lifetime, he/she can move up from the presently held lower position in an organization/office/industry.

Mobility is an accepted characteristic of an open system of stratification. Generally, horizontal mobility occurs in such a system, which does not pose a threat to the ideological/structural basis of the system. The system remains as such, but the individuals move up or down horizontally. Mobility is always accomplished individually, rather collectively or on the basis of whole family. "In an open system of stratification a single variable must be the hierarchy, so that quantitative differences in this variable can be measured in a rank order." From zero to hundred, for example, can be measured in a continuous way. Such a mobility or gradations do not result into categorical distinctions within the stratification system. A variety of factors, such as occupation, education, schooling, housing, source of income, may be there in a continuous hierarchy, which are quantifiable and measurable. L. Warner et al. constructed a composite index and stratified the American

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people into upper class, upper-middle class, lower-upper-middle class, upper-lower class and lower-lower class. One may not agree with the criteria chosen by Warner and his associates with regard to the weight given to different and diverse occupations, 'education, etc., because criteria such as wealth, power or land owned are far more clearly quantifiable and measurable. "An open system of stratification is ultimately best suited when mobility and class status are plotted, or can be plotted, on a single quantifiable variable." "An open system gets complicated once elements of incommensurable differences are superimposed on it."



Did u know? In an open system of stratification, "hierarchy may be fixed and firm, but individuals can go up or even down the hierarchy".

"Generally, America is perceived as an ideal case of an open system of social stratification. In America, individual is supreme. "This makes it the ideal locale for a system of stratification to exhibit itself." America accepts a certain kind of similarity among its people. Gupta states that "in an open system of stratification upward mobility does not mean that somebody else must lose status as a consequence". The assumption is that people are all equal and that mobility occurs to the extent that people can realize their potentials.

12.2 Closed System of Social Stratification

In a closed system of stratification, caste, race, religion, ethnicity, etc., are central considerations. Ascribed characteristics are given prime importance in a such system. However, such considerations are always questioned and disputed. As in an open system, quantity is the main yardstick, quality is the deciding criterion in a closed system of stratification. Distinctions between groups of people such as castes/races are elaborated in the closed system. Both difference and hierarchy characterize such a system. The two together make the system rigid, hence mobility becomes an uphill endeavour. There have been several mobility movements to effect change in India's rigid caste system. Gupta argues that in a closed system of stratification, differences are basic and hierarchy follows from them. Hierarchy is built after differences. The differences are basically incommensurable and unrankable in character, hence, upward mobility encounters strong impediments.

Because of this, mobility is a rare and difficult possibility, and even if it occurs, it is unquantifiable. Mobility is far from a usual phenomenon in closed system of stratification such as caste and race.

Let us make it clear that a closed system has never been absolutely static, nor an open system is just opposite of a closed system. At times, an open system develops a tendency of resistance to change and mobility, and similarly, a closed system under acute forces and pressures, bends toward change and mobility. Even the caste system was challenged in ancient and medieval periods, and it showed resilience and dynamism. Today, the intercaste relations, which were the bedrock of the caste system, have disappeared. Commensal ties have nearly vanished. Connubiality is becoming weak. But caste identities for non-caste reasons, particularly for political and economic gains, are becoming stronger. Thus, closed and open systems of social stratification are not poles apart, the two are relative, and one has some features of the other.



Notes "In a closed system of stratification the hierarchy does not have the complicity of all those who are deemed to be within it." The main factor is that rather than an individual, a group or a sub-group is ranked as higher and lower.

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An analytical comparison of open and closed systems of stratification

Open System	Closed System
Mobility is an accepted phenomenon.	Mobility is strongly discouraged.
Individual moves up and down.	Group is the unit of ranking.
Hierarchy may be fixed and firm.	Hierarchy is determined by ascribed
But individuals move up.	considerations, such as birth. Individuals find it difficult to move up.
Quantity is hierarchized.	Quality is hierarchized.
Hierarchization is natural.	Hierarchization is made out of castes, races, estates, etc.
The principle of difference is significant.	The principles of difference and hierarchy both are important.
Class in America is an example of an	Caste in India is an example of a closed
open system of stratification.	system of stratification.
There is a continuous hierarchy	Hierarchy is static and pre-given.
It is simple.	It is elaborate.
There is a rapid movement.	Mobility is slow and entails impediments.
Gradations signify the system.	Relations characterize the system.

12.3 Social Mobility in India

Since the caste system has been pivotal in India, social mobility is mainly revolved arpund it. Social mobility, by its definition, indicates either as a threat to the persisting and relatively static system, or it implies minor changes in regard to statuses and roles of the members of a society, or as a drastic measure, it displaces the existing system and replaces it by a new one. Adjustments with and changes in a given system of stratification are named as horizontal mobility or positional change. The basic changes are of vertical/structural nature posing a threat to the given system. Indian society has witnessed both horizontal and vertical mobility. Changes in the caste system are referred to as *positional* changes, and changes of the caste system are named as *vertical* or *structural* changes. Social mobility, as characterized in terms of sanskritization, westernization, universalization and parochialization, implies positional changes in the cultural domain of Indian society.

Three main approaches to social mobility can be identified, namely, (1) the structural-historical, (2) the Marxist, and (3) the modernization/culturological. The emphasis in the structural-historical approach is on displacement of the old urban dominated people by a new set of people drawn from the advanced rural elements. Political consciousness and democratization of politics have brought about such a social transformation. Land reforms and massive irrigation schemes have resulted in the embourgeoisiement of the tenants of the pre-independence period. Abolition of landlordism has created a new social fabric in rural India. Structural change creates various new tensions and contradictions in terms of divides between rich and poor, rural and urban, and local, regional and national formations.

The reservation policy in education, jobs and elections has also led to the emergence of a new class of power elite and white-collar workers among the former underdog sections of Indian society. Modernization/culturological approach emphasizes on change in the structure of values and norms. M.N. Srinivas and McKim Marriott have explained cultural mobility by way of the concepts

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of sanskritization and westernization, and universalization and parochialization, respectively. The Marxist approach discusses on inter-group relations based on the mode of production, social classes and the state. The main point in this approach is related to base and superstructure or relations between core and periphery in the context of the role of capitalist economy.

Generally, social mobility is perceived in the caste system in terms of change in the criteria of status determination, hereditary occupations, jajmani obligations, observance of certain rituals, acceptance of modern occupations, education, migration and positions of power in political bodies. Social mobility, even with regard to the caste system, is not monolithic. It occurs at three levels : family, group, and individual. One can understand better the entire gamut of mobility by analysing it at these levels. The extent, quantity and quality of social mobility can be gauzed by seeing individual, family and group as analytically distinct as well as interrelated units of social mobility. The three levels of mobility are distinct and also affect each other.



What is called vertical changes ?

Broadly speaking, three patterns of mobility in caste structure may be discussed as under: (1) those families and groups who have raised their status marginally within their own castes; (2) the families and individuals who have marginally gone down; and (3) the families and groups, despite adverse situations, have maintained their status by attaining education, paying jobs, and formal power.

Thus, social mobility has no doubt enhanced in the past few decades due to education, migration, modern occupations, technological advancements, political awareness and participation, and reservation policy for the SCs, STs, OBCs, women, physically challenged, etc. Positional change continues to be at a faster speed compared to basic structural change. The overall system remains stable. Change is in the system, and not of the system. Resilience of the caste system and reshaping of caste identities, reproduction of economic and educational means and processes and hold of a select minority on positions of power do not allow the basic structural change in Indian society.

Self-Assessment

Choose the correct options

1. In open system mobility is an ..... phenomenon.
   (*a*) Rejected (*b*) Accepted (*c*) Both *a* and *b* (*d*) None of these
2. In closed system
   (*a*) Mobility is strongly discouraged (*b*) Individuals moves up and down
   (*c*) Hierarchy may be fixed and firm (*d*) None of these
3. In open system
   (*a*) Hierarchy is determined by ascribed (*b*) Group is the unit of ranking
   (*c*) Individuals moves up and down (*d*) None of these
4. In open system
   (*a*) There is a rapid movement (*b*) Hierarchy is static
   (*c*) Quality is hierarchized (*d*) None of these
5. Caste in India is an example of
   (*a*) Open system (*b*) Closed system (*c*) Both *a* and *b* (*d*) None of these

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12.4 Summary

- Stratification is ranking of people in a society. Ranking is made on certain criteria. These criteria include power, status and prestige. The Marxists look at stratification from the perspective of mode of production. As a matter of fact social stratification in contemporary sociology has become a multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional field of study. It is qualified by the adjective *multi* because the disciplines of sociology, rural sociology, social anthropology, psychology, political science and economics also study stratification. Because of its multi-disciplinary nature, its approaches to study are also different.
- The Weberian approach to stratification takes into consideration the concepts of wealth, power and prestige. Wealth, for example, may be defined by occupational category and its accompanying ability to produce income, or by inherited valuables such as real estate. Prestige refers to honour and style of life; for example, how elegant one's life-style is. Power refers to the ability to control or dominate the course of events which make up social life. Thus positions in a society are ranked in terms of the amount of those desirables that are attached to them. Stratification, then, involves inequality because the higher the rank of a position, the more desirable one can get by holding that position.
- A ranked social order is common in most societies. Another way of placing the people is based on conceptions of difference. Dipankar Gupta writes : "If inequality is the key feature, then, the stratificatory system can be characterized as *hierarchical* one. If *difference* is more important, then, the various social orders face each other as horizontal and equal blocs. A ranked hierarchy does not make that much sense here." "Inequalities of income or rank clearly belong to the hierarchical order of stratification." On the contrary, for example, linguistic differences cannot be placed in a hierarchical order. But, generally speaking, differences between men and women are not seen as horizontal, rather they are perceived as "ranked" vertically.
- Natural differences become "social" when they are seen as sociological categories. "Hierarchy" is generally a static rank order, whereas "difference" implies "dynamics" in the static social order. Social stratification includes both hierarchy and difference. Social mobility can occur in a hierarchical society, like India, which is characterized by the rigidity of caste system. Class-based societies are generally considered more prone to mobility. Open and closed systems of social stratification are viewed in terms of avenues and possibilities for social mobility.
- An open system of stratification is characterized by mobility of an aspiring individual. Opposite to this, a closed system discourages mobility within its rank order. For upward mobility, in both systems, efforts are made by people. In other words, the members who wish to move up challenge the persisting system of social stratification and announce their claims on new positions or those of who have held privileged status and honour in the society.
- "In an open system of stratification it is possible to move up by simply obeying the internal order or rank differentiation."
- "In an open system of stratification a single variable must be the hierarchy, so that quantitative differences in this variable can be measured in a rank order." From zero to hundred, for example, can be measured in a continuous way. Such a mobility or gradations do not result into categorical distinctions within the stratification system. A variety of factors, such as occupation, education, schooling, housing, source of income, may be there in a continuous hierarchy, which are quantifiable and measurable.

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- "An open system of stratification is ultimately best suited when mobility and class status are plotted, or can be plotted, on a single quantifiable variable." "An open system gets complicated once elements of incommensurable differences are superimposed on it."
- In an open system of stratification, "hierarchy may be fixed and firm, but individuals can go up or even down the hierarchy".
- In a closed system of stratification, caste, race, religion, ethnicity, etc., are central considerations. Ascribed characteristics are given prime importance in a such system. However, such considerations are always questioned and disputed. As in an open system, quantity is the main yardstick, quality is the deciding criterion in a closed system of stratification. Distinctions between groups of people such as castes/races are elaborated in the closed system. Both difference and hierarchy characterize such a system. The two together make the system rigid, hence mobility becomes an uphill endeavour.
- An open system develops a tendency of resistance to change and mobility, and similarly, a closed system under acute forces and pressures, bends toward change and mobility. Even the caste system was challenged in ancient and medieval periods, and it showed resilience and dynamism. Today, the intercaste relations, which were the bedrock of the caste system, have disappeared. Commensal ties have nearly vanished.
- The caste system has been pivotal in India, social mobility is mainly revolved arpund it. Social mobility, by its definition, indicates either as a threat to the persisting and relatively static system, or it implies minor changes in regard to statuses and roles of the members of a society, or as a drastic measure, it displaces the existing system and replaces it by a new one. Adjustments with and changes in a given system of stratification are named as horizontal mobility or positional change.
- Changes in the caste system are referred to as *positional* changes, and changes of the caste system are named as *vertical* or *structural* changes. Social mobility, as characterized in terms of sanskritization, westernization, universalization and parochialization, implies positional changes in the cultural domain of Indian society.
- The emphasis in the structural-historical approach is on displacement of the old urban dominated people by a new set of people drawn from the advanced rural elements. Political consciousness and democratization of politics have brought about such a social transformation. Land reforms and massive irrigation schemes have resulted in the embourgeoisiement of the tenants of the pre-independence period. Abolition of landlordism has created a new social fabric in rural India. Structural change creates various new tensions and contradictions in terms of divides between rich and poor, rural and urban, and local, regional and national formations.
- The Marxist approach discusses on inter-group relations based on the mode of production, social classes and the state. The main point in this approach is related to base and superstructure or relations between core and periphery in the context of the role of capitalist economy.
- Social mobility is perceived in the caste system in terms of change in the criteria of status determination, hereditary occupations, jajmani obligations, observance of certain rituals, acceptance of modern occupations, education, migration and positions of power in political bodies. Social mobility, even with regard to the caste system, is not monolithic. It occurs at three levels : family, group, and individual. One can understand better the entire gamut of mobility by analysing it at these levels. The extent, quantity and quality of social mobility can be gauzed by seeing individual, family and group as analytically distinct as well as interrelated units of social mobility.

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- Social mobility has no doubt enhanced in the past few decades due to education, migration, modern occupations, technological advancements, political awareness and participation, and reservation policy for the SCs, STs, OBCs, women, physically challenged, etc. Positional change continues to be at a faster speed compared to basic structural change. The overall system remains stable. Change is in the system, and not of the system. Resilience of the caste system and reshaping of caste identities, reproduction of economic and educational means and processes and hold of a select minority on positions of power do not allow the basic structural change in Indian society.

12.5 Key–Words

1. Open system : An open system continuously interact with the environment.
2. Closed system : It is held to be isolated from their environment , which the subject is not cut off from a society but weaved in social context.

12.6 Review Questions

1. What do you mean by open system of social stratification? Explain.
2. Discuss closed system of social stratification.
3. What is meant by social mobility in India? Discuss.
4. Write a note on open and closed systems.

Answers: Self–Assessment

1. (*b*) 2. (*a*) 3. (*c*) 4. (*a*) 5. (*b*)

12.7 Further Readings



1. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Perspectives on Social Stratification, Rawat Publication.
2. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Social Stratification & Mobility, Rawat Publication.
3. Hasnain, Nadeem, 2011 : Indian Society and Culture Continuity and Change, Jawahar Publishers and Distributors.

Unit 13: Changing Dimensions of Social Stratification

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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Explain the Changing Dimensions of Social Stratification.
- Describe the Emerging Patterns of Social Stratification in India.

Introduction

So far we have discussed some basic concepts relating to stratification such as equality, inequality, hierarchy, exclusion, poverty and deprivation in previous units. We have also explained theories of social stratification, namely, Marxist, Weberian and structural-functional. Since our main emphasis has been on the relevance conceptualizations, we have considerably drawn from our experience and understanding of Indian society with a view to relate these concepts and theories with the Indian society. Earlier, in the introductory chapter, an attempt has been made to define the term "social stratification", by drawing from different streams of thought systems and formulations. The main dimensions of social stratification are economic, social and political as perceived by Max Weber, and "class alone" as advocated by Karl Marx. Gender has been added to the theory of social stratification along with the persisting dimensions of class, status and power. Two dimensions, namely, ethnicity and race, have appeared as cultural dimensions of stratification.

We will discuss these domains of social stratification in the following order:

1. Class
2. Status groups or castes
3. Power
4. Gender
5. Ethnicity
6. Race

Not only a discussion on these dimensions would embrace economic, social, political and cultural aspects of social stratification, it would also provide understanding of specific situations and factors and their permutations and combinations to know the overriding nature of given factors and also that of the composite types of stratification systems. Lastly, all these domains/dimensions of social stratification would be mirrored in terms of their relevance in the context of the present-day Indian society.

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13.1 Changing Dimensions of Social Stratification

Class

Adam Smith, much before Karl Marx and Max Weber, talked of capitalists and labourers in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. We presume that Marx was considerably inspired by Smith in formulation of his theory of class, class struggle and class consciousness. Smith realized the significance of labour and labour power, particularly when he was not under the command of a landlord or a master. When land became a private property, the landlord demanded a share of almost all the produce which the labourer could either raise, or collect from it. His rent made the first deduction from produce of the labour which was employed upon land.

Secondly, the person who tills the ground has wherewithal the ground to maintain himself till he reaps the harvest. The master maintains his existence by giving advance, and in return he gets share in the produce of his labour. Thirdly, the produce of almost all other labour is liable to the like deduction of profit. Much before Marx, Smith voiced for the cause of the labour. He writes: "In all arts and manufactures the greater part of the workmen stand in need of a master to advance them the materials of their work, and their wages and maintenance till it be completed. He shares in the produce of their labour, or in the value which it adds to the materials upon which it is bestowed; and in this share consists his profit."

There are not many independent persons combining the roles of a master and a workman. The masters can combine easily the law and authorities, but workmen cannot do it. Workmen cannot subsist even for a work, the masters, landlords, master manufacturers or merchants can survive on their own for a long time. Thus, Smith clearly describes the division of society into classes (particularly two).

While agreeing with Adam Smith on classes, i.e., capitalists and labourers, Smith's contemporary Thomas R. Malthus writes : "In every society that has advanced beyond the savage state, a class of proprietors, and a class of labourers, must necessarily exist." By no means the present great inequality of property is either necessary or useful to society. It must certainly be considered as an evil and every institution that promotes it is essentially bad and impolitic. Malthus uses much before Marx, the Marxist language in favour of the poor. He says that the labour is the only property of the class of labourers. This is the only commodity he has, which he gives in exchange of the necessities of life.

The Marxian Concept of Class

According to Marx, there are three classes, namely, labourers, capitalists and landowners. There are also middle and intermediate strata. However, landlords obliterate under the capitalist mode of production. Only capitalists and wage labourers ultimately constitute the two classes whom Marx refers as bourgeoisie and proletariat. The bourgeoisie are haves, hence they become a ruling class. The proletariat are have-nots, hence they become an oppressed class. The relations between these two classes are determined by their respective positions in the capitalist system of production. All other relations in the society are determined by these basic relations. Marx terms the basic relations as *base*, and the relations built after it are named as *superstructure*.

A clear exposition of the two classes, namely, bourgeoisie and proletariat is given by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. They write : "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." They further write : "By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labour. By proletariat, the class of modern wage labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live." This is how the society has always been divided mainly into two classes, that is, freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guildmaster and journeyman. These classes are that of the oppressor and the

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oppressed, always having clash of interests. The class struggle ended in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

Marx and Engels write : "The modern bourgeoisie society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones." However, the present epoch of the bourgeoisie has simplified the class antagonisms. "Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other : bourgeoisie and proletariat."

Bourgeoisie

The class structure can be seen as an evolutionary process -from the *serfs* to the chartered *burghers*, and from there to the *bourgeoisie*. The feudal society disintegrated because the guilds could not suffice for the new markets. The manufacturing middle class, and division of labour between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labour in each single workshop. The manufacture was further replaced by the giant, modern industry, industrial millionaires, the leaders of whole industrial armies - the modern bourgeoisie.

Modern industry has developed the world market. As a result, commerce, navigation and communication by land immensely developed. In proportion to such a development, the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every earlier class. Marx and Engels thus observe : "We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange." Further, "each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class". The development can be seen in terms of an oppressed class during feudalism, an armed and self-governing association in the medieval commune/independent urban republic/taxable "third estate" of the monarchy, a manufacture producer, serving either semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the mobility, and lastly, the bourgeoisie since the establishment of modern industry and of the world market, under the modern representative state, exclusive political sway. "The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary role. The following points may be noted :

1. The bourgeoisie has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. No "natural superiors", only naked self-interest, "cash payment" are valued. Only exchange value and free trade, and naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation in place of personal worth have occurred.
2. Honoured and looked up occupations have been stripped of their halo. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the man of science, into its paid wage labourers.
3. The bourgeoisie has taken away from the family its sentimental veil. It has been reduced to a mere money relation.
4. The bourgeoisie has shown what man's activity can bring about.
5. The bourgeoisie has constantly revolutionized the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. This has also constantly expanded market for its products.
6. The bourgeoisie has, through its exploitation of the world market, given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. New industries and new wants have become the order of the day. National boundaries are broken. The national seclusion and self-suffering are outdated.
7. The bourgeoisie has brought about rapid improvement of all instruments of production by the immensely facilitated means of communication. A new civilization has ushered in. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.

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8. The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities.
9. The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralized means of production and has concentrated property in a few hands. "Political centralization" has occurred due to such a situation.
10. The bourgeoisie has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than all preceding generations together.

In course of time, say in 100 years, too much civilization, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce will deter the development of the conditions of bourgeoisie property. Consequently, disorder starts coming in the bourgeois society, endangering its existence. "The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself."

Proletariat

Marx and Engels write : "But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself, it has also called into existence the new who are to wield those weapons - the modern working class - the proletarians". In proportion to the bourgeoisie, the proletariat - a class of labourers - has developed. They are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, influenced by the vicissitudes of competition and fluctuation of the market.

"Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine." His work is simple, monotonous and easy. He gets simply to survive. However, the price of a commodity is nearly equal to its cost of production. Repulsiveness increases, the wage decreases. The burden of toil also increases with increasing use of machine. Working hours also go up. The following points may be noted regarding the proletariat :

1. There is a sort of despotism. The patriarchal master has become the great industrial capitalist. Masses are like slaves.
2. With lesser skill required, age and sex become instruments of appropriation. Women supersede men in factory.
3. In relation to the proletariat, the manufacturer behaves as the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker, etc.
4. The lower strata of the middle class - the small trades people, shopkeepers, retired tradesmen, handicraftsmen and peasants - all sink gradually into the proletariat because of their *diminutive capital* and *competition*. They become worthless, their creativity finishes.
5. The proletariat lack cooperation.
6. The organization of the proletarians into a class and then into a political party is continuously disturbed.
7. The moorings of the old society also obstruct the process of class-based polarization.
8. When the decisive victory of the proletariat approaches, a small section of the bourgeoisie joins the proletariat to sabotage the fruits of revolution.
9. However, the proletarian alone is a really revolutionary class. The industry has produced the proletariat as its special and essential produce.

Thus, the Marxist concept of class envisions an egalitarian and democratic future for humanity. It is a charged concept, rooted in ideas of oppression, exploitation and domination. A vision of classless society is its essence. The empirical validation of the Marxist grand theory is almost impossible.

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The Weberian Concept of Class

Max Weber does not consider "classes" as communities; they merely represent possible, and frequent, bases for communal action. According to Weber, a "class" is found when (a) a number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances, in so far as (b) this component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income, and (c) is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labour markets.

These points refer to a "class situation", which is "the typical chance for a supply of goods, external living conditions and personal life experiences, in so far as this chance is determined by the amount and kind of power, or lack of such, to dispose of goods or skills for the sake of income in a given economic order". The term "class" refers to any group of people that is found in the same class situation. Like Marx, for Weber too, class is an economic phenomenon. The people, who are actors in the market for material gains, constitute different classes as determined by their role and capacity. Market signifies a situation of competition among the actors, namely, buyers and sellers. The two are not monoliths, hence, some become privileged and monopolists and others remain loosers. Weber observes that property" and "lack of property" are the basic categories of all class situations. All this holds true within the area in which true market conditions prevail. "Property" and "lack of property" are, therefore, the basic categories of all class situations.

Further, class situations are differentiated into two categories : (i) according to the kind of property that is usable for returns; and (ii) according to the kind of services that be offered in the market. In the first, the property, which has money equivalence, is included. The propertied may belong to the class of rentiers or to the class of entrepreneurs. In the second case, those who have no property but offer services to a recipient, are included. The people offering services in the market thus constitute a stratum of their own, though they have a wide range of services to offer with differential significance and value. "Class situation" is, in this sense, ultimately "market situation". The credit-debtor relation becomes the basis of "class situation" where a "credit market" is developed by a plutocracy. In such a situation, "class struggles" begin.

Those men whose fate is not determined by the chance of using goods or services for themselves on the market, e.g., slaves, are not, however, a "class". They are, rather, a "status group".

Every class may be the carrier of any one of the possibly innumerable forms of "class action", but this is not necessarily so. In any case, a class does not in itself constitute a community. In the same class situation, economic interests may compel men to act in a "communal" way, because "class" is "infallible" about its interests. Though classes as such are not communities, nevertheless class situations emerge only on the basis of communalization. The communal action that brings forth class situations, however, is not basically action between members of the identical class; it is an action between members of different classes. The labour market, the commodities market and the capitalistic enterprise are the examples of communal actions. These are very specific communal actions, empowering individuals to dispose over the means of production. In other words, the utilization of the power of property in the market obtains its most sovereign significance.

A Comparison of the Marxian and Weberian Approaches to Class

The frameworks on class developed by Marx and Weber continue to dominate academic debates and discourses. However, recently, some scholars have incorporated elements from both Marx and Weber to arrive at a synthesis of the two positions. For example, Erik Olin Wright mentions that there are three dimensions of control over economic resources by which major classes can be identified. These are :

1. Control over investments or money capital.
2. Control over the physical means of production (land, factories, offices, etc.).
3. Control over labour power.

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The capitalist class has control over all the three resources. The working class has control over none of them. In between the two are *contradictory class locations*, in which Wright includes white-collar and professional employees. These people are neither capitalists nor manual workers, but share some common features with both of them.

Another approach is given by Frank Parkin, who says that property is only one form of *social closure*. Parkin defines social closure as any process by which groups try to maintain exclusive control over resources, limiting access to them. Besides property or wealth, status differences such as ethnic origin, language or religion may also be used to create social closure. Two types of process are involved in social closure : *exclusion*, and *usurpation*. The first refers to preventing others from having access to valued resources. The second refers to the efforts made by the less privileged to acquire resources from the privileged ones. The lower and backward castes are an appropriate example of usurpation. There is *dual closure*, that is, usurpation on one hand by a group of people and denial by the same group to other social groups from sharing the benefits.

Normally, all societies are divided into the upper, the middle and the working (lower) classes, based on wealth, income and the access to societal resources. But none of these classes are monolith and homogeneous entities. They are internally differentiated, e.g., upper middle, lower middle classes, upper working class, lower working class, etc. Class is also a matter of self-perception. According to a study in Britain, people considered themselves as upper middle, middle, upper working, working, and poor. In America, generally, people perceive their class subjectively, whereas their status is based on objective criteria such as property, wealth, occupation, income, etc.

Marx, Weber and the Study of Class in India

Class in India has existed along with caste and power. Change in the caste system is generally seen as an indication of the emergence of class-based relations. Migration, mobility, modern occupations, education, etc., are indicators of emerging class structure. A class analysis of Indian society has been advocated by some scholars who argue that class relations are as old as caste relations. Class transformation has been a viable fact in the form of new kingdoms, settled agriculture, trade, cities, banking and guild organizations. However, some scholars define class as an abstract category in terms of certain devices. Based on such an approach, classes are constructed as upper, middle and lower strata of society.

Mode of production and class contradictions are essential features of the Marxist approach to class, class conflict and class consciousness.. The forces of production and production relations could be seen even in caste, kinship, family, marriage and even in rituals. Emergence of a new bourgeoisie, polarization of peasantry and pauperization of the working class have been reported in Indian society. Today, the main classes are : agrarian, industrial, business, mercantile, and professional. Contradictions could be seen due to persistence of the old classes and at the same time emergence of the new classes. Generally, industrial, business and professional classes characterize urban India. Landowners, tenants, sharecroppers and agriculture labourers "are there in rural India.

These classifications have ideological overtones. Simple reference to landowners, moneylenders and landowners as classes does not imply class antagonism. But, the use of terms such as bourgeoisie, gentlemen farmers, rich peasants, landless peasants, agricultural labourers, etc., refers to class interaction, hegemony and conflict as the characteristic features of class structure.

Caste overshadows class quite often, because it continues as a means of identity and mobilization. Both caste and class are real. But, there is no correspondence as it used to be in the past between the two systems. Middle castes are not middle classes necessarily. Middle classes could be lower castes. Middle and lower classes may be from amongst the upper castes. Middle castes could be both middle and upper classes. Such permutations and combinations characterize today's Indian society. India's middle classes are disproportionate to the forces of production and to the sizes of

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the upper and the lower classes. Middle classes are also not monolith. New status groups are emerging as classes.

Status Groups

The concept of "status groups" is applied by Max Weber while distinguishing between "class, status and party" as three orders of society, namely, economic, social and political. Weber defines "social status" as a typically effective claim to positive or negative privilege with respect to social prestige so far as it rests on one or more of the following bases :

(*a*) Mode of living.

(*b*) A formal process of education accompanied by empirical or rational training and the acquisition of the corresponding modes of life.

(*c*) The prestige of birth, or of an occupation.

The primary manifestations in real life can be seen in the practice of connubium, commensality and exclusive appropriation of privileged economic opportunities, and also prohibition of certain modes of acquisition. There are also certain conventions or traditions attached to a social status.

Property, income or even poverty are not disqualifications for high social status.

Though the economic factors may influence social status and vice versa, social status may partly or even wholly determine class status, without, however, being identical with it. People may have different class statuses or economic standings, but they may enjoy the same social status based on the same mode of life in all relevant respects as a result of their common education as status groups do not function through the sheer market principle.


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A caste is the best example of a status group. A stratificatory system characterized by caste is based on the criteria of exclusion and inclusion, ascription based on birth, hereditary occupation, distinct modes of life of different caste groups, and on a fixed notion of status and prestige.

Status Honour

In contrast to classes, status groups are normally communities, generally, of an amorphous kind. In contrast to "class situation", Weber mentions existence of a "status situation", which is based on social estimation of a given honour, of a specific, positive or negative kind. A given status situation is shared by a plurality, and it can be close to a class situation. Class distinctions are linked in the most varied ways with status distinctions. Property as such is not always recognized as a status qualification, but in the long run it is, and with extraordinary regulatory. Honorific preference is the key to status honour. The point is that status honour need not necessarily be linked with a "class situation". On the contrary, it normally stands in sharp opposition to the pretensions of sheer property.

Both propertied and propertyless people can belong to the same status group, and frequently they do it with very tangible consequence. This "equality" of social esteem may, however, in the long run, become quite precarious. A rich man may not treat his servant equal, just because he is as much educated as he is.

In content, status honour is normally expressed by the fact that above all else a specific *style of life* can be expected from all those who wish to belong to the *circle*. Linked with this expectation are restrictions on "social" intercourse. These restrictions may confine normal marriages within the status circle and may lead to complete endogamous enclosure. India's caste system prescribes

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such restrictions relating to caste endogamy and clan exogamy. Members of a caste are required to marry within their caste/sub-caste, and outside their own clan and that of mother, grandmother and maternal grandmother, etc. Thus, stratification by "status groups" evolves on the basis of agreed upon communal action and conventional styles of life.

Weber states that with some over-simplification, one might say that "classes" are stratified according to their relations to the *production and acquisition* of goods, whereas "status groups" are stratified according to the principles of their *consumption* of goods as represented by special "styles of life".

An "occupational group" is also a status group. Generally, it successfully claims social honour only by virtue of the special style of life which may be determined by it. The differences between classes and status groups frequently overlap. Castes in India are a sort of status communities. Brahmins, for example, have shown, in the past, a relatively high degree of indifference to pecuniary income, and they have been at the top of caste hierarchy. Stratification by status is favoured when the bases of the acquisition and distribution of goods are relatively stable, and not threatened by onslaught of technology and economic transformation.

Guarantees of Status Stratification

As we have stated earlier that specific *style of life* is the characteristic feature of a given status group. Such a style of life is ensured by the status group through observance of certain norms and regulations vis-a-vis its members. Social honour is estimated based on adherence to the normative compliance by individual members or collectively by all the members as a status group. Visits to specific streets, neighbourhoods, groups, etc., are also examples of encircling of status groups. The development of status is essentially a question of stratification resting upon usurpation. Such usurpation is the normal origin of almost all status honour. Stability of a system of stratification comes in from legally sanctioned social order.

"Ethnic" Segregation and "Caste"

Weber considers "castes" as examples of status groups. When the status group evolves into a closed "caste", it realizes its aims to the fullest extent. Status distinctions are then guaranteed not merely by conventions and laws, but also by rituals. Ritualistic impurity and stigma or relative purity and honour characterize caste hierarchy or status honour based on the principle of pure and impure. According to Weber, the "caste" is the normal form in which ethnic communities usually live side by side in a "societalized" manner. Caste-like status distinctions are found all over the world.

However, a "status" segregation grown into a "caste' differs in its structure from a mere "ethnic" segregation. Caste is a vertical social system of super - and subordination relations between different caste groups. An ethnic group has its own honour as the highest one. "Caste" insists on a hierarchy of honour, and more so in favour of the privileged or upper castes and status groups. By implication, there are actually the negatively privileged status groups, characterized by repulsion and segregation and denial to access societal resources.

Finally, the development of status groups from ethnic groups (including castes) is by no means the normal phenomenon. The "objective" racial differences are not basic to every subjective sentiment of an ethnic community. A status group is to a high degree effective in producing extreme types. At the same time, quite frequently, the class situation is by far the predominant factor in the possibility of a style of life expected for members of a status group.

Status Privileges

For all practical purposes, stratification by status goes hand in hand with a monopolization of ideal and material goods or opportunities, in a typical manner. Besides the specific status honour based on distance and exclusiveness, we also find all sorts of material monopolies. Such honorific preferences may include the privilege of wearing special costumes, of eating special dishes, taboo

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to others, of carrying arms, the right to pursue certain artistic practices, to play certain musical instruments, etc. In the caste system, the lower castes were denied, for example, access to education, amenities available exclusively for upper or clean castes, marriage procession in the neighbourhoods of the upper castes, etc. There is a long list of denials to the lower castes, including restrictions on observance of rituals, occupations, movements, migration and mobility.

Within a status circle there is the monopolization of potential bridegrooms, and also of daughters, in the context of a marriage circle. Certain goods become objects for monopolization by status groups. Serfs or bondsmen, and special trades, were quite common in feudalism and caste system. Feudal lords and priests or warriors as distinct status groups were entitled to own and manage certain services and goods which were denied to others.

In other words, status groups are the specific bearers of all conventions. All "stylization" of life either originates in status groups or is at least conserved by them. The most privileged strata reveal certain typical traits. Work just for money, or an activity which is devoid of excellence or peculiarity, is considered antithetical to honorific preference or style of life.

Power

Power is omnipresent. It is in everyday life, in the micro-world of the individual, in the school and at the workplace. Power is relational, some have very less power, and others have near-absolute power. Means of power range from physical force to gentle cajoling. At the macro level, there are institutions of power and authority, such as the state or government.

Power is in society, and society is reflected in the structure of power and authority. Power is not a new concern in sociology. Two approaches, one led by Max Weber and other by Vilfredo Pareto, provide the basic categories for the sociological analysis of power.

The Weberian Approach

According to Weber, "power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests". Command and compliance are key terms in Weber's analysis of power. The concept of power is highly comprehensive. "All conceivable qualities of a person and all conceivable combinations of circumstances may put him in a position to impose his will in a given situation." Imperative control operates in exercise of a command given by an authority to a person for compliance. Authority is legitimized, but not all power is so.

The main point in Weber's analysis is that power can exist even against resistance. If there is resistance, then it is overcome. Power is distinct from "leadership". The latter emanates from a group/collectivity based on some criteria to lead people in a particular way and direction. Power rests on means of enforcement that lie only in the imagination and also on the nature of resistance.

Power is closely related to social control, as power involves societal coercion against recalcitrant individuals or groups. However, the two have different connotations. Social control is a negative category. It refers to social mechanisms that are designed to prevent deviant or disruptive conduct. Power has more positive functions. Power refers to carrying out the will of an individual or a group. But then social control tries to keep individuals and groups within its bounds. The category of power, on the contrary, suggests conflict. The will to power of one individual can clash with that of another, and the same is true of groups, institutions or entire societies. Thus, all human societies have both the phenomena, namely, power and social control. All societies have struggles over power.

In fact, Weber draws a clear distinction between "power" and "domination". Power is a general phenomenon, whereas domination is a more specific aspect. As we have discussed earlier, power comprises the chance that an actor's will can be imposed on other participants in a social relationship, even against their resistance. Power is measured simply by the *chance* that an individual

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or collectivity would have to realize their will. Power is realized through the actions in which an actor engages, and this potential is determined not only by accidental or fortuitous circumstances, but also by the structurally defined opportunities and capacities that are available to an actor. Superior physique, possession of an information or some contingent factors may give an individual power over another. An individual's power is not merely determined by contingent factors, it is also shaped by structural factors. Systemic determinants of power refer to social distribution of resources. Thus, power is an integral element in human action that combines both contingent and structured determinants.

Weber refers to those forms of power that involve stable and enduring social relationships. Power structured as such is termed by Weber as "domination". Power is structured into distinctive forms of domination through processes of rationalization. There are two forms of rationalization : "instrumental rationalization" and "value rationalization". The first implies calculations of self-interest and expediency, whereas the second is termed as a matter of unreflective custom and habit, and sustained by a conception of legitimacy of social order. The contrast is between *expediency* and *legitimacy* as two diametrically contrasting types of domination. While the first type of domination involves a rational, calculative alignment of interests, e.g., that which occurs in competitive exchange relationships, the second type of domination is exercised "by virtue of authority". This is a case of authority relationship, of command and compliance. Legitimacy of commands is claimed based on a normative framework. Besides the domination based on rationality and legitimacy of authority, there is a third type, that is, "domination by virtue of prestige" or "expressive rationalization". It is rooted in communal beliefs of a "charismatic" kind, shaping actions through influence, persuasion and example. Thus, the types of domination (authority) are :

1. Rational
2. Legal
3. Charismatic

These are ideal types, and occur rarely in their pure forms. In real life, they may occur in a particular combination. One who holds an authority has also prestige correspondingly. Charisma also develops a close relationship with prestige and authority. In fact, such a typology refers to social distribution of power, and the distribution of power involves the formation of social strata into structures of domination. "Class, status and party", as coined by Weber, imply three forms of domination and their interrelationships.

Peter L. Berger and Brigitte Berger consider three elements essential in Weber's definition of power. These are : (1) probability, (2) the habit of obedience and authority, and (3) legitimacy. Probability refers to the "chance" factor in exercise of power, which may or may not be there, and in a particular form. Besides habituation, l*egitimacy* is also another crucial factor. Justness of power is proven by legitimacy. All the three are interrelated in real life situations. Power and legitimacy support each other and related in a complicated manner. At times, when legitimacy of power is questioned, coercion and violence are also used to reinforce the need for authority. All societies have the major types of authority, namely, traditional, charismatic and legal-rational, though not in the same way and magnitude.

Pareto's Approach to Power

Pareto's approach to power is dominated by a simple and pervasive dichotomy of rulers and ruled. Rulers are given the name *elite* by Pareto. Power, for Pareto, is a harsh and inevitable reality of human life. A similar view of power is taken by Gaetano Mosca, a contemporary of Pareto, and both belong to the classical tradition of Italian political thought.

Pareto distinguishes between two types of elites. He calls one the *lions* and the other the *foxes*. The two have very different motivations and psychological characteristics - which Pareto calls - residues. The term "residues" means recurring constellations of motives in human history. Elites of lions

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are characterized by the residues, which Pareto calls "the persistence of aggregates". These refer to a fundamentally conservative impulse, a mindset, that is concerned with the preservation of things as they are, addicted to forceful action and not overly given to reflection. By contrast, elites of foxes are based on another class of residues, which are those of the "instinct for combination". The "foxes" are less rigid intellectually, more innovative and reflective, but much less decisive in action. According to Pareto, *lions* essentially rule by force, *foxes* by cunning. These characteristics are general predispositions, and are deeply rooted in the consciousness of the two groups of elites. Based on the rigidity of consciousness, every elite tends to become heavy-handed and increasingly inflexible in response to new situations.

When both types of elites fail to meet with certain situations, and loose power, a new type would take power. The succession of ruling groups is called by Pareto *circulation of elites*. Circulation of elites is like a law of history. It has happened always in all societies. When lions have no strong grip over their rule, they are ousted skilfully by the foxes. The very basis, namely, forceful and decisive action, on which the lions had occupied the throne loose its significance. The circulation of elites is also caused by the onset of *decadence* in any elite that has been in power over a long period. The privileges of power spoil the game of power itself. All elites eventually become flabby. Incorporation of "new blood" within the ranks of elites may lengthen the process of survival in power. This would imply that there can be a controlled circulation of elites - a mix of the persisting and the new ones.

Pareto was impressed by the sway of irrational forces over social life. However, the irrational forces emanating from the dumb predispositions (residues) keep cutting across rational conduct and frustrate the very interests of the people. Weber was for rational motives. People act to push forward their own *interests*. The consciousness motives in a struggle for power are usually the advancement of such rational interests. Thus, as such, social life (and particularly power) is "an inextricable tangle of rationality and irrationality, of interests and habits, of lucid planning and blind passion".

The Marxian Notion of Power

Before Weber and Pareto, Karl Marx related political power to his ideas on the class and class struggle. And both Weber and Pareto were aware of the Marxist perspective on power. For Marx, power is a superstructure. According to him, political power is always an instrument of the dominant class (bourgeoisie). Marx sees political relations as a reflection of underlying economic relations. Political power is the result of and a reflection of economic power. Marx called the state as an "executive committee of the bourgeoisie". But Weber distinguished between class and power in no uncertain terms. According to Weber, power had its own dynamics and could not simply be reduced to the dynamics of economic interests. Thus, both Weber and Pareto were different from Marx in their understanding of power.

Today, the questions regarding the nature and location of power are quite varied and complex. Does democracy entail power in popular consensus? Is power a matter of manipulations? Is there hidden or invisible power? What is the role of the processes of democracy and development in determination of power relations? What are the linkages of power between local, regional and national levels in a given society? Does power lie in a community (of professionals, ethnic groups, castes, etc.)?

C. Wright Mills on Power

Studies of power structure are available in the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, etc. In particular, communities, political parties and bureaucratic organizations have been studied by social scientists from their respective perspectives. Here, we may mention C. Wright Mills' book *The Power Elite* in particular as it has generated a serious discourse on national power structure in the context of American society. According to Mills, America is ruled

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by economic, political and military elites. The economic elite represents the top strata of big business and corporation management. The political elite represents key figures in the formal apparatus of government. The military elite comprises of the top echelon of the armed services.

Mills' view is that economic component of the power elite is a decisive one. As such, Mills' analysis of power elite resembles with the Marxist framework as both consider the economic component most significant determinant. However, Mills differs from Marx as he observes that the leadership in these three elite groups is increasingly interchangeable, hence, emergence of a system of interlocking directorates of economic, political and military elites. "All three groups mix with each other in a variety of both informal and official contacts. There is cohesion and impermeability of the hierarchy of elites. One of the criticisms of Mills' "economic elite dominance" "hypothesis" is Arnold Rose's "multi-influence hypothesis", which essentially confirms a pluralistic model of political relations. One can say that both at the national and micro levels, multiple influences work in shaping the structure of power elite. To a considerable extent, there are cohesive elites, they are variegated, as non-economic factors also affect them; and there is a pluralistic power structure.

Lastly, at the conceptual level, the views expressed by Bertrand Russell, in the book *Power*, are useful in understanding of power as key to a man's desires. He writes : "Of the infinite desires of men, the chief are the desires for power and glory." He rejects the Marxian notion of the economically determined power, which is largely supported by Mills as well. Love for power is the cause of the activities that are important in social affairs of a society. The forms of power include wealth, ornaments, civil authority, influence and opinion. These forms of power are autonomous and irreducible. The laws of social dynamics are laws of power dynamics. *Love for power* is not evenly distributed in society. In a way, Russell's explanation is psychological as power is considered by him as an innate energy in man. Rajendra Sharma writes : "More than a psychological phenomenon, power is a socially and culturally structured reality. Power over man is a universal phenomenon, so is to power man, but these are not psychological traits or motives, these are historical processes and are structured by forces and events of human civilization."

There could be multiple sources of power, including ideological, economic, military and political. It also matters how one looks at power. Power could be socially an integrative mechanism, a hierarchical phenomenon, a yardstick of interpersonal behaviour, and a multidimensional normal and evaluative aspect. For example, power could be used for communication, language, cognitive structures, and a tool for a critique of modernity. For example, Michel Foucault talks of power as a medium and power technologies, including therapies, expert opinions, social technologies, curriculum tests, research reports, data banks, proposal for reforms, etc., for new genealogy of knowledge.

Power and Society in India

Society and polity are closely linked in India. Economy is undoubtedly an important factor influencing politics and social status. But its role and significance are somewhat hazy and less effective. Power emanates in India from two main sources : socio-cultural fabric, and political structures. In the first case, caste, religion, language, region, etc., play decisive role in access to positions of power and authority. In the second, institutions such as Panchayati Raj, municipal bodies, State Assembly and Lok Sabha provide opportunities to the people to enter into these arenas of power politics. Political parties are generally in the forefront at the time of elections for these bodies.

Primordial sentiments, particularly relating to caste and region, are appropriated in the game of power. Caste, class and power nexus works in the interest of those who can make maximum use of support of their caste/community, economic standing and patronage of concerned political party and its leadership. New forms of power blocs (NDA, UPA, etc.), alignments (social

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engineering), and strategies indicate flexibility of Indian State and Constitution. Caste and class have surfaced in new forms. Power is socially based with new contradictions, resilience and new patterns of domination and subjugation. Fierce competition between political parties, factions, castes, communities, and individuals characterize power politics in contemporary India.

Gender

Earlier I wrote : "Patriarchy legitimizes culturally-backed biophysiological differences between men and women as the basis of unequal access to resources, opportunities and rewards and to rights. Status inequality between men and women is an age-old phenomenon reinforced through patriarchy and its institutions, gendered division of labour, and social institutions like marriage, dowry, property and inheritance, and subordination." It has been observed that patriarchy is not just a matter of the differential distribution of power, it is built into the very mechanics of production (a patriarchal mode of production). Male-female inequalities persist in the face of development. New forms of subordination and gender asymmetry have superseded the old, leaving patriarchal control undisturbed in India.

Defining Patriarchy

Michael Mann observes that the social stratification theory centres around three nuclei : social class, social status/ideology and political power. Other aspects of stratification are considered contingental and non-structural. Gender relations are not viewed as part of the core of stratification. Gender relations exist in a structured way. Women obtain their position in social stratification from the dominant male of their household. Mann identifies five main areas of stratification which influence gender and are influenced by gender. These are : (1) the individual, (2) the family and household, (3) the division of labour between the sexes, (4) social classes, and (5) nation-states. The relations between gender and stratification are mediated by each of these different "nuclei". Further, Mann argues that gender and stratification can no longer be kept in separate compartments, as stratification is gendered and gender is stratified. There are no non-gendered stratification relations in modern society, and despite weak patriarchy, a different form of gender domination exists. Mann defines a patriarchal society as follows :

In the "private" sphere of the household, the patriarch enjoys arbitrary power over all junior males, all females and all children. In the "public" sphere, power is shared between male patriarchy according to whatever other principles of stratification operate. No female holds any formal public position of economic, ideological, military or political power. Indeed, females are not allowed into this "public" realm of power. Whereas many, perhaps most, men expect to be patriarchs at some point in their life cycles, no women hold formal power. Within the household they may influence their male patriarch informally, but this is their only access to power. Contained within patriarchy are two fundamental nuclei of stratification : the household/family/linage and the dominance of the male gender. These coexist in any real society with social classes and other stratification groups.



A patriarchal society is one in which power is held by male heads of households. There is also clear separation between the "public" and the "private" spheres of life.

Further, Mann says : "This is an ideal type. Yet it has not been so far from historical reality." Mann cites concrete examples, including Europe up to the 18th century AD. Three qualifications, however, may be mentioned here : (1) customary protection of women against cruelty; (2) informal powers of women; and (3) exploitable spaces between families. But, these are not refutations of patriarchy.

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Nor these granted women a basis for collective action. Thus, social stratification was two-dimensional : (i) the two nuclei of household/family/lineage and the dominance of the male gender, and (ii) the "public" stratification nuclei (classes, military elites, etc.). The latter was connected to the former, as the aggregates of household/family/ lineage heads were represented in the "public" sphere.

Distinction between "male" and "female" is bio-physiological; it is value-neutral. However, when a male is referred as a "man", and a female as a "woman", a value is attached to the two, in terms of superior and inferior human beings. Postmodernists both Foucault and Derrida recognize connection between language and power. Both attack such a rationality of postmodernism. To say that women are identified with the irrational and men with the rational implies dualisms of Enlightenment thought, e.g., reflected in the basic feminine/masculine dualism. This dualism is not symmetrical. "Woman is always defined as that which is not man; she is 'minus male', who is identified by the qualities that she lacks." Language establishes and maintains the basic gender identity that creates female inferiority."

Through language, women are told that they should have those qualities by which they remain "feminine". In this sense, sex and gender become intertwined. Today, feminist writings focus at separating biological sex from imposed gender roles in linguistic practice. The language practice forges a connection between personality identity and gender identity. Children come to know this right from their early life. They learn distinctly about "male personhood" and "female personhood". And personhood is not merely tied to biological sex. It is linked, rather, to a specific gender identity — a "feminine" identity. This identity is irrationality. Men and women learn separate languages, even if they know each other's language, women would not use men's language. Men are considered embodiment of rationality; and women are seen as having emotion, feeling and irrational. The male-female dichotomy leaves for women two unacceptable options : (1) either they can talk like women and be "feminine" but irrational, or (2) they can talk like men and be rational but "unfeminine". Thus, male-female dualism is a culturally created power dichotomy.



Did u know? "Female" speaks of sex, and "feminine" means that is central to an understanding of the nature of the oppression of women.

Through the control of language, men have dominated not only women but every aspect of the world in which we live. This is done (i) through linguistic practices in the knowledge-creating institutions along gendered lines, and (ii) by connection between the real and the rational. For example, women were denied education, particularly in Sanskritic studies, in India, and also in other societies learning of Latin language. J. Derrida states that *speech* is privileged over writing in the West. But, when speech or oral expression becomes a common feature, then, the disprivileged challenge to the dichotomy, to the superiority of speech. In the second case, there is connection between the real and the rational. "Concepts formed from the male point of view create a male reality; both the real and the rational are defined in exclusively male terms." Thus, the male definition of reality hides women's experiences, makes them invisible. It also means that women are inarticulate because language they use is derivative of male definitions of reality. The claim that term "man" is generic, that is, it includes both the experience of both man and woman, is false. Men's experiences are not of "mankind", but only of "men". Since the Enlightenment, reason and rationality have been defined in exclusively masculine terms, "man of reason" is gendered, not generic. *Public Man, Private Woman* theory is serious attack all over the world. No more private/public, irrational/rational/human/not fully human, etc., are unacceptable dichotomies.

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Gender and Stratification

To begin with, males assert the biological inferiority of women even today. Female disorderliness is brought under control by education, producing modesty and humility, by honest work and the subordination of the wife to her husband. Married women are deprived of certain forms of independence, even regarding their dowries and possessions. They are confined to the domestic sphere. These are the views even today held and practised considerably in most societies. One hardly finds any description, for example, in a work like *The Making of the English Working Class* by E.P. Thompson. His class analysis refers more or less exclusively to men. Even in the recent work of Eric Hobsbawn one finds reference to experiences of middle-class women. Only very recently, the idea of "home"/"home making" has come up in a positive sense recognizing contribution of women. The notice of "housewife" has also emerged that she looks home and children, performing a very important task, and her husband goes out to earn money, as his duty towards his wife and children.

Domestic patriarchy has come with the concept of home and home making. Women's right to proper recognition of her work at home has been recognized to a great extent all over the world. Now women go out for work, have their savings, and a control over what they earn. Most men are not hostile towards women's work. Despite these very notable changes, the man's work determines where the couple lives, and how much of their lives are organized. R.W. Connell calls such a situation "gender regimes", and Harriet Bradley gives it the name "gendered work cultures". Some types of work are believed to be "appropriate" for women; and women are debarred from various types of occupations by informal barriers and restrictions.

Marriage is a gendered and unequal division of labour. In Indian society, husband starts controlling his wife's activities, and also starts imposing upon her some of his own activities. Helping the wife by the husband is considered an inferior task. The modern technology has certainly reduced the manual load on women, but even then gendered division of work persists. Women, despite part-time or full-time work, are not able to get equal footing with men because men do not participate equally in parenthood and domestic labour.

Michael Mann emphatically states that gender divisions are considered as important, but not really integrated into the core of stratification theory, namely, social class, status and political power. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, individual, family and household, division of labour between the sexes, social classes and the nation-states are mediated by each of them. No doubt, patriarchy has taken a new form due to modern industry, interchangeability of men-women occupations, equal democratic rights and adult suffrage, and even then "neo-patriarchy" has emerged due to newly found control mechanisms by men over women in industry, politics and civic life. Women have become "individuals" like men, but they are gendered individuals through their connection with domesticity. Women are still in patriarchal family systems, they are also members of social class and affected by such class (caste) stratification. Thus, they belong to different, but to overlapping, stratification hierarchies. Their occupations cannot be meaningfully combined into a single scale. However, gender and stratification can no longer be kept in separate compartments. "Stratification is now gendered and gender is stratified."

Gender and Stratification in Indian Society

"Gender regimes" refer to inequalities of gender in family, work and state related activities. Gender is reproduced within such a complex of institutions through "male reason" and the dichotomy of "maleness" and "femaleness". Connell writes : "A gender regime is a cluster of practices, ideological and material, which in a given social context, acts to construct various images of masculinity and feminity and thereby to consolidate forms of gender inequality." For Indian women, N. Kabeer observes that gender hierarchies have implications for the production of knowledge and the allocation of resources. Hence, a need for the "deconstruction" of conventional

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concepts. Kabeer says : "Ideology is gendered as well as sexed." Class mediates the way in which biological difference is translated into gender inequality. Hence, gender factor in the stratification theory is essential, supporting Mann's point of view. Even status which women extract from their own achievements, such as education and salaried jobs, is not fully recognized and are attributed to the husbands and their families or to the parents of the upwardly mobile women. Women thus enjoy only derived status despite their own individualistic gains and achievements. And all women do not enjoy equal status, they are differentiated among themselves based on their status among female members in the family.

The idea of *purush jati* and *stree jati* is quite there among the members of our society. Nita Kumar suggests four ways to deal with the question of women : (1) to make women the object of human "gaze", (2) to see women as males, (3) to focus on the patriarchical, ideological, discursive structures, and (4) to look at the hidden, subversive ways in which women exercise their agency. Kumar questions the understanding of "women as subjects". She pleads for replacement of the masculine, rational, free subject by a feminine entity in all walks of life. For inferior and subordinate status of women, our value system, loopholes in the Constitution and law, violence, aggression and crimes against women are also responsible. Dowry, child marriage and prohibition of widow remarriage continue to lower down the position of women in Indian society. Patriarchy and caste-class hierarchy have combined with a consequence of gendering of social life.

Education and employment among women of the urban middle classes have raised their socio-economic status. More than employment, women are demanding autonomy by seeking their identity as persons/members of society equal to male members. More representation in jobs and reservation in civic bodies, state legislatives and Lok Sabha are being sought. Demand for representation in PRIs and civic bodies has been accepted under the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, respectively. For state legislatures and Lok Sabha, the demand has been in doldrums for quite some time.

Some women have also taken up entrepreneurship and other independent economic activities. In most cases, however, they remain *secondary earners*. Real empowerment, equal to men, is yet to come to women even in the metropolises and big towns. Women continue to have *real* and *imagined* faces because of the overarching patriarchal nature of Indian society. How to reduce "gendering" of relations, work, decision-making in everyday life? Women do not need sympathy or mercy of the male members in the family and society. What they need is right to own and control resources equal to men. "Statization" and patronage to provide employment, education and health care for women is a top-down manner to analyse their problems. Effective property rights may reduce women's economic, social and political subordination and bring about more equal gender relations. A resource theory, rather than the reform theory, is the main concern.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity and Culture

Anthony Giddens has discussed in detail ethnicity and race. He writes: "Ethnicity refers to cultural practices and outlooks that distinguish a given community of people. Members of ethnic groups see themselves as culturally distinct from other groupings in a society, and are seen by those others to be so." The main characteristics of distinction based on ethnicity are language, history or ancestry (real or imagined), religion, and styles of dress or adornment as perceived by Giddens. Ethnic differences are *wholly learned*. Most modern societies have numerous different ethnic groups. Many societies are today *plural societies* having several large ethnic groupings, culturally and socially distinct from one another. Ethnic distinctions are rarely "natural". Generally, they are associated with marked inequalities of wealth and power, as well as with antagonism between groups. Giddens poses the following questions regarding ethnic divisions and tensions and conflicts :

1. Why are ethnic differences so often associated with tension and conflict?

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2. What accounts for ethnic prejudice and discrimination?
3. Why do ethnic antagonisms often centre upon "social differences"?
4. Are societies marked by a high degree of pluralism bound to remain unequal?

The Concept of Minorities

Another related concept is that of *minorities*, which are generally ethnic groups. Sociologically speaking, a minority group as mentioned by Giddens is :

1. Its members are disadvantaged, as a result of discrimination against them by others.
2. Members of the minority have some sense of group solidarity, of "belonging together".
3. Minority groups are usually to some degree physically and socially isolated from the larger community.

In addition to these criteria, minority groups are always to some extent ethnically distinct from the majority.

The number of members of a minority group may be politically significant, but socially and culturally it may not be so. For example, Parsis, Jains, Sikhs, etc., are numerically not so preponderant, but economically they are quite well-off, and are also ahead of other communities in terms of education and socio-cultural awakening. Thus, the notion of a minority group is not simply a statistical one, it is more of a sociological nature.

Defining Ethnicity

There is a long trajectory of discourse on ethnicity as it is a culturally specific conception of the social world. As such, the idea of ethnicity is immanently transformative. Always, ethnicity is related to some basic aspects of society such as language, religion, region and styles of life, etc. When people having differences in terms of these aspects of social life, and are ranked as higher and lower or superior and inferior, ethnic stratification emerges as a social reality. The proponents of ethnic stratification consider the idea of ethnicity as a functioning mode of organization. Moderation of unequal conflicting ethnic segments is also an ongoing process. Structure and process are thus ontological basis of ethnicity. The fact is that ethnicity is a question of emphasis. To what extent one can stretch the criteria, namely, language and religion, to distinguish between people as higher and lower ? If a situation becomes too rigid causing immobility and hardship, anti-ethnic agitations and movements are organized to redress the cultural and social oppression and discrimination.

Ethnicity is thus a set of cultural areas or complexes, and these are synonymous with ethnic groups. Cultural representations, differences, boundaries, units/communities are created based on ethnic criteria and divides. On the one hand, one can see cultural affinities, and on the other, antipathies based on ethnic segregation. Such a situation is there because "I"/"we" and "other" complex gets roots based on ethnic differences. There are different mechanisms and rationales of ethnicity. A simple idealist approach to ethnicity is insufficient. A materialist (class) approach is equally significant. However, ethnicity is not race. As we have discussed earlier that race is pre-given, a natural hierarchy, generally based on the biological/physiological conception. And, the concept of ethnicity is seen as a medium of expression of social relationship, and it is not an immutable or static medium. Ethnicization is a cultural process, which explains ground conditions or cultural meta-context and also ideology underlying ethnic stratification.

The studies of the Blacks and Whites in the USA imply both "racial" and "ethnic" dimensions of stratification and inequality. More than the stratification aspect, ethnicity is used as a means of identification. It is a way to know the "cultural other". There is a Greek word - *ethnos*, which means "people" or "nation". In fact, *ethnos* referred to a range of situations in which a collectivity of humans lived and acted together. Ethnicity and ethnicization as such become mechanisms of

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distribution and redistribution of resources and opportunities in a given society. Ethnicity becomes an issue in everyday discourse as the politics of group identification and advantage. Collective interests and actions are geared to extract maximum share in societal resources. Such a situation may also result into ethnic conflicts. In some societies the vulgarization of ethnic game has invited "ethnic cleansing". "Groupness" as characterized by "distinctive cultural traits" is thus another way of defining ethnicity. The trajectory today implies from "race" to "culture" to "ethnicity". The word "tribe" is giving way to the use of the term "ethnic group". Regional linguistic groups are being labelled as "nations" or distinct cultural formations. The dimension of hegemony of the dominant group or numerical strength of a given group vis-a-vis a small linguistic/regional entity is referred to as majority-minority syndrome.

Ethnicization

F. Barth talks of ethnic groups and boundaries as "the cultural stuff", and a processual phenomenon. Barth relates ethnicity with boundaries of identification and differentiation between ethnic collectivities. He refers to ethnicity as a materialist, individualist and narrowly instrumentalist phenomenon. It has entered deep into politics, decision-making and goal orientation. The following points may be noted in the context of ethnicity and ethnicization :

1. Cultural differentiation
2. Shared meaning
3. Not fixed or unchaning nature
4. Social identity - collective and individual

Thus, ethnic groups are characterized by self-perception, others' perception, and participation in shared activities. Some scholars consider ethnicity as both source of strength and conflict. Such a dualism becomes the basis of its stability and change as a socio-cultural phenomenon.

Ethnic Consciousness and Conflict

Another issue is related to ethnic consciousness and conflict. Sri Lanka is an appropriate example of ethnic conflict between Tamils led by the Liberation Tigers for Tamil Ealam (LTTE) and the government led by the dominant Sinhalese community. The ethnic strife has continued for nearly three decades. Behind the ethnic conflict are economic, political and cultural issues. The Tamils are discriminated against the Sinhalese as alleged by the LTTE. The questions are : Are ethnic groups classes ? Is the ethnic stratification the same as the class stratification ? Can a given ethnic group be seen as a dominant or ruling class and the other as a subservient class ? Recently, in May 2009, during a prolonged battle with the government forces and the LTTE, Prabhakaran, the strongman of the LTTE was killed. The LTTE has virtually acceded the defeat, and demand for a separate Tamil nation has died down, at least at present.

Answers to these questions are : Today, human society is polyethnic and multiethnic. Interethnic cleavages, competition and conflict have become a common tendency. Ethnic demands are made in the name of interests of a religious, linguistic and regional community. Ethnic community is projected as a nation. We may ask, for example, are Dalits an ethnic category ? Are tribes ethnic entities ?

With regard to the Jharkhand movement in Bihar it was observed that the tribes were moving from ethnicity to regionalism by way of a demand for the state of Jharkhand. Now, the question is : Have tribes merged into a single entity, which may be called Jharkhandi ? Are they no more concerned about themselves as Mundas, Oraons, Hos, Santhals, etc. ? It seems that with the realization of the goal of the formation of the Jharkhand state, the tribais are today more of socio-cultural entities rather than political fora as they were mobilized to be so before the formation of the state of Jharkhand.

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Ethnicity and Class

Elements of ethnicity can be perceived in class differentiation and vice versa. There is class differentiation within and between ethnic groups. Interplay between ethnicity and class is found in all polyethnic societies. Ethnic groups have formed associations for protection and promotion of their interests and welfare. The people of Kerala have their voluntary associations in Chennai. In Delhi, innumerable ethnic associations can be found from various provinces of India. Sikh ethnicity is well known within and outside Punjab as well. In Assam, one can see Assamese and Bengali ethnic identities as competitive cultural and political forces. Movements like SNDP, Yadava, Akali, Jharkhand, Gorkhaland, Bodoland, Assam, Telangana, Uttaranchal, Lingayat, Sri Vaishanava, Bhagat and Dalit movements are rooted into ethnic game in one way or other. It is not a question of the apparent or real goals of these movements. What we see is that in all these movements "community" or "ethnicity" was considered appropriate for mobilizing the people to support and strengthen the declared cause and concern by the leadership.

From the above examples, we may ask : Can ethnicity be treated as a significant dimension of social stratification just like caste, class and power ? In our view, an ethnic group is a stratum along with class and power, hence, it has a structural basis, being a group of people in a given society. Besides this, ethnicity is also a cultural phenomenon as it is rooted into *sentiments*, which people share being a stock of people having certain common traits.

Difference between caste and ethnicity lies in the fact that caste is ascribed by birth, hence, it remains immutable or natural. Ethnicity can also be ascribed, determined by birth in a given ethnic community, and its characteristics, including language, religion, styles of life, etc. But it is also mutable by a way of change in language, religion, etc. People move away to far off places, and learn and adopt a new language and culture, and as such their ethnicity too is also transformed. The best example is the USA, where people from different parts of the world live and share language and culture. Thus, situational factors may change ethnic status and power.

Ethnicity and Power

There are both broad and narrow implications of ethnicity. The examples of the broad ethnic formations are : English, Japanese, Hindus, Muslims, etc. The narrow ethnic formations may be Bodos, Santhals, Manipuris, or abstracted entities, which are not really ethnic categories, they are more of ethnic misnomers. These are caste clusters like AJGAR (Ahir, Jat, Gurjar and Rajput), Forwards, Backwards, Dalits and Minorities. It has also become a common practice to express regional identities in ethnic idiom such as Oriya, Tamil, Telugu, Assamia, Marathi, Gujarati, etc. What we need is to study sociology of ethnicity and politics of ethnicity. The two could be studied independent of each other, and at the same time, the two seem to be intertwined phenomena of the same reality.

"Sons of the Soil" movement, the one presently seen in Maharashtra under the leadership of Shiv Sena and its splinter group, conversion, migration, territoriality, dual labour market, ethnic division of labour (for example, in Assam and Punjab) have all accelerated ethnicization of economic and political interests and aspirations, cleavages and conflicts.

To the extent, ethnicity is expressed and appropriated as a means of social protest and social criticism, providing reasoning to moral and political ideas, and contains a critical spirit, renaissance, humanism, etc. When ethnicity acquires the character of a tool in the hands of new status-seekers, the pyramid climbers, it takes the shape of resource in the hands of vested interests. The need is to see the values and norms, leaders and followers, and the nature of interaction in any given ethnicized activity/movement/protest. Forces behind ethnicism, and also its counter-protest could reveal the real character of ethnicization of issues and goals involved therein.

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Race

Most modern societies have numerous ethnic and racial groups. India, the USA, the UK, Canada, etc., are *plural societies*. Economically and politically, ethnic and racial groups may perform the same functions in a particular society, though culturally they are generally distinct from each other. However, in reality, ethnic and racial differences are also marked by inequalities of power and wealth, tension and conflict, and prejudice and discrimination. There are also ethnic and racial minorities, and as such they are bound to have unequal access to opportunities and status distinctions. Discrimination based on ethnic and racial considerations has been reported from both highly industrialized and less industrialized societies. But ethnic or racial minorities are not necessarily backward economically and socially. In India, some ethnic groups are minorities, but economically they are far more ahead of the majority groups. Parsis, Christians, Sikhs are generally better off than other groups in their respective regions.

Defining Race

Generally, it is believed that people can be separated biologically into different races. Some anthropologists have categorized people into four or five major races. Such classifications are mainly based on the colour of skin, shape of hair, physique, etc. The science of genetics has proved that these are only conjectures and not valid characteristics. Population inbreeding and degree of contact between people could create physical differences. The same segment of population may have a variety of physical traits. Physical differences between human beings are partly inherited, but generally such differences are appropriated for social discrimination and prejudice. Anthony Giddens observes : "Racial differences, therefore, should be understood as *physical variations singled out* by the members of a community or society as *ethnically significant*." More than "race", "racism" is practised through a false attribution of inherited characteristics of personality.

Physical anthropologists have dealt with the question of "race" in great detail based on physical characteristics of different sections of population. Anthropologist A.L. Kroeber believes : "Race is a valid biological concept. It is a group united by heredity : a breed or genetic strain or subspecies." Further, Kroeber says that it is not a valid socio-cultural concept, nor usable in socio-cultural situations. All human beings are *homo sapiens*; how they have become different types is not known.

Classification of Races

Based on certain traits, such as stature or bodily height, cephalic index, or the ratio of the length and breadth of the head, nasal index, relation of breath and length of nose, prognathism, or the degree of the protrusion of the jaws, capacity of the skull, the texture of the hair, hairiness of the body, hair colour and eye colour, steatopygia, or a heavy deposit of fat in the buttocks, etc., classifications of different races have been made out. There are three primary categories of races : (1) Caucasian, Caucasoid, or Europoid; (2) Negroid; and (3) Mangoloid. These three are also referred to as "White", "Black" and "Yellow" races, respectively. The three main groups account for more than ninetenths of all the nations and tribes of the world. Each of the three great primary stocks falls into several natural divisions. Primary stocks and races are as follows :

1. Caucasian or "White"
   - Nordic
   - Alpine
   - Mediterranean
   - Hindu
2. Mangoloid or "Yellow"
   - Mangolian
   - Malaysian
   - American Indian

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3. Negroid or "Black"
   Negro
   Melanesian
   Pigmy Black
   Bushman
4. Doubtful Classification
   Australoid
   Veddoid (Indo-Austral)
   Polynesian
   Ainu

After discussing various classifications of races based on some specific physiological traits, Kroeber reiterates his view that "the term 'race' has here been used in its biological sense, for a group united in blood or heredity. A race is a subdivision of species and corresponds to a breed in domestic animals. Popularly, the word is used in a different sense; namely, that of population having any traits in common, be they hereditary or nonhereditary, biological or socio-cultural, organic or superorganic". Thus, Kroeber also enlarges the initial definition of race by way of incorporation of socio-cultural traits. Scientifically speaking, to say that there is the French race, the Anglo-Saxon race, the Gypsy race, the Jewish race, etc., is not correct.

Caste and Race Compared

In a recent study, Chris Smaje considers both "race" and "caste" as natural hierarchies, that is, people can be divided into ordered collectivities as *sui generis*. However, caste and race are not the same thing, the two have some differences and similarities as well. Three common points as under are discerned in the two institutions :

1. the separation or identity between persons and things;
2. conceptions of cosmic order and its relation to worldly diversity, particularly with respect to political boundaries; and
3. the character of the persons and the "substance" that they embody.

Both create certain tensions and conflicts vis-a-vis social processes. The very essence of the two institutions is against egalitarianism. Social science theories and conceptualizations are also free from the socio-cultural limitations of caste and race. In case of race, the physical traits are socially consequential. Smaje does not understand "race" principally in terms of somatic traits, but in terms of a specific engagement between political ideology and the colonial expansion of Europe. Race can be regarded as one of broader class of social phenomena that we might term as *essentialist* **identifications.**

Smaje is opposed to the idea that some actual, substantive quality or qualities exist which unambiguously and unfailingly differentiate some kinds of people from others. In other words, it opposes the idea that involves natural properties which define groups of people. Race inheres relations of a particular kind between persons – relations which are symbolized or denoted by the concept of "race". Race denotes categories or devices through which particular ideas of groupness are constituted. Thus, according to Smaje, race is not a given "natural" property, it is the idea of a relation, which is created in specific historical or social contexts, usually involving exclusion or discrimination of some kind. In reality, many societies practise "racism", without knowing fully connotations of the idea of race.

Kenan Malik observes that "the concept of race ... is not an expression of a single phenomenon or relationship. Rather it is a medium through which the changing relationship between humanity,

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society and nature has been understood in a variety of ways". Smaje questions this definition of race as *unchanging* medium or context of social relations, which are constantly changing. It seems that Malik argues that racism emerged in the 19th century as a rationale for inequality – in an age which espoused egalitarianism. In the 17th century, it was used for enslavement of labour. There have been a variety of "racisms" as it is obvious from the contemporary racial discourse. For Louis Dumont racism is simply an inherent human tendency towards discriminations of status. Gunnar Myrdal, certainly before Dumont, considers that racism is practised, for example, as an excuse for slavery in American society. The fateful word "race" is appropriated to deny inalienable rights of all men to freedom and equality of opportunity. Race prejudice is the perversion of equalitarianism — the apparent national creed of the Americans.

Racial hierarchy and individualist egalitarianism represent two poles of a single socio-cultural system, characterized with capitalist production. In a secular political order, perpetuation of racism indicates a paradoxical situation in the modern world. Myrdal tries to explain how biological racism has been transformed into a socio-cultural, political and economic system of deprivations and discriminations.

Racism

"Racist mentality" aroused in Europe around 1800-1815. Hostile attitudes towards the Jews gave birth to new beliefs. Theological dogmatism was opposed by way of belief in Science and Logic. Jews were addressed as a "race", having characteristics such as bad smell, hereditary diseases, hidden illnesses, and other loathsome defects. German patriotism and pride in Nazism resulted into framing of racial laws. Racial conceptions and stereotypes have found their way into philosophical and theological thought in the 19th century Germany, France and other countries of Europe. In fact, there is a close relationship between the rise of nationalism and that of racism. Rivalry between Christians and Jews is well known as the two competed in all fields. Superiority-inferiority complex haunted the two communities.

The protagonists of racism have argued that "race" is a kind of magic key to universal historical secrets. "All is race, there is no other truth". "Race is key to history." In Great Britain and France the notion that "coloured races" were congenitally inferior was spread out by powerful economic interests. A sort of nexus was worked out between capitalist interests and psychological needs vis-a-vis racism. Even in the writings of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud references to racial thinking can be found.

According to Peter Robb, "the concept of race included any essentialising of groups of people which held them to display inherent, heritable, persistent or predictive characteristics, and which thus had a biological or quasi-biological basis". There may be different kinds of race theory, reflecting various understandings of biology, history or societies. "The idea of race is a form of this process (essentilisation) applied to humans." "Racism occurs when characteristics are assumed from generalizations and are not verifiable. Its crucial measures include the degrees of mutability or plurality admitted to exist within categories, and the arbitrariness of their outer limits. But, above all, racism implies a *ranking* according to the biological origins and features already mentioned."

Race and Indian Society

The question is : How far biology can be considered to have been *essential*? In the context of Indian society, skin colour, birth, sexual relations, etc., were considered the bases of quasi-racial discrimination and stereotyping. *Varna* hierarchy reflected considerably racism. But it is difficult to say that these categories were wholly or clearly biological. The *mleccha* was racially stigmatized. "Untouchability" too reflected racial elements through *exclusion* of certain groups from the community. The Hindu idea of *dharma* as inherited roles also reflected racism. Thus, in some way, the terms such as "lineage", "blood", "breeding", *jati*, *varna*, though quite distinct from "race",

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reflected some elements of the concepts of "race" and "racism". Religious identities too in a sense reflected racial elements.

A very important point is : "The relation of caste to race is not simply a question of whether the groups are in fact racially different, but rather that there seems to be some disposition to attribute racial difference to even the most marginal cues in caste and caste-like situations." Why it is that pariah groups engage in the same kinds of occupation ? Why are tanners, leather workers and butchers frequently pariah groups ? Such a pattern of segregation and exclusion is found in both caste and race. However, caste has been resilient, adaptive and discrete system, and as such biological or quasi-biological elements do not matter as much as they do in race, though *birth* continues to be there as significant ascriptive element in Indian society.

13.2 Emerging Patterns of Social Stratification in India

The Marx-Weber Syndrome

Studies of social stratification in India have generally been influenced by Karl Marx and Max Weber. Marx was for a revolutionary change in the capitalist system of class and stratification, whereas Weber advocated more for stability of the system. While for Marx, "class" was the sole determinant of social and political power, for Weber, economic, social and political orders were not only independent of each other but also influenced and reshaped each other. Marx characterized a class society by contradiction between the rich and the poor or the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Capital and labour were irreconcilable entities for Marx. However, Weber thought of economic, social and political orders as three dimensions or forms of stratification and hierarchy. Market situation created a class situation as the competition in the market between sellers and buyers determined success and failures of the actors, hence difference and hierarchy. For Marx, status and power were closely related to class and, in fact, emanated from class. Class was considered as the basis and status and power were thought of as superstructures.

Both the Marxian and Weberian approaches have echoed in the studies of caste, class and power. However, a number of studies have been there deriving clues from the structuralist perspective as given by C. Levi-Strauss and Louis Dumont on the one hand, and from the functionalist view of British and the American scholars, on the other. Despite these influences, some studies have used indological and nativistic ideas and categories in their studies of caste, kinship and class. We would take up briefly these different viewpoints in our understanding of social stratification. Here, we are tempted to go by Dipankar Gupta's view. He writes : "Stratification is about both hierarchy and difference. If hierarchy strains to establish stability, social differences constantly pose a threat to order. To understand better the dimensions of inequality and the social trajectories they trace, hierarchy and differences must be conjointly examined in any study of social stratification." By studying together hierarchy (order) and difference (change), we can better understand change, social mobility and transformation. Closed and open systems of stratification are concomitant with hierarchy and difference.

Operationalization of Conceptual Schemes

The indicators of status, levels of equality and inequality, occupational differentiation or degree of homogeneity and heterogeneity of groups in status hierarchy, and interactional variables have been used in the studies of social stratification as analysed by Yogendra Singh. As such, stratification in India is multifaceted, multi-causal and multidisciplinary phenomenon.

There is a coexistence of social, economic, political and cultural factors in status determination, and also any one of these can be found more effective or dominant cause than the remaining ones. Thus, the *dominance* of one or two factors over others and the nature of nexus between different factors and changes therein needs to be ascertained in a given society and at a given time.

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"Change" and "process" have become focal points of analysis in social stratification. Focus on the study of differentiation, evolution and change in caste, class and power may hold the key to our understanding of social stratification. The Marxist scholars as well as activists look at the origin and evolution of caste from the point of economic relations. Caste is seen as a mechanism of exploitation in the hands of the upper castes. Modes of production is the key to the theory of stratification. The essence of the Marxist analysis is that explanation emanates from the structure of social reality, and it is not static. The Marxist approach is not only evolutionary, it is also emancipatory and hermeneutic in its essence. Several scholars have studied nationalism, caste, class, land relations, etc., from the viewpoint of Marxism.

Following the Marxian view, it can be stated emphatically that the existential conditions determine hierarchy and inequality. To quote Marx and Engels, "As individuals, express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and *how* they produce." Thus, Marx speaks of both the *structure* of existential conditions, and also of the *process* of change in these conditions. Through his analysis of evolution of society, state and forces of production, Marx provides a vivid account of socio-economic differentiation.

Innumerable studies of caste and class reveal that caste has acquired a new form, and a different system of relations. The immutable and rigid system has become quite flexible. The inevitable phenomena have become optional or they have disappeared. Similarly, the class character of Indian society has also considerably changed due to the emergence of the middle class, disproportionate to the upper and the lower classes. "The emergence of the new middle class, disproportionate to the forces of production, and also to the size (s) of the upper and lower classes, has forged a new nexus between caste and class. The embourgeousiement of the principal agricultural castes has established a new direction between caste, class and politics. The divide between the traditionally dominant and the emerging sections has acquired a new character."


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Antagonism and contradictions are the causes of differentiation and change in stratification in India.

Thus, according to the Marxian approach, structuring of social inequality is a continuous process. It is a life process of the placement of individuals, families and groups. What people do as members of their families and collectivities (castes and communities) is not independent of their existential conditions. What they do in structural terms is their social life. What is its mode of production ? What units (classes, groups, collectivities) are produced as a result of certain social (material) conditions ? What is the nature of social interaction between the groups produced through this social and historical process ? A key to find answers to these questions may be found in the proposition: each generation continues the traditional activity in completely changed circumstances, and modifies the old circumstances with a completely changed activity. As such, the Marxian perspective can explain the following :

1. continuity of tradition and emergence of modernity side by side in the field of social stratification;
2. determination of social relations by the direction of social change; and
3. coexistence of the structure and process of social stratification.

The Marxist approach has often been applied in the agricultural and industrial domains with a view to know the nature of production relations and the class structure emanating from them. Some important conclusions drawn from the studies of agrarian relations are :

1. The proletarianization of the poor peasantry with the increasing concentration of village resources in few hands,

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2. The shift in the mode of production in agriculture from family-based subsistence farming to market-oriented hired worker-based agriculture.
3. The increasing diversification of economic and social life in the village.

These are new parameters of status and social mobility in the countryside replacing the traditional criteria related to sanskritization, westernization and the dominant caste.

It is also reported that based on the production-exchange relations rural society can be divided into: (a) semi-proletariat, (b) small holders, (c) farmers, and (d) rentiers. In most studies today the concepts of class and mode of production are used to explain agrarian stratification and its transformation. However, some hardcore Marxists believe that there are only two classes : (a) class of big landowners (including rich peasants); and (b) class of agricultural labourers (including landless labourers). It is undeniable that the middle peasants as a class category have acquired considerable significance. Class-based power relations and dominant castes too influence rural stratification system. Rural class structure and class relations can also be seen in terms of production, indebtedness and asset structure. As such, there are : (a) big, (b) medium, (c) petty, (d) landless peasants, and (e) landlords. Distribution of assets corroborates class stratification.

Stratification of peasants is understood mainly in terms of the mode of production in agriculture. Based on the landholding and resources, the agrarian hierarchy comprises : (a) landless agricultural labourers, (b) small peasants, (c) middle peasants, (d) rich peasants, and (e) landlords (mainly absentee). Thus, both landholdings and resources are considered as the main criteria for using attributes and interaction in the understanding of agrarian hierarchy. In agrarian stratification, there are old issues and new explanation and new issues and old explanation. *Leader-landlord nexus* is also seen because the local leaders are landlords as well. The leaders are also employers of labour, and they come from a high social stratum, because the beneficiaries of the land reforms are mainly rich peasants. The historicity of a given region/sub-region and effective implementation of land reforms also determine the nature of agrarian hierarchy.

Analytically speaking, in contrast to the rural society, the urban society is divided into : (a) industrial bourgeoisie, (b) the middle class or petty bourgeoisie, further divided into upper, middle and lower middle classes, (c) the industrial proletariat, (d) semi-proletariat, and (e) lumpen proletariat. Thus, rural and urban phenomena are two distinct patterns of life. Country-town nexus has always been there, and therefore, despite distinctions between rural and urban settings, the rich and the poor are basically similar in both. Caste, class and power are common to the two settings. However, the two differ in terms of the contexts and extents of operation of a particular principle or a set of criteria/attributes. The structural and cultural differences make the two different phenomena.

Urban industrial social stratification is characterized by the professional and the working classes to a large extent. Professional classes reflect social and cultural differentiation or changes from tradition to modernity in the fields of occupation, industry and economy. Emergence of professional classes becomes a measure of social mobility. Urban industrial social stratification consists of the following classes :

(*a*) Upper class

(*b*) Upper-middle class

(*c*) Lower-middle class

(*d*) Working class

These classes are generally framed on the basis of income and occupation. Conceptually, an industrial society can be characterized, based on income and occupation, having a very open view of status, role and power allocation. Open relationships, competition, radicalism, innovation and utilitarianism-rationalism are the main features of an industrial society. Urban industrial

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stratification in India is a consequence of macro-structural processes of change, rural to urban migration, social mobility and increase in the number of urban industrial towns. The main points in the studies of urban industrial social stratification are : class and caste, occupation, income, education and class, social mobility and elite formation, professionals and working classes, middle classes, process of social change and status crystallization, dissonance and inconsistency, associations and trade unions. Workers, supervisors and managers, along with trade unions, informed groups and owners of industry, are the main units of the studies of industry.

Michel Lipton adds a new dimension to the understanding of urban industrial stratification. "Inequalities *within* rural areas also owe much to the urban biased nature of the development policy." Rural-born doctors, teachers, engineers and administrators serve the urban population. Surpluses from rural areas are extracted for the urban populace. Urban social stratification in terms of capital/labour relation can be characterized by capitalists, administrators, professionals, labour aristocracy and large landowners. On the contrary, there are small farmers and tenants, landless agricultural workers and members of the informal sector in the countryside. T.J. Byres contradicts Lipton's hypothesis by pinpointing rural bias as the main hinderance in India's industrialization. The sugar industry of India shows emergence of a mixed pattern of social stratification as it combines both agricultural and industrial elements.

The urban industrial classes are comprised of (a) the bourgeoisie/capitalist class, (b) middle classes and professional elites, and (c) working class.

Bourgeoisie/Capitalist Class

The bourgeoisie/capitalist class is characterized by :

1. concentration and private ownership of the means of production;
2. a free market for the sale and purchase of commodities and services;
3. formally free labour sold in the market as commodity;
4. the pursuit of profits by entrepreneurs for wages; and
5. the division of society into two opposed and antagonistic classes as a consequence of the exploitation and alienation of the labour from the means of production.

The property-owning, entrepreneurial, capitalist employer has emerged from a variety of sources, including the decline of the feudal system. Along with the bourgeoisie, the capitalist system has produced a *working class*. The worker is treated as a commodity. Though Marx refers to the bourgeoisie and the proletariat as the main antagonistic classes, he realizes the transition of society and the emergent role of the intermediate strata, situated between the workers and the industrial capitalists. He also realizes the increasing role of the managerial and ministerial classes, and the trade unions as a result of the transition from capitalism to socialism.

There is differentiation between and within the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and the working class. Class inequality is not simply economistic. However, economic groupings in the form of classes and domination of one class over the other are found in all societies irrespective of the level of their industrialization. Capitalist society has undergone vast changes over a period of its long journey. Professional salaried management and middle classes have grown quite fast due to new economy and state apparatus.

The Indian bourgeoisie has never been a monolith and its character has partly been determined by the colonial rule and partly by the class character of the Indian National Congress. India's freedom, industrial policy of India and the re-creation of India's economy have reinvented the Indian bourgeoisie in the post-independence period. The Indian bourgeoisie comprises two categories : (a) the comprador, and (b) small and medium national bourgeoisie. The comprador character of the big bourgeoisie and a similar though latent tendency of the national bourgeoisie resulted in guided industrialization.

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Entrepreneurs are also a significant stratum in the scheme of social stratification. Earlier, moneylending and trading were taken up even by the landlords and substantial cultivating families. The castes and communities which were earlier engaged in non-mercantile pursuits have taken up entrepreneurship. There were *peasant entrepreneurs*, and there were also upper caste manual and agricultural workers. Today, entrepreneurship is not confined to agriculture, business and industry; it has spread to the domains of medicine, science, government service and teaching, etc. Entrepreneurship has linkages with caste, community, region and religion. For example, in carpet manufacturing in Uttar Pradesh, Hindus, Muslims, Jains and Sikhs are engaged. Banias, Muslims and Rajputs dominate the carpet manufacturing. In eastern Uttar Pradesh, R.S. Singh finds a close tie between landownership, leadership and entrepreneurship, and about three-fourth of the entrepreneurs belong to three upper castes, namely, Brahmins, Rajputs and Bhumihars. In Rajasthan, there are tribal entrepreneurs. In Kolkata, Mahisyas, a peasant caste, have dominated the engineering industry surpassing both Brahmins and Kayasthas. Thus, entrepreneurship has emerged as an avenue and a new direction of status determination.

Middle Classes and Professional Elites

In the pre-colonial period, the middle classes comprised the merchant, the artisan and the landed aristocracy. During the British period, the middle classes transformed and included the businessmen and entrepreneurs, industrialists, landed people, educated groups, professionals, etc. After independence, the structure of the middle classes has undergone a considerable change in terms of their size, functions and the role mainly due to the nature and character of the Indian state.

The middle classes are basically trained service groups and, therefore, ideally serve both the upper and the lower classes, though not making available their services actually in equal measure. The middle class is a class between labour and capital. The middle classes in India are a product of both the capitalist development and the state. The lower classes generally aspire for the status enjoyed by the middle classes by having access to lucrative white-collar jobs.

Elite formation in India is largely determined by the traditional social structure, particularly caste, religion, language, networks, income, occupational background, education, family background, etc. Select positions are usually taken by persons from select social strata. This select group controls the positions of prestige, power and responsibility. Higher education is still under the grip of upper castes, hence, it is status stabilizer, rather than an invader on status rigidities.

There are some studies of professionals such as lawyers, medical doctors and university teachers, but not many studies of technocrats, scientists and managers. Because of professionalization, these groups of people enjoy high social status. Formal criteria of social status are valued in these professional groups. Besides these groups, there are also intelligentsia, which include white-collar workers - from managers to clerks, workers in administrative services - from top to bottom, teachers - from university to school level, doctors and nurses, lawyers and judges, engineers and architects, writers, journalists, artists and other skilled workers, professionals, politicians, trade union leaders, etc. One common feature of all the middle classes is that they do not themselves produce any values in the material product sense of value. The middle classes depend for their economic gains on the ruling classes as well as the state. Intelligentsia are not homogeneous in terms of income, wealth and level of living. They are salaried people.

Thus, middle classes are different from industrialists, workers and peasants. There is a marked homogeneity among them. There are also structural distinctions among different middle classes. Some are more important for people than others, and they enjoy high prestige based on their professionalism.

Working Class

For Karl Marx the interests of the owners of the means of production and the wage-earning class were the central issue. Marx thought of ways and means of organizing the working class into a

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collective force to transform the capitalist system. Connections between social relations of production, social organization of the exploited classes and state power formed the main basis of the Marxian analysis. The organized working class becomes a power to reckon with as it represents its interests, hence becomes a political class as well.

Studies of Indian working class consider labour as a commodity, and the value of labour power as the basis of understanding the capitalist appropriation and exploitation of the surplus generated by the proletariat. Thus, the working class is highly stratified within and in relation to the capitalist and the middle classes. The working class has inequalities due to caste, ethnicity and gender. There is *labour aristocracy* on the one hand and the *pauperized labour* on the other.

The working class in terms of its socio-cultural position is comprised of the urban poor, living in slums and hutments. They are found working in industries, textile mills, sugar factories, plantations, railways, cottage industry and informal sector. Despite these differences, the working class constituted the urban and the rural poor both in the organized and informal sectors of economy. Labour market, labour legislation, caste and class background of workers, class consciousness, working class movements and their leadership are some of the issues taken in the studies of the working class in India. Role of owners, managers, superiors and leadership of trade unions and gender has been studied in relation to the working class.



What is the focal points of analysis in social stratification ?

Operationalization of the Weberian Approach

Though Max Weber represents a considerably different perspective while compared to Marxian thinking, yet Gerth and Mills observe, "Much of Weber's own work is of course informed by a skilful application of Marx's historical method". Weber criticizes Marx for an untenable monocausal theory, a segmental perspective and reducing the multiplicity of causal factors to a single-factor theorem. Weber's work is commented by Gerth and Mills as an attempt to "round out" Marx's economic materialism by political and military materialism. In him famous essay "Class, Status, Party", Weber considers "class", "status groups" and "parties" as phenomena of the distribution of power within a community. These are also three orders, namely, economic, social and political, and are not identical to each other, though they are interlinked and influence one another.

Now, the question is : How far the multidimensional studies of social stratification emphasizing caste, class and power/politics have accounted for Weber's principles of rationalization, individual and his action (subjectivity) and interpretative understanding ? The points such as the notion of rationality; historical specificity, cultural mornings, methodology and levels of application and analysis are necessary elements in the application of Weber's approach to the study of social stratification.

There has been a realization that stratification goes beyond "caste" and the principle and practice of "pure and impure". "Caste-free areas" have emerged due to the differentiated structures in modern India. Cleavages between caste, class and power indicate incompatibility of the pollution-purity syndrome. For a comprehensive understanding of caste-class nexus, it has been suggested that dialectics, history, culture and structure should become essential factures for the study of social stratification. The Weberian approach brings out in focus the multidimensional nature of social stratification, namely, caste, class and power. In other words, caste alone is insufficient to gauge the totality of stratification. It cannot encompass entirety of economic and political aspects of inequality and hierarchization.

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The distinction made by Andre Beteille between caste, class and power, based on Weber's framework of "class, status and party", or economic, social and political orders, is justifiable in the context of change and mobility, levels of caste and class consciousness, power structure and emerging value orientations. Caste could be seen from a class point of view, or from "upside down" rather than from "top down" view. Beteille observes "differentiation of institutional structures" and weakening of "summation of statuses" in his study of a village in South India. He also finds a very little preoccupation with purity-pollution related rituals. Beteille writes : "The hierarchies of caste, class and power in the village overlap to some extent, but also cut across." The emergence of "market economy" can be better understood through Weber's ideas of a "class situation" and a "market situation". Beteille asserts that caste, class and power are just abstract categories, they are there at the empirical levels as economic, social and political distinctions among the people.

Another noteworthy multidimensional study covering caste, class and politics is by Anil Bhatt. The main objective of the Bhatt's study is the understanding of what he calls –"comparative social stratification", meaning thereby a comparison of the traditional system of stratification with that of the modern one.

Bhatt's study shows the pattern and degree of relationship between caste, class and politics, the degree of status congruence, the extent of socio-economic and political inequalities, the extent of socio-economic and political positions and conversely the impact of democratic political structures on the caste system. Bhatt deals with individuals as members of a caste, caste as a group in relation to other castes and the caste system as a dimension of social stratification in relation to socio-economic and political dimensions. According to Bhatt, social stratification in India has deviated considerably from the traditional caste model. Caste does not encompass economic position and political power. A given caste is internally differentiated in terms of class and power of its members. Thus, Bhatt observes status incongruence, relative openness, mobility and competition as the salient features of the emergent system of social stratification.

K.L. Sharma has classified the studies on social stratification into two categories : (i) the studies on caste stratification, and (ii) the multidimensional studies of stratification. In the first category, caste is viewed as the sole institution of social ranking; "caste model of Indian society" is the main hypothesis in the studies of this category. Caste as an extreme form of class or as a closed community, and a system of ideas and values concerning pollution-purity and religion is given prime consideration in social ranking. The multidimensional studies do not consider caste as an all-inclusive basis of social stratification. Economic position, style of life, education, occupation, etc., are also considered as the bases of evaluation of social position in a given community or caste.

Structuralist Approach to Social Stratification

For Louis Dumont, who is a prominent architect of structuralism, caste stands for inequality in theory and practice both, but it is not simply an opposite of "equality". Dumont observes that caste as a type of social stratification is socio-centric. The inequality of the caste system is a special type of inequality. The caste system appears as a perfectly coherent theory once one adds the necessary but implicit links to the principles that the people themselves give. Thus, Dumont adopts the methodology of structuralism in his analysis of the caste system. Dumont considers the idea of the fundamental opposition between the pure and the impure in the analysis of the caste system. Based on this, Dumont defines the caste system in terms of hierarchically arranged hereditary groups, segregation and interdependence. Since these are based on the binary opposition of the pure and the impure, Dumont calls it "a single true principle". This opposition underlies hierarchy, which is the superiority of the pure to the impure, underlies separation because the pure and the impure must be kept separate. *The whole is founded on the necessary and hierarchical coexistence of the two opposites*. Yogendra Singh sums up Dumont's structuralism in terms of (a) ideology, (b) dialectics (binary opposition), (c) transformational relationship, and (d) comparison.

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Thus, hierarchy is defined by Dumont in terms of the superiority of the pure over the impure. Hierarchy is, in fact, the principle by which the elements of a whole (society) are ranked in relation to the whole. Here, Dumont sounds like a "functionalist". As such, hierarchy is the relationship between "that which encompasses and that which is encompassed". Such a view helps to obtain a holistic view of the system and to overcome the dualism of opposition.

The opposite of equality is hierarchy and not inequality. Hierarchy is an indispensable element of social life everywhere, but it is more so in case of India as it is very well affirmed in terms of its caste system. The caste system is a system of ideas and values, a formal, comprehensive rational system, a system in the intellectual sense of the term. This implies understanding of the intellectual system (ideology). Castes are related through a system of oppositions, a structure, in terms of the opposition between the pure and the impure. Thus, Dumont introduces the notions of "system" and "structure", in terms of ideology of/and relations between the pure and the impure castes.

While upholding his view regarding the primacy of "values and ideas", Dumont focuses on the *differentiation between status and power, and the subordination of the king to the priest.* Dumont also argues that hierarchy involves gradation, but it is distinct from both power and authority. Hierarchy refers to "religious ranking", and classifies "things" and "beings" based on their dignity. Thus, hierarchy is an all-embracing, comprehensive concept. Hierarchy, in fact, encompasses *varna* divisions and caste system. However, the connection between hierarchy and power remains problematic. Hierarchy cannot give a place to power without contradicting its own principle. Realizing the tie between purity and power in "actual situations", Dumont gives a place to power without compromising with his main argument. Both "interaction" and "attribution" are present in a situation where ideology and power coexist. In terms of the coexistence of hierarchy and power, Dumont analyses jajmani system and regulation of marriage, and commensality, untouchability and vegetarianism. In terms of confrontation of ideology and observation, Dumont looks at the ontological basis of caste, and observes that religion encompasses politics, and politics encompasses economics within itself. Religion is supreme, and politico-economic domain is subordinate.

A synthesis of different approaches to stratification can be seen in Pierre Bourdieu's view that symbolic productions are to be treated as instruments of domination. The Marxist tradition ignores this and lays great emphasis on relating the symbolic productions to the interests of the dominant class. According to Bourdieu, "the dominant class is the site of a struggle over the hierarchy of the principles of hierarchization". In fact, Bourdieu takes forward Weber's analysis of "class, status and party". Power is the key to Weber's verstehen. In a similar view, Bourdieu argues that the dominant class imposes the legitimacy of its domination to appropriate the social world for its own benefit. The capital, namely, economic, social, cultural or symbolic, which provides the basis for position to the agents is placed at the top in the principles of hierarchization. Capital is power, and power relations are not reducible to the intentions of individual agents or even to direct interactions between agents. The distribution of power is multifaceted and a relative phenomenon. The kinds of capital are powers which define the chances of project in a given field. This view marks a break with Marxian, Weberian and Dumont's traditions.

We do not have noticeable studies of caste, class and power taking cues from Bourdieu's analysis and understanding. As we have noted that considerable work has been done drawing from Marx, Weber and Dumont. Viewing different perspectives, we can say that social stratification implies ordering and reordering, and distribution and redistribution of people and resources. Both endogenous and wider forces play significant role in the structure and process of stratification. Conceptualization of stratification and inequality and the formulation of relevant approaches in relation to caste, class and power in India is a herculean task.

New Dimensions of Social Stratification

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Caste

Several misconceptions about caste have been dispelled with that it is not a static system; it is not opposite of class; and caste and class are found in both rural and urban settings. Social mobility and structural changes, migration, conflicting claims and feuds relating to land, property and resources have always been there in Indian society. Both structural and positional changes and upward and downward mobility have taken place at different levels, such as group, family and individual. The nexus between caste and class and its continuity and change could explain the structural and processual aspects of social stratification in Indian society.

Historicity of the nexus between caste, class and power needs to be studied far more seriously and carefully. Members of a caste compete each other, and they also exhibit mutual cooperation and harmony. Class-like distinctions within a caste are quite common, but their conspicuous display is considered to be an anti-caste activity. Such distinctions are, however, an indicator of high social status. In matrimonial alliances, such intracaste class-like distinctions play a decisive role.

Caste continues to function as an imagined status group and as a referent for evoking collective mobilizations and actions on certain occasions. It operates as a device of social arrangement of people in the local context. At the macro level caste is used as a means of identity, not necessarily paving way for commonalities and intimate interpersonal relations. Caste functions at times both formally and informally as an interest group. It becomes a resource, and a means of establishing as well as expanding social networks.

Caste is increasingly becoming a matter of interpretation rather than substantialization. Caste refers to purposive rationality, and at the same time, it provides a description and explanation of the pathologies of modern polity, economy and culture. There is no unilinear hierarchy of caste. Multiple hierarchies characterize the Indian society. Castes are "discrete categories", because they are no more related to each other organically, nor are they segmentary entities. Intercaste relations, which were the bedrock of caste system, have disappeared. Jajmani has become a defunct institution, and family and individual have taken over the place of caste in everyday life.

Increasingly, caste has become a desideratum, a state of mind, a plastic and malleable institution. No more hypersymbolization is manifest to express caste differences and typifications on a continuing basis. Though there is a process of delegitimation of the "essential" of caste, yet the sporadic appearance of caste-based decisions, and articulation of religious and metaphysical interpretations of caste and its divinity, pose a serious challenge to the secularized understanding of social reality.

Economic/class interpretation of caste is quite common in the Marxist scholarship. Caste has been appropriated as a means of exploitation. Ramifications of class can be seen in a given caste, and a caste can be observed in different classes.

Hence, caste-class polarity is unrealistic. As a system of stratification, caste does not have a monolithic ideology and pattern. Caste needs to be seen more as a process of inequities and social justice.

Dipankar Gupta pleads for an intersubjective sociology/anthropology against typification to study the caste system. He rightly ventures to search "individual" in caste. Because, individuals interrogate their own social existence, reflect on it, and maximize their options. Locating such an individual in caste would demythologize the rigid and closed hypersymbolizations, typifications and binary oppositions of Louis Dumont and his tribe. K.L. Sharma has argued in his study of six villages in Rajasthan that units of social mobility are individual, family and group. The three units are distinct conceptually, but are also interdependent and non-antagonistic. Gupta substantiates the differentiated nature of social mobility through search for "individual" in the caste system.

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Today, the "dominant castes" are not necessarily the twice-born castes. The dominant caste could well signify a section of a particular caste group, not necessarily the entire caste group. The caste system is not uniformly rigid/flexible, hence different patterns of social mobility exist in the caste system. In a given context, caste might work as a cultural phenomenon or it may denote structural features resembling with the systems of social stratification in a global context. In a given situation, caste may exhibit structural and cultural features in varying proportions. Thus, there are studies of caste relating to its dimensional nature, theoretical and methodological issues, sociology of knowledge perspective, and on the questions of theory, ideology and method for understanding of the structure and process of social stratification.

Class

Class and power are economic and political dimensions of social stratification, respectively. Caste and power have been viewed from a class perspective. However, there are not just two classes — the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. V.M. Dandekar discerns four broad classes in India as follows :

1. agrarian classes,
2. industrial classes,
3. professional classes, and
4. business and mercantile classes.

Dandekar questions the Marxist approach on the basis of the absence of the fully developed monopoly of capitalism and emergence of trade unions and their power of collective bargaining, class harmony, middle class, intra-class differentiation, welfare policies of the state, and an overlap between caste, class and occupation and mixed classes. Even for the realization of economic or class interests, the use of caste idiom is found to be a convenient means of articulation. K.L. Sharma observes the following patterns of social mobility vis-a-vis caste and class :

1. downward mobility and proletarianization,
2. upward mobility and embourgeoisiement,
3. urban migration and income for the rural people and social mobility in the village, and
4. rural non-agricultural income and intra-village social mobility.

Both the reality and perception of class have changed over the years. Class is no more understood simply as a grouping of people having common economic and political interests. It is not merely an attributional phenomenon understood in terms of income, occupation, education, etc. Competition alone cannot be the sole criterion of the emergence of class in a caste society.

In ancient and medieval times, the prevalence of private landholding, interaction between socio-economic classes, trade and society, and agrarian growth and social conflicts characterized the class structure of Indian society. The colonial class structure could be seen in terms of the complex nexus between state, capital and labour. In the thirties of the 20th century, the following classes were identified :

1. political classes,
2. commercial classes,
3. landlords and agricultural classes, and
4. industrial labour.

During the period after independence, the capitalist class has reinvented itself with increased control/influence in decision-making. However, the big business may not always occupy a superordinate position. But, generally, both organized workers and private financial and industrial capital are politically marginal being constrained by their specific interests. The state is more influenced by small-scale, self-employed "bullock capitalists". The bullock capitalists oppose both

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industrial capital and urban capital workers. Certainly, the wide gap between the rich and the poor, the rural and the urban people, the upper and the lower castes, the professionals and the common men would not allow an effective "class politics" in Indian society, but during the period before the recent recession, income, occupation and globalization influenced policies and programmes of the Indian government. Despite the world-wide recession, in the elections to the 15th Lok Sabha held in April-May 2009 for the first time maximum multi-millionaires and the richest of the rich, members of the former princely states, family members and kins of the entrenched politicians have been elected. Probably, "class" plays its role in one way or other in shaping and reshaping of power politics.

Dominance and Power

Caste and politics remain closely interlinked despite the weakening of the caste system and the emergence of a new language of politics from time to time. According to Rudolph and Rudolph, three types of political mobilization characterize the relationship between caste and politics. These are : (a) vertical, (b) horizontal, and (c) differential. Horizontal mobilization geared by caste associations is the most effective means in power politics. However, for Rajni Kothari, caste is something like interest-gratifying means in politics. Such a view was voiced by Kothari nearly four decades ago. Today, Kothari refers to increasing encounters between the masses and the classes in which the state remains a mute spectator. The classes cherish status quo, and the masses are restless for bringing about change and transformation. Kothari lays emphasis on the multiple dimensions of domination, exploitation and marginalization by the monolithic elite and the role of state in tackling these basic problems. Related to this view is that power revolves around class interests and control over the state, hence, legitimacy is of different class reference groups and of different balance of class forces.

Now, the question is : Can we make use of Srinivas' concept of dominant caste for analysing the rural power structure and its implications for Indian polity ? Srinivas writes : "A caste may be said to be 'dominant' when it preponderates over the other castes, and when it also wields preponderant economic and political power. A large and powerful caste group can be more easily dominant if its position in the local caste hierarchy is not too law." Further, "when a caste enjoys all the elements of dominance, it may be said to be dominant in a decisive way". Srinivas admits that there could be permutations and combinations of these attributes of dominance. S.C. Dube, T.K. Oommen and K.L. Sharma observe that many limitations of the concept of dominant caste make it unsuitable for the study of rural social stratification and power. Individual and family are far more concrete and specific with regard to holding of power rather than the caste/group. A complex set of criteria of dominance and power at different levels and layers is suggested in several critiques of Srinivas' concept of dominant caste. Caste and power or power and class are significantly interrelated, and as such this hypothesis itself tends to be a serious limitation of the concept of dominant caste.

John Macdougall's paper "Dominant Castes or Rich Peasants" may be taken as a direct criticism of Srinivas's concept of dominant caste. Macdougall prefers the rich peasants theory as it allows for a variation in the form and presence of change, though slow but irreversibly. Class is the main factor, and what goes in the name of caste conflicts are in fact class conflicts. The dominant-peasant theory also explains the processes of legitimizing rural power structures and the nature of supra-village networks.

In rural India, "caste, land and politics" are found closely interlinked because economic power is common ingredient in all the three. A caste is a class and yet it remains a caste. Land is related closely to caste hierarchy and power. And those who have economic resources (including land), have entry into the game of power politics. Thus, both caste and class are resources for gaining access to political power. The two, using Bourdieu's terminology, are social and economic capital,

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and they are transformed into political capital, and it proves to be a further resource for the consolidation and improvement of status and class positions.

There are "established elites" and "emerging elites", and the first one make efforts to retain their hold, and the second one try to displace them to occupy positions of power and authority. Such a political scene is there at all the levels, namely, local, regional and national. The two exist side by side, and they also interact and intermingle, providing a way for a sort of circulation of elites and social mobility. In Bihar, for example, political polarization could be seen in terms of "Forwards" and "Backwards". In Tamil Nadu, contradictions of regional forces have been there for a long time. Ethnic ethos is being encashed in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and some of the north-eastern states.

The following points can be extracted from the above discussion :

1. Caste, class and dominance are not monolithic structures of social, economic and power relations.
2. There is no exclusivity of these phenomena as one cannot be comprehended in actual life without the other (s).
3. The state has been a crucial factor in shaping and reshaping the social, economic and political arrangements.
4. Efforts in the form of social movements supporting/opposing the state's policies and programmes have crystallized the structural contradictions and paved the way for social transformation.

Self-Assessment

Choose the correct options

1. Rulers are given the name elite by
   (*a*) Weber (*b*) Berger (*c*) Pareto (*d*) None of these
2. Weber's definition of power is
   (*a*) Probability (*b*) Habit of obedience and authority
   (*c*) Legitimacy (*d*) None of these
   (*e*) *a, b* and *c*
3. The book 'The power Elite' is written by
   (*a*) C. wright Mills (*b*) Weber (*c*) Berger (*d*) Pareto
4. Cancasian belongs to
   (*a*) Nordic (*b*) Mangolian (*c*) Negro (*d*) None of these
5. Doubtful classifications is
   (*a*) Ainu (*b*) Bushman (*c*) Hindu (*d*) Alpine

13.3 Summary

- Social stratification is multifaceted and multi-causal phenomenon. The "caste model" alone is inadequate, hence, a multidimensional approach, encompassing caste, class and power is useful for the study of social stratification. Structural criteria have gained far more currency today in comparison to the cultural dimension of social stratification. Though social inequalities are persisting, at the same time, shifts and new hierarchies are also emerging. As a result of the shifts, there are reduced social inequalities today. Conceptualizing caste-class-power nexus, rather than analysing caste, class and power as distinct domains, is required with scientific vigour.
- Social stratification deals with social differences and distances among different sections of society, families and individuals. It is not just differences that form the basis of stratification,

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but hierarchization of differences too creates social inequality. People have tendency to hierarchize their relations, and seek expression and articulation of the same in actual life with due legitimacy to perpetuate their entrenched position or to gain access to new avenues of status and power. This is how stratification emerges. In this way, social stratification incorporates a semblance of differences and hierarchy. The two are found in different combinations.

- The person who tills the ground has wherewithal the ground to maintain himself till he reaps the harvest. The master maintains his existence by giving advance, and in return he gets share in the produce of his labour.
- There are not many independent persons combining the roles of a master and a workman. The masters can combine easily the law and authorities, but workmen cannot do it. Workmen cannot subsist even for a work, the masters, landlords, master manufacturers or merchants can survive on their own for a long time.
- Modern industry has developed the world market. As a result, commerce, navigation and communication by land immensely developed. In proportion to such a development, the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every earlier class. Marx and Engels thus observe : "We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange."
- Marx and Engels write : "But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself, it has also called into existence the new who are to wield those weapons - the modern working class - the proletarians". In proportion to the bourgeoisie, the proletariat - a class of labourers - has developed. They are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, influenced by the vicissitudes of competition and fluctuation of the market.
- The term "class" refers to any group of people that is found in the same class situation. Like Marx, for Weber too, class is an economic phenomenon. The people, who are actors in the market for material gains, constitute different classes as determined by their role and capacity. Market signifies a situation of competition among the actors, namely, buyers and sellers. The two are not monoliths, hence, some become privileged and monopolists and others remain loosers. Weber observes that property" and "lack of property" are the basic categories of all class situations. All this holds true within the area in which true market conditions prevail. "Property" and "lack of property" are, therefore, the basic categories of all class situations.
- The capitalist class has control over all the three resources. The working class has control over none of them. In between the two are *contradictory class locations*, in which Wright includes white-collar and professional employees. These people are neither capitalists nor manual workers, but share some common features with both of them.
- Mode of production and class contradictions are essential features of the Marxist approach to class, class conflict and class consciousness. The forces of production and production relations could be seen even in caste, kinship, family, marriage and even in rituals. Emergence of a new bourgeoisie, polarization of peasantry and pauperization of the working class have been reported in Indian society.
- The primary manifestations in real life can be seen in the practice of connubium, commensality and exclusive appropriation of privileged economic opportunities, and also prohibition of certain modes of acquisition. There are also certain conventions or traditions attached to a social status.
- An "occupational group" is also a status group. Generally, it successfully claims social honour only by virtue of the special style of life which may be determined by it. The differences between classes and status groups frequently overlap. Castes in India are a sort of status

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communities. Brahmins, for example, have shown, in the past, a relatively high degree of indifference to pecuniary income, and they have been at the top of caste hierarchy. Stratification by status is favoured when the bases of the acquisition and distribution of goods are relatively stable, and not threatened by onslaught of technology and economic transformation.

- Power is omnipresent. It is in everyday life, in the micro-world of the individual, in the school and at the workplace. Power is relational, some have very less power, and others have near-absolute power. Means of power range from physical force to gentle cajoling. At the macro level, there are institutions of power and authority, such as the state or government.
- Power is in society, and society is reflected in the structure of power and authority. Power is not a new concern in sociology. Two approaches, one led by Max Weber and other by Vilfredo Pareto, provide the basic categories for the sociological analysis of power.
- Power is a general phenomenon, whereas domination is a more specific aspect. As we have discussed earlier, power comprises the chance that an actor's will can be imposed on other participants in a social relationship, even against their resistance. Power is measured simply by the *chance* that an individual or collectivity would have to realize their will. Power is realized through the actions in which an actor engages, and this potential is determined not only by accidental or fortuitous circumstances, but also by the structurally defined opportunities and capacities that are available to an actor.
- In particular, communities, political parties and bureaucratic organizations have been studied by social scientists from their respective perspectives. Here, we may mention C. Wright Mills' book *The Power Elite* in particular as it has generated a serious discourse on national power structure in the context of American society. According to Mills, America is ruled by economic, political and military elites. The economic elite represents the top strata of big business and corporation management. The political elite represents key figures in the formal apparatus of government. The military elite comprises of the top echelon of the armed services.
- Society and polity are closely linked in India. Economy is undoubtedly an important factor influencing politics and social status. But its role and significance are somewhat hazy and less effective. Power emanates in India from two main sources : socio-cultural fabric, and political structures. In the first case, caste, religion, language, region, etc., play decisive role in access to positions of power and authority. In the second, institutions such as Panchayati Raj, municipal bodies, State Assembly and Lok Sabha provide opportunities to the people to enter into these arenas of power politics. Political parties are generally in the forefront at the time of elections for these bodies.
- A patriarchal society is one in which power is held by male heads of households. There is also clear separation between the "public" and the "private" spheres of life. In the "private" sphere of the household, the patriarch enjoys arbitrary power over all junior males, all females and all children.
- Distinction between "male" and "female" is bio-physiological; it is value-neutral. However, when a male is referred as a "man", and a female as a "woman", a value is attached to the two, in terms of superior and inferior human beings. Postmodernists both Foucault and Derrida recognize connection between language and power. Both attack such a rationality of postmodernism.
- Domestic patriarchy has come with the concept of home and home making. Women's right to proper recognition of her work at home has been recognized to a great extent all over the world. Now women go out for work, have their savings, and a control over what they earn. Most men are not hostile towards women's work. Despite these very notable changes, the man's work determines where the couple lives, and how much of their lives are organized.

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- The proponents of ethnic stratification consider the idea of ethnicity as a functioning mode of organization. Moderation of unequal conflicting ethnic segments is also an ongoing process. Structure and process are thus ontological basis of ethnicity. The fact is that ethnicity is a question of emphasis.
- Both the Marxian and Weberian approaches have echoed in the studies of caste, class and power. However, a number of studies have been there deriving clues from the structuralist perspective as given by C. Levi-Strauss and Louis Dumont on the one hand, and from the functionalist view of British and the American scholars, on the other. Despite these influences, some studies have used indological and nativistic ideas and categories in their studies of caste, kinship and class. We would take up briefly these different viewpoints in our understanding of social stratification.
- "Change" and "process" have become focal points of analysis in social stratification. Focus on the study of differentiation, evolution and change in caste, class and power may hold the key to our understanding of social stratification. The Marxist scholars as well as activists look at the origin and evolution of caste from the point of economic relations. Caste is seen as a mechanism of exploitation in the hands of the upper castes. Modes of production is the key to the theory of stratification. The essence of the Marxist analysis is that explanation emanates from the structure of social reality, and it is not static.
- There is differentiation between and within the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and the working class. Class inequality is not simply economistic. However, economic groupings in the form of classes and domination of one class over the other are found in all societies irrespective of the level of their industrialization.
- Elite formation in India is largely determined by the traditional social structure, particularly caste, religion, language, networks, income, occupational background, education, family background, etc. Select positions are usually taken by persons from select social strata. This select group controls the positions of prestige, power and responsibility. Higher education is still under the grip of upper castes, hence, it is status stabilizer, rather than an invader on status rigidities.
- One common feature of all the middle classes is that they do not themselves produce any values in the material product sense of value. The middle classes depend for their economic gains on the ruling classes as well as the state. Intelligentsia are not homogeneous in terms of income, wealth and level of living. They are salaried people.
- There has been a realization that stratification goes beyond "caste" and the principle and practice of "pure and impure". "Caste-free areas" have emerged due to the differentiated structures in modern India. Cleavages between caste, class and power indicate incompatibility of the pollution-purity syndrome.
- The opposite of equality is hierarchy and not inequality. Hierarchy is an indispensable element of social life everywhere, but it is more so in case of India as it is very well affirmed in terms of its caste system. The caste system is a system of ideas and values, a formal, comprehensive rational system, a system in the intellectual sense of the term. This implies understanding of the intellectual system (ideology). Castes are related through a system of oppositions, a structure, in terms of the opposition between the pure and the impure.
- Today, the "dominant castes" are not necessarily the twice-born castes. The dominant caste could well signify a section of a particular caste group, not necessarily the entire caste group. The caste system is not uniformly rigid/flexible, hence different patterns of social mobility exist in the caste system. In a given context, caste might work as a cultural phenomenon or it may denote structural features resembling with the systems of social stratification in a global context. In a given situation, caste may exhibit structural and cultural features in varying proportions.

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- In ancient and medieval times, the prevalence of private landholding, interaction between socio-economic classes, trade and society, and agrarian growth and social conflicts characterized the class structure of Indian society. The colonial class structure could be seen in terms of the complex nexus between state, capital and labour.

13.4 Key–Words

1. Bourgeoisie : It is a word used in the fields of Political economy, political philosophy, sociology and history which denotes the wealthy stratum of the middle class that originated during the latter part of the middle ages.
2. Segregation : The action or state of setting someone or something apart from other people or things or being set apart.

13.5 Review Questions

1. What is the Marxian concept of class?
2. Distinguish between Marxian and Weberian approaches to class.
3. Define Patriarchy.
4. Write briefly the changing dimensions of social stratification.
5. Discuss the emerging patterns of social stratification in India.

Answers: Self–Assessment

1. (*c*) 2. (*e*) 3. (*a*) 4. (*a*) 5. (*a*)

13.6 Further Readings



1. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Perspectives on Social Stratification, Rawat Publication.
2. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Social Stratification & Mobility, Rawat Publication.
3. Hasnain, Nadeem, 2011 : Indian Society and Culture Continuity and Change, Jawahar Publishers and Distributors.

Unit 14: Emergence of Middle Class System

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Objectives

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Understand the Concept of Middle Class.
- Explain the Emergence of Middle Class System.

Introduction

Group of people within a society who possess the same socio-economic status. The term was first widely used in the early 19th century, following the industrial and political revolutions of the late 18th century. The most influential early theory of class was that of Karl Marx, who focused on how one class controls and directs the process of production while other classes are the direct producers and the providers of services to the dominant class. The relations between the classes were thus seen as antagonistic. Max Weber emphasized the importance of political power and social status or prestige in maintaining class distinctions. Despite controversies over the theory of class, there is general agreement on the characteristics of the classes in modern capitalist societies. In many cases the upper class has been distinguished by the possession of largely inherited wealth, while the working class has consisted mostly of manual labourers and semi-skilled or unskilled workers, often in service industries, who earn moderate or low wages and have little access to inherited wealth. The middle class includes the middle and upper levels of clerical workers, those engaged in technical and professional occupations, supervisors and managers, and such self-employed workers as small-scale shopkeepers, business people, and farmers.

Social classes are the hierarchical arrangements of people in society as economic or cultural groups. Class is an essential object of analysis for sociologists, anthropologists, political economists, and social historians. In the social sciences, social class is often discussed in terms of 'social stratification'.

In sociology and political philosophy, the most basic class distinction is between the powerful and the powerless. In Marxist theory and historical materialism, social class is caused by the fundamental economic structure of work and property. Various social and political theories propose that social classes with greater power attempt to cement their own ranking above the lower social classes in the social hierarchy to the detriment of the society overall. By contrast, conservatives and structural functionalists have presented class difference as intrinsic to the structure of any society and to that extent ineradicable. Social classes with a great deal of power are usually viewed as "the elites" within their own societies.

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Karl Marx and Max Weber have different views upon social class in contemporary societies. In Karl Marx's perspective, social class has a two-class system whereas Max Weber argued that social class has three dimensions of stratification : class, status and party. In this chapter, I will explain and analyse why Weber carried out this theory that these three dimensions are distinct entities and cannot be resolved under the single concept of class. A "class" is any group of persons occupying the same class status. Unlike Marx's two-class system, Weber divided "class" into four categories : propertied upper class, propertyless intelligentsia (white-collar workers), the petty bourgeoisie, and the manual working class. A propertied class is placed at the top because they own economic power, social status and political influence. A propertyless intelligentsia is a professional class.

For Karl Marx, the stratification of social classes was the most significant source of societal conflict. Max Weber's definition of social class differs most notably from Marx's conception of the term in the sense that for Weber, social class and political class cannot simply be lumped together as a single entity.

Weber viewed and defined social and political realms separately in an attempt to put emphasis on the unique dynamic that power possesses in its own right, apart from economic interests. Moreover, he wanted to highlight the irrational features of power by making it clear that the rational interests of a class are not sufficient to explain the dynamics of society, particularly when comparing one society to another.

Weber's conception of what he calls "life chances" is a critical component of his understanding of social class. In Weber's view, an individual's class position is a direct determinant of how his life will turn out. The chances of a better life are, of course, higher for those in a higher social class and vice versa. The conception is evidence of Weber's view of the relationship between materialism and idealism. Social action, he believed, can be evoked by either or both as its driving force.

Marx is far more focused on the economic aspects of social stratification; most particularly, divisions of labour. In "Alienation and Social Classes" he wrote "Human alienation, and above all the relation of man to himself, is first realized and expressed in the relationship between each man and other men. Thus in the relationship of alienated labour every man regards other men according to the standards and relationships in which he finds himself placed as a worker".

Weber, while in agreement with Marx about the oppressive nature of social stratification, also believed that material possessions and a person's overall standard of living constitute the primary cause of class conflict. So whereas for Marx, the notion of alienation and oppression were seen as the chief aspects of social unrest, for Weber this unrest existed as a result of the power obtained from property ownership and other material possessions. Simply put, it was the 'haves' as opposed to the 'have nots' that had the most promising "life chances". The 'have nots' were therefore destined to stay poor while the 'haves' were destined to become more wealthy and more powerful.

Marx of course agreed with this perspective as well, however unlike Weber, he was unable to separate social class from economic class. So for Marx, feelings of alienation were just as influential on a person's social classification as were material possessions. For Weber, these entities did not necessarily have to co-exist; one could exist without the other. This is the primary point of divergence between Marx and Weber's conceptions of social class and social stratification.

Sociologists like T.B. Bottomore and Anthony Giddens talk of the four major classes in the modern world :

1. Upper class
2. Middle class
3. Working class, and
4. Peasantry.

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A large peasantry is found to exist mainly in developing countries like India. Peasantry consists of groups of people engaged in agriculture and allied activities. The other three classes are found in industrialised and industrialising societies. The upper class consists of the owners of wealth or employers who own or directly control productive resources, e.g., the wealthy and the industrialists. The middle class consists mostly of white-collar workers and professionals. The working class is comprised of those who are engaged in blue-collar or manual jobs.

14.1 Concept of the Middle Class

The middle class are any class in the middle of a societal hierarchy. In Weberian socio-economic terms, the middle class is the broad group of people in contemporary society who fall socio-economically between the working-class and upper class. In Marxist terms, middle–class commonly refers to either the bourgeoisie before or during capitalism, or some emergent new class within capitalism. In common parlance, middle-class refers to a set of culturally distinct contemporary Western cultures that emphasize consumerism and property ownership within capitalism.

In Marxism, which defines social classes according to their relationship with the means of production, the middle class is broadly synonymous with the bourgeoisie. Historically, under feudalism, the bourgeoisie were the urban merchant and professional class who stood between the aristocracy and the proletariat, and were thus the "middle-class" according to the Marxist social schema. Under capitalism, the bourgeoisie are taken to be the ruling class, as the group that owns and controls capital. As such, some Marxists specify the petite bourgeoisie-owners of small property who may not employ wage labour-as the "middle-class" between the ruling and working classes.

Sociologists have given three-fold classification of classes which consists of upper–class, middle-class and lower-class. Sorokin has spoken of three major types of class stratification-they are economic, political and occupational classes. Lloyd Warner shows how class distinctions contribute to social stability. Veblen analyzed the consumption pattern of the rich-class by the concept of conspicuous consumption. Warner has classified classes into six types-upper-upper class, upper-middle class, upper-lower class, lower-upper class, the lower middle class and lower class. Anthony Giddens's three class model is the upper, middle and lower (working) class.

Middle Class in India

The concept of middle class, as the name suggests refers to the middle stratum of the hierarchy but this concept is not restricted to locate the stratum in the hierarchical order. But it have far reaching consequences too. This concept developed in India in response to industrial developments here. Middle class forms a composite intermediate layer with a common life-style and behavioural pattern. They stood for certain liberal democratic values. Stability of political democratization and social mobility are identified with middle class. In India middle class has contributed a lot for the political modernization, nation building and economic development of our country in post independence period. Thus we need to understand the Indian Middle class and their importance.

Rise of Middle Classes in India during the British Rule

The British rule brought significant changes in the economy and polity of our country ownership right on land was introduced by the Britishers so land could become a private property. They introduced different land revenue systems and adopted policies like Zamindari system, Rayotwari and permanent settlement system. This created the landed middle class i.e. self- cultivating middle class. B.B. Mishra, a famous historian pointed out that the middle class emerged basically as a result of economic and technological change and were mostly engaged in trade and industry in the west but in India they emerged as a consequence of changes in the system of law and public administration than in economic development and they mainly belonged to the learned profession.

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Britishers introduced modern education which was secular, utilitarian and open to get educated Indians as staff for their administrative institution. The intention was to create a native middle class that would become the carrier of western culture in India and act as interpreter. With expansion of education professional middle class emerged they included doctors, lawyers, teachers, journalists etc. Their size grew in late 19th and early 20th century. The western educated youth brought the new liberal values of democracy, equality, liberty etc. They started reforming Indian society. All those reform movements in 19th century were led by these western educated middle class individuals.

Britishers created institutional system for emergence of new professionals by establishing new legal system, new judiciary, new administrative system, revenue system, civil services, etc. This prepared the ground for the professional middle class in India.

In early twentieth century industrial middle class started developing. Earlier British government discouraged industrialization in India and kept it as a captive market deliberately. But after first world war it realized the need for some industries here. Emerging Indian bourgeoisie also put pressure for setting industries here. So different industries started functioning like textile, jute, paper, cement, iron, plantation etc. establishment of railway also facilitated for trade mercantile activity. The swadeshi movement was started by the nationalist leaders to give a boost to native industries. It was nothing but a demand for industrialization in India. All this led to the emergence of industrial and mercantile middle class.

Politics of Middle Classes during the Freedom Movement

The emergence of middle class in India was a consequence of British rule. These English educated middle class themselves questioned the legitimacy of British rule in India. They played a very crucial role in bringing social reforms and creating a sense of Indian nationalism. The Indian National Congress, initially was dominated by professional, English educated middle class only. Majority members of the Congress were lawyers, journalists, teachers and educationalists. Mahatma Gandhi who put effort to transform the National Congress into a mass movement was a lawyer and typically belonged to professional middle class. The freedom movement in India in its course was guided by the middle class leader only. They forced the Britishers for industrialization in India, expansion of educational institutions and social reforms.

After independence, this middle class took the responsibility of nation building. They became the political elite. The Indian middle class who were working for the British government they continued to play their role in governance of the country after independence also.

Size and Composition : In India middle class includes body of merchants, bulk of salaried executives, managerials, supervisors, bankers, traders, civil servants, public servants, shop-keepers, entire body of secondary school teachers etc. during independence the size of middle class was very small. Income was not the criteria to define the middle class rather education, knowledge of English and high aspiration level were the important characteristic of middle class in India. They played a very significant role in the modernization of our country. Today the optimistic estimation states that in India, middle class constitute about sixty million households.

Growth of Middle Classes after Independence

After independence, it was the middle class who became the political elite and captured power. The process of nation building was started. It was a state led exercise. For this, we embarked upon the planned development. The government of India made several plans and programmes for different sectors of our economy. For the execution of these plans, the services of huge trained people were required. So there was massive expansion of government services.

To meet the demand of trained personal, higher and technical educational institutions and universities were started in different regions of our country. It created more professional middle class.

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Because of emphasis on industrialization industrial sector grew. With establishment of various industries there occured rapid urbanization. With growth in urbanization the demand of various services increased that includes banking, insurance, hospital, hotel, press recreation centre, teaching etc. So service sector also expanded.

After independence, the new political elite initiated the capitalist transformation of agriculture through land reform and green revolution. Land reform conferred ownership right to twenty million family in country side. Green revolution technology increased the productivity of land. Such economic development in rural area motivated people to have higher aspirations. Thus it created rural middle class. They are being mobilized by the politicians for the regional interests. As a result of policy of protective discrimination and abolition of untouchability, people from the Dalit caste groups could get education and employment in government jobs. Now these people are forming a Dalit middle class.

The growing IT sector today is contributing in the expansion of service sector. People from different socio-economic background are joining this, thus they are also today constituting the major portion of middle class.

14.2 Emergence of Middle Class System

The emergence of the middle-class was facilitated by modern education and the consequent work opportunities available in offices set-up for commercial, administrative and other purposes by the colonial government. The conceptual and political boundaries of Indian middle-class rested on mediation between the colonial rulers and colonial subjects. The relationship was premised on subordination to colonial power but at the same time providing cultural leadership to the indigenous people. In the post-colonial India, the middle-class were identified as 'Nehruvian civil service-oriented salariat, short on money but long on institutional perks'. In the contemporary period, the 'new' middle class, as a social group, is depicted as negotiating India's new relationship with the global economy in both cultural (socio symbolic practices of commodity consumption) and economic terms (the beneficiaries of the material benefits of jobs and business in India's new liberalised economy)

Emergence of Middle Class during British Rule

The advent of British rule witnessed the emergence of a new elite. The British rule brought significant changes in the economy and polity of our country. OwnerShip right on land was introduced by the Britishers, so land could become a private property. They introduced different land revenue systems and adopted, policies like Zamindari system. Rayotwari and permanent settlement system. This created the landed middle class i.e. self-cultivating Middle Class. B.B. Mishra, famous historian pointed out that the middle classes emerged basically as a result of economic and technological change and were mostly engaged in trade and industry in the west, but in India, they emerged as a consequence of changes in the system of law and public administration than in economic development and they mainly belonged to the learned profession. Britishers introduced modern education which was secular, utilitarian and open to get educated Indians as staff for their administrative institution. The intention was to create a native middle class that would become the carrier of western culture in India and act as interpreter. With expansion of education professional Middle Class emerged. They included doctors, lawyers, teachers, journalists etc. Their size grew in late 19th and early 20th century. The western educated youth brought the new liberal values of democracy, equality, liberty etc.

They started reforming Indian society. All those reform movements in 19th century were led by these western educated middle class individuals. Britishers created institutional system for emergence of new professionals by establishing new legal system, new judiciary, new administrative system, revenue system, civil services, etc. This prepared the ground for the professional middle

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class in India. In early twentieth century, industrial middle class started developing earlier. British government discouraged industrialization in India and kept it as a captive market deliberately. But after First World War, it realized the need for some industries here. Emerging Indian bourgeoisie also put pressure for setting industries here. Establishment of railway also facilitated for trade mercantile activity. The Swadeshi Movement was started by the nationalist leaders to give a boost to native industries. It was nothing but a demand for industrialization in India. All this led to the emergence of industrial and mercantile Middle Class. Thus we can conclude that the emergence of such a huge middle class in India was largely the unconscious contribution of the British rule.


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When we try to understand 'Middle Class', it is found to be theoretically located at the confluence of economy, society and polity. But the 'class' in Marxian sense is the theoretical principle by which society may be divided into distinct groups. His two class scheme-Bourgeoise or Capitalist and Proletariat or Working class may be a useful device for model building in economic and political theory. But the 'intermediate' or middle classes have been the most important non-polar classes.

When India embraked on a process of economic reform in 1991, the Indian middle class acquired a new prominence as one of the world's largest markets-urban India,' concluded one survey, 'is itself the world's third largest country.' But, 'what seemed to have been forgotten was that the class in question was not conjured up overnight; it had a past and a history, which preceded its had a past and a history, which preceded its great discouver as a consumerist predator.'

The urban middle classes now more than one hundred million people reaped most of the benefits of the liberalisation and modernisation programmes and began to envisage their entry into the brave new world of computers, electronics. In addition, the new economic policy also included deregulation and privatisation of the public sector. Economic reforms are generating a 6-7 per cent annual economic growth rate. Material comforts have begun to reach millions of homes for the first time in Indian history and the process is certain to continue. It had not only provided opportunities for more and more employment but in addition the emerging middle class is able to have access to TV-sets, radios, video-equipment, foreign magazines, films, international satellite and cable TV. Not only this, but the renewed power of the commercial channels and satellite transmission has made the middle class man more informed about politics and about the world around India, which has led him to establish his own status in India. Before market liberalisation, Indian internal market was considered to be large enough to make international trade virtually irrelevant and central planing was deemed superior to reliance on markets for economic development. This market liberalisation policy has given new chances to the people, irrespective of their caste and creed to avail the opportunities in liberalisation. In fact the government could not help having the poor classes as well as other deprived sections of the society to be included in this process because industrialisation required labour and people who could work.

India's rapidly expanding economy has provided the basis for a fundamental change—the emergence of what eminent journalist Suman Dubey calls a "new vanguard" increasingly dictating India's political and economic direction. This group is India's new middle class—mobile, driven, consumer-oriented, and, to some extent, forward-looking. Hard to define precisely, it is not a single stratum of society, but straddles town and countryside, making its voice heard everywhere. It encompasses prosperous farmers, white-collar workers, business people, military personnel, and myriad others, all actively working toward a prosperous life. Ownership of cars, televisions, and other consumer goods, reasonable earnings, substantial savings, and educated children (often

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fluent in English) typify this diverse group. Many have ties to kinsmen living abroad who have done very well.

Rural and Urban Middle Class

In the last one and half decade, cities in India have become symbols of the economic growth achieved by the nation in the preceding years. The hitherto centres of large-scale mechanised industry (Ahmedabad, Kolkatta, Kanpur, Mumbai etc.) as well as other state capitals and major towns (Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Pune, Lucknow, Amritsar etc.) including the national capital region of Delhi are witness to radical socio-economic restructuring. In several of the "post industrial" cities, a significant proportion of the middle class have entered the market as owners of capital in order to trade in various goods and services in the informal sector markets. They are the important beneficiaries of urban economic growth while the recent spatial restructuring also demands closure/ shifting of their economic establishments. Further, the growth of modern markets catering to the needs of the aggressive consumer fetish of the middle class is displacing the traditional hawkers who were also a source of relatively cheaper consumer items meeting the immediate consumption needs of this class.

If we see the emergence of the middle class in the rural areas. Several of the states in India are witness to the emergence of an agro-mercantile class who have stakes in agriculture but also sufficient economic presence in the nearest urban economy. Their social habits, educational achievements/ aspirations and consumerism seem to be similar to their urban counterparts.

In conclusion, the most striking feature of contemporary India is the rise of a confident new middle class. It is full of energy and drive-and it is making things happen. That it goes about in an uninhibited, pragmatic and amoral fashion is true.

It is different from the older bourgeoisie, which was tolerant, secular and ambiguous. The new class is street-smart. It has had to fight to rise from the bottom, and it has learnt to maneuver the system.

Modernity and the Middle Class in Contemporary India

The modernity of the middle class does not enter the realm of the mind. Perpetuating patriarchal and hierarchical notions and reaffirming stereotypical gender roles are seen as commitment to tradition. Being liberal is epitomised as consumption and spending. Modernity does not mean the inclusion of more sections of society; on the contrary, it means exclusion. It is also politically conservative, says Rowena Robinson.

It is interesting of reading about the modernity of the Indian middle class : its commitment to democracy as well as its respect for "tradition". The middle class Indian is fundamentally non-democratic and his (the use of the pronoun is deliberate) "commitment" to so-called "tradition" amply demonstrates his intolerance. If "Indian" (read Hindu) culture and "family values" exemplify tradition, these encapsulate a notion of the family seen in films like "Hum Aapke Hain Kaun", "Dilwale Dulhaniya le Jayenge" or in advertisements for anything from Pantaloons to Bartan soap. This notion is hierarchical and patriarchal, perpetuating stereotypical ideas about gender roles in the family, particularly those of the daughter and daughter-in-law.

The deeply non-democratic side of middle class Indians is brought out by the nature of the causes they espouse (the romantic and the conveniently distant Narmada displaced tribals) and the ones they unequivocally condemn (those of street vendors or municipal workers on strike). The latter are assertions by people "getting above themselves" and threatening the environment and the "ownership" of public space by middle class "citizens" or cutting off their access to particular forms of consumption.

If, as in the advertisement, the middle-class Indian was asked, "How do you like your modernity?", the answer would undoubtedly be : "Pack it (packet)". This allows me to answer the question that

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has troubled social scientists of the age : "Where does the modernity of the middle-class Indian lie ?" I can now tell you. In his pocket.

The domestication of modernity in India has a trajectory not unlike that of the taming of the shrew; and, indeed, many educated (male) Indians would attribute to modernity, qualities not dissimilar to those borne by that hapless Shakespearean wench. Technology is the only arena where the middle class Indian feels comfortable with modernity. And then he has to domesticate it annually through worshipful puja every Dussehra. In all other areas, particularly to do with social interaction, the middle class Indian speaks only the language of caste, kinship and community.

Over 90 per cent of all middle-class marriages are arranged or "other-initiated", caste specific and involve kanyadan (the transfer of the virgin bride), if not also dowry. Fairy tale romances are also subject to parental approval, in the absence of which the parting of ways can be swift and ruthless.

Gone are the days when young Lochinvars in real (and reel) life braved social and familial wrath for love across caste and community boundaries. The modern man is far more pragmatic and considers such moves suicidal. If he can find a love who also fits in with those rigidly conceived "homely, family values", great. Else the girl must be dumped. Today's films shore up the idea.

An acquaintance, recently being wooed-with parental consent no doubt-by a co-worker from another community and region, was foolish enough to tell him of an earlier, dead relationship. He turned tail and fled back into the consoling arms of caste and family who, no doubt, convinced him of the woman's dubious character or origins. Regardless of his own sexual status, the modern Indian male is convinced that only a virgin is capable of pure love and worthy of being introduced to his mother.

"Sources" and "contacts" are the ways to negotiate the professional world and kin whispers to kin about the possibilities of "finding something" for one of their own. The use of connections to gain employment, favours and benefits is rampant among the middle class and it rarely enters a secular arena, whether government office or corporate house, without having first found out who is the best person (in caste/regional/kinship terms) to "approach" there.

The weakest area of modern life is that of non-ascribed associations. Professional relations rarely metamorphose into deep friendships and, when they do, are strictly status and gender bound. The average male flees from interaction of even the weakest sort with female colleagues. When family meets family, sex and status are sharp dividing lines. Woe betide the single professional woman (and modern India has many of these and few single men) who tries to establish friendship with a male colleague. She can be tolerated in the corridors of the professional arena, rarely admitted into the sacred portals of the home.

The secular professional world does not always succumb to the lure of the "contact" or the "connection". Secularism and even democratic dissent, by the disprivileged, render the middle class vulnerable.

Modernity for it, therefore, is not inclusion of more sections of society; it is exclusion. Public spaces close themselves to those without credit cards, residential localities hem themselves in against "the lower orders" with watchmen and boundary walls. The state protects the consumption and lifestyle of the already endowed, chastising workers, slum dwellers or other marginalised who dare to rebel for holding "citizens" to ransom.

The mentally modern is all too frightening. It is the modernity of matter (read money) that (al) lures the middle class Indian in Shopper's Stop and Crossroads (Mumbai), MG Road and Brigade Road (Bangalore), South Extension and Greater Kailash (New Delhi). Clothes, jewellery, cars, compact disc players, washing machines and flat televisions-this is the real modernity. Sindur and mangalsutra intact, female subservience and patriarchy unchallenged, the middle class Indian, dressed in jeans and T- shirt, can afford to be "liberal" in spending. He epitomises modernity as

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consumption. Packet modernity or modernity of the pocket. Neat, attractive and well-bound, pocket modernity, best symbolised by the remote control or the mobile phone, can be hand-held and controlled. Its powers are (literally) graspable. It is amenable to easeful handling. Its jolts are controlled by the button and, best of all, it requires no fine tuning of the mind. Pocket modernity is politically conservative and socially and economically exclusive. It feeds middle class conservatism, pitching its sales talk at "family" and "Indian culture." Raymonds and Indian marriages or MacDonalds and vegetarian families. Is it at all surprising that the great Indian middle class offers the most Willing ears to the Hindu right, whose cultural organisations aim to preserve "national" symbols as the "sanctity of womanhood" and whose political organisations encourage disinvestment, privatisation and enhanced entry of multinational companies.



Notes The middle class Indian flees from modernity of the mind. Freedom terrifies him because it demands individual responsibility. Collective (read caste and family) responsibility offers a security that is difficult to resist. Female modernity challenges his patriarchal authority and opens up the frightening abyss of sexual choice.

The Great Indian Middle Class

A truer measure of India's failure is not its present level of poverty, but its inability to create a middle-class. India's middle-class constituted less than 10% of the population in 1984 and 1985, according to the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER). Since then, it has more than tripled, but is still less than 20%. If our country's economy grows 7% over the foreseeable future and if the population increases anually by 1.5%, if the literacy rate keeps rising and if we assume the historical middle-class growth rate of the past 15 years, then half of India will turn middle class between 2020 and 2040.

The growth of the middle class and the economic growth of India are in a virtuous cycle. Rising incomes lead to more consumption, which in turn leads to higher economic growth, then more employment opportunities and subsequently higher wages and the circle starts again.

Thus, as the middle class grows and continues to increase domestic demand, the economy will also continue to grow. In terms of consumption, real private consumption (including both households and private companies) accounts for approximately 55% of GDP. The growth of the middle class will continue to increase household consumption in the country. The middle class also demands better healthcare and education. In addition to the benefit of strengthening human capital stocks l0 and thus productivity, this also leads to more private expenditure on healthcare and education and thus improvements in existing infrastructure. In fact, the CLSA survey of middle income and upper-middle income behaviour showed that education was the third largest household expenditure behind essentials such as rent/mortgage and groceries. In terms of investment (already around 35% of GDP), the growth of the middle class will also make an impact as it will force more business to expand or new business to take root.

The middle-class is also increasing its share of financial investments and thus providing new sources of capital for companies. Although household savings and investment rates as a per cent of GDP have remained relatively the same over the past several years, investment in shares and bonds has risen over the past several years. As the middle class recovers from the crisis, this trend should continue.

When half the population in a society is middle class, its politics will change. Its world view will be different, its poor will be fewer - and society will have greater means to look after them. Thus, to focus on the middle class is to focus on prosperity. This is unlike in the past, when our focus has been on redistributing poverty. This does not mean that we are becoming callous. On the contrary, the whole purpose of the enterprise is to lift the poor - and lift them into the middle class.

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Values Related to Family, Marriage and Women's Status amongst the Middle Class

As India has rapidly progressed since 1990, there has been an upward shift from the lower income to middle income and from middle income to higher income households (population). The middle income group is much larger than the combined number of the other two income categories.

Since the 'Middle-Class' is very large, within this classification also there are sub-classifications as per the income levels. This large populace gives India a unique identity and marketers a large consumer base. Despite India's diverse culture most of the Middle Class Values are common across the country. The Middle Class is cautious, careful and conservative. While there is good literacy level and increasing awareness of the new world without boundaries and globalization, middle class would still like to preserve what they have. The family seniors have worked for most of their lives holding on to their dear jobs and hence are very pro Government service. Stability and surety of income is very important to them.

They have gone through the gradual cycle of acquisition of consumer durables and assets and believe in the same principle. (They worship on buying the first motorbike or small car and paint religious symbols on them.) They have learnt not to take good times for granted and would like to save and re-use. They use polythene covers on all new furniture items and the car seats, till the children force them to part with the same. They are great votaries of good education for their children but would still recommend Engineering and Medicines as the top professions.

The younger population has started exploring new career options and a large percentage of urban youth are engaged in B.P.Os, Retail, Insurance and Telecom sectors. This has brought lot of disposable income in their hands and hence the 'Brand' consciousness and the 'Cafe' culture. Parents are very proud of their working children and do fuel their aspirations, but are at best Cautiously Optimistic of their grand plans. (They are somewhat vary, lest the good times do not last.)

The power of prayer is held to be sacrosanct. Rituals, customs and mores are important. Festivals and marriages are great occasions for the family get together (All somewhat diminishing in the urban areas). Opinion of the neighbours and social groups is still very powerful. Mothers will always eat after feeding the children and the husband. They would insist on handing over home made food tiffin to the four or five figure salary earning children, who obviously are more comfortable in being seen to with the times and by ordering a Pizza or Burger. (This does not however faze the doting mothers.) A study published some time back in India Today stated that children still spend maximum time at home and are deeply influenced by their parent's opinions (Though none of the two generations would readily agree to this!). In a manner of speaking, parents are still their best friends.

Marriages are made in heaven and are for life. Even the NRI children would mostly rely on their mother's opinion for the best match (Though most of them will claim differently). Home made remedies are used with greater faith than the allopathic medicines (Gargles for sore throat, Turmeric in milk for the hidden injury and Garlic for lowering B.P.). While eating in a restaurant, they will order dishes that the family can share and think nothing of eating from each other's plate.

Middle class values are shared Family Values, which are a great bonding factor. These are based on Pragmatism. They suggest achievement and consolidation rather than the Unsustainable Exponential Spiral. More power to the Indian middle class.

Women, being the integral part of our so called democratic nation have always been looked down under the dictatorship of men. Women not only suffer in the rural India, but the problem remains the same in the urban sector of the society too. India's economy has undergone a substantial transformation since the country's independence in 1947 and so the growth of women has also evolved. A section of Indian women the elite and the upper middle class have gained by the

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exposure to the global network. Many of the working women, who manage their own expenses, do contribute towards the economic needs of their family as and when required. Unlike the earlier time they often participate in discussions at workplace where their views are also given equal importance before any final decision.


Task What do you mean by 'old middle classes'?

After globalisation, women are bagging more and more job opportunities. It has raised hopes of women for a secured and elevated status of women arising out of increased chances to work but, at the same time, it has placed them in a highly contradictory economic liberty. But women continued to be denied economic, social and legal rights and privileges.

Women plow fields and harvest crops while working on farms, women weave and make handicrafts while working in the household industries, they sell food and gather wood while working in the informal sector making money for them and their family.

The basic infrastructure of society has hardly improved, though the role of women within the same structure is passing through a transitional phase. It is but natural that she would remain vulnerable to exploitation even in her economically independent status.

In the case of women, besides other social institutions, patriarchy plays on over determining role in socially situating the status of women in the larger social landscape.


Did u know? India is the first among countries to give women equal franchise and has a high credible record with regards to the enactment of laws to protect and promote the interest of women.

Middle Classes in the Western Countries

As a result of industrial developments in the western Europe the new class of merchants and industrialists started developing. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the term middle class was first used to describe these emerging class of bourgeoisie. It stood in-between the rich land owning class and poor working class. With expansion of industries and urban areas, trade and service economy grew. People engaged in these works like small traders and professionals constituted the middle class whom we called 'old middle classes'.

G.D.H. Cole, a famous sociologist attributed the rise of middle class to two important economic developments in the western economy. First, spread of education and Second one is spread of joint stock companies. Another sociologist D. Lockwood attributed the rise of the white-collar salaried class to the developments of corporate capitalism and the emergence of big organisation the 'new middle class' further enlarged with expansion of tertiary/service sector. So here Marx's vision of disappearance of middle class does not stand true because though old middle class seem to have declined in strength, the size of new middle class' has been expanding continuously.

Self-Assessment

Choose the correct options

1. The term middle class was first widely used in

   (*a*) 18th Century (*b*) 17th Century (*c*) 19th Century (*d*) None of these

Notes

2. Class is an essential object of analysis for
   (*a*) Sociologists (*b*) Anthropologists
   (*c*) Political historians (*d*) All of these
3. Social class has a two-class system as per
   (*a*) Karl Marx (*b*) Max Weber (*c*) Persons (*d*) None of these
4. India embarked on a process of economic reform in
   (*a*) 1991 (*b*) 1995 (*c*) 1985 (*d*) 1950

14.3 Summary

- Social classes are the hierarchical arrangements of people in society as economic or cultural groups. Class is an essential object of analysis for sociologists, anthropologists, political economists, and social historians. In the social sciences, social class is often discussed in terms of 'social stratification'.
- The middle class are any class in the middle of a societal hierarchy. In Weberian socio-economic terms, the middle class is the broad group of people in contemporary society who fall socio-economically between the working-class and upper class. In Marxist terms, middle-class commonly refers to either the bourgeoisie before or during capitalism, or some emergent new class within capitalism. In common parlance, middle-class refers to a set of culturally distinct contemporary Western cultures that emphasize consumerism and property ownership within capitalism.
- The concept of middle class, as the name suggests refers to the middle stratum of the hierarchy but this concept is not restricted to locate the stratum in the hierarchical order. But it have far reaching consequences too. This concept developed in India in response to industrial developments here. Middle class forms a composite intermediate layer with a common life-style and behavioural pattern. They stood for certain liberal democratic values. Stability of political democratization and social mobility are identified with middle class. In India middle class has contributed a lot for the political modernization, nation building and economic development of our country in post independence period. Thus we need to understand the Indian Middle class and their importance.
- Britishers introduced modern education which was secular, utilitarian and open to get educated Indians as staff for their administrative institution. The intention was to create a native middle class that would become the carrier of western culture in India and act as interpreter. With expansion of education professional middle class emerged they included doctors, lawyers, teachers, journalists etc. Their size grew in late 19th and early 20th century. The western educated youth brought the new liberal values of democracy, equality, liberty etc. They started reforming Indian society. All those reform movements in 19th century were led by these western educated middle class individuals.
- These English educated middle class themselves questioned the legitimacy of British rule in India. They played a very crucial role in bringing social reforms and creating a sense of Indian nationalism. The Indian National Congress, initially was dominated by professional, English educated middle class only. Majority members of the Congress were lawyers, journalists, teachers and educationalists. Mahatma Gandhi who put effort to transform the National Congress into a mass movement was a lawyer and typically belonged to professional middle class. The freedom movement in India in its course was guided by the middle class leader only. They forced the Britishers for industrialization in India, expansion of educational institutions and social reforms.

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- Income was not the criteria to define the middle class rather education, knowledge of English and high aspiration level were the important characteristic of middle class in India. They played a very significant role in the modernization of our country. Today the optimistic estimation states that in India, middle class constitute about sixty million households.
- After independence, the new political elite initiated the capitalist transformation of agriculture through land reform and green revolution. Land reform conferred ownership right to twenty million family in country side. Green revolution technology increased the productivity of land. Such economic development in rural area motivated people to have higher aspirations. Thus it created rural middle class. They are being mobilized by the politicians for the regional interests. As a result of policy of protective discrimination and abolition of untouchability, people from the Dalit caste groups could get education and employment in government jobs. Now these people are forming a Dalit middle class.
- The emergence of the middle-class was facilitated by modern education and the consequent work opportunities available in offices set-up for commercial, administrative and other purposes by the colonial government. The conceptual and political boundaries of Indian middle-class rested on mediation between the colonial rulers and colonial subjects. The relationship was premised on subordination to colonial power but at the same time providing cultural leadership to the indigenous people. In the post-colonial India, the middle-class were identified as 'Nehruvian civil service-oriented salariat, short on money but long on institutional perks'. In the contemporary period, the 'new' middle class, as a social group, is depicted as negotiating India's new relationship with the global economy in both cultural (socio symbolic practices of commodity consumption) and economic terms (the beneficiaries of the material benefits of jobs and business in India's new liberalised economy).
- The urban middle classes now more than one hundred million people reaped most of the benefits of the liberalisation and modernisation programmes and began to envisage their entry into the brave new world of computers, electronics. In addition, the new economic policy also included deregulation and privatisation of the public sector. Economic reforms are generating a 6-7 per cent annual economic growth rate. Material comforts have begun to reach millions of homes for the first time in Indian history and the process is certain to continue.
- India's rapidly expanding economy has provided the basis for a fundamental change—the emergence of what eminent journalist Suman Dubey calls a "new vanguard" increasingly dictating India's political and economic direction. This group is India's new middle class—mobile, driven, consumer-oriented, and, to some extent, forward-looking. Hard to define precisely, it is not a single stratum of society, but straddles town and countryside, making its voice heard everywhere. It encompasses prosperous farmers, white-collar workers, business people, military personnel, and myriad others, all actively working toward a prosperous life. Ownership of cars, televisions, and other consumer goods, reasonable earnings, substantial savings, and educated children (often fluent in English) typify this diverse group. Many have ties to kinsmen living abroad who have done very well.
- The growth of modern markets catering to the needs of the aggressive consumer fetish of the middle class is displacing the traditional hawkers who were also a source of relatively cheaper consumer items meeting, the immediate consumption needs of this class.
- If we see the emergence of the middle class in the rural areas. Several of the states in India are witness to the emergence of an agro-mercantile class who have stakes in agriculture but also sufficient economic presence in the nearest urban economy. Their social habits, educational achievements/ aspirations and consumerism seem to be similar to their urban counterparts.

Notes

- The domestication of modernity in India has a trajectory not unlike that of the taming of the shrew; and, indeed, many educated (male) Indians would attribute to modernity, qualities not dissimilar to those borne by that hapless Shakespearean wench. Technology is the only arena where the middle class Indian feels comfortable with modernity. And then he has to domesticate it annually through worshipful puja every Dussehra. In all other areas, particularly to do with social interaction, the middle class Indian speaks only the language of caste, kinship and community.
- "Sources" and "contacts" are the ways to negotiate the professional world and kin whispers to kin about the possibilities of "finding something" for one of their own. The use of connections to gain employment, favours and benefits is rampant among the middle class and it rarely enters a secular arena, whether government office or corporate house, without hawing first found out who is the best person (in caste/regional/kinship terms) to "approach" there.
- The growth of the middle class and the economic growth of India are in a virtuous cycle. Rising incomes lead to more consumption, which in turn leads to higher economic growth, then more employment opportunities and subsequently higher wages and the circle starts again.
- Thus, as the middle class grows and continues to increase domestic demand, the economy will also continue to grow. In terms of consumption, real private consumption (including both households and private companies) accounts for approximately 55% of GDP.
- The middle class also demands better healthcare and education. In addition to the benefit of strengthening human capital stocksl0 and thus productivity, this also leads to more private expenditure on healthcare and education and thus improvements in existing infrastructure. In fact, the CLSA survey of middle income and upper-middle income behaviour showed that education was the third largest household expenditure behind essentials such as rent/ mortgage and groceries.
- The middle-class is also increasing its share of financial investments and thus providing new sources of capital for companies. Although household savings and investment rates as a per cent of GDP have remained relatively the same over the past several years, investment in shares and bonds has risen over the past several years.
- The 'Middle-Class' is very large, within this classification also there are sub-classifications as per the income levels. This large populace gives India a unique identity and marketers a large consumer base. Despite India's diverse culture most of the Middle Class Values are common across the country. The Middle Class is cautious, careful and conservative. While there is good literacy level and increasing awareness of the new world without boundaries and globalization, middle class would still like to preserve what they have. The family seniors have worked for most of their lives holding on to their dear jobs and hence are very pro Government service. Stability and surety of income is very important to them.
- The power of prayer is held to be sacrosanct. Rituals, customs and mores are important. Festivals and marriages are great occasions for the family get together (All somewhat diminishing in the urban areas). Opinion of the neighbours and social groups is still very powerful. Mothers will always eat after feeding the children and the husband. They would insist on handing over home made food tiffin to the four or five figure salary earning children, who obviously are more comfortable in being seen to with the times and by ordering a Pizza or Burger.
- Middle class values are shared Family Values, which are a great bonding factor. These are based on Pragmatism. They suggest achievement and consolidation rather than the Unsustainable Exponential Spiral. More power to the Indian middle class.

Notes

- Women, being the integral part of our so called democratic nation have always been looked down under the dictatorship of men. Women not only suffer in the rural India, but the problem remains the same in the urban sector of the society too. India's economy has undergone a substantial transformation since the country's independence in 1947 and so the growth of women has also evolved. A section of Indian women the elite and the upper middle class have gained by the exposure to the global network. Many of the working women, who manage their own expenses, do contribute towards the economic needs of their family as and when required. Unlike the earlier time they often participate in discussions at workplace where their views are also given equal importance before any final decision.
- The basic infrastructure of society has hardly improved, though the role of women within the same structure is passing through a transitional phase. It is but natural that she would remain vulnerable to exploitation even in her economically independent status.
- In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the term middle class was first used to describe these emerging class of bourgeoisie. It stood in-between the rich land owning class and poor working class. With expansion of industries and urban areas, trade and service economy grew. People engaged in these works like small traders and professionals constituted the middle class whom we called 'old middle classes'.

14.4 Key–Words

1. Emergence : The process of coming into view or becoming exposed after being concealed.
2. Peasantry : The class of peasants.

14.5 Review Questions

1. What is the concept of middle class?
2. Explain the rise of middle class in India during the British Rule.
3. What is the growth of middle class after independence?
4. Write a short note on the emergence of middle class

Answers: Self–Assessment

1. (*c*) 2. (*d*) 3. (*a*) 4. (*a*)

14.6 Further Readings



1. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Perspectives on Social Stratification, Rawat Publication.
2. Sharma, K.L., 2010 : Social Stratification & Mobility, Rawat Publication.
3. Hasnain, Nadeem, 2011 : Indian Society and Culture Continuity and Change, Jawahar Publishers and Distributors.