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SEMESTER - II

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

SOCIOLOGY

Surya Kumar Bhuyan School of Social Sciences

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

The first course of Second Semester of M.A Sociology Programme of KKHSOU is titled "Social Stratification". It is designed to help the learners to have a deep understanding about various concepts, theoretical dimensions and bases or forms of Social Stratification. For a learner of Sociology, the understanding of society is incomplete without understanding social stratification. Accordingly, the course begins with a very basic discussion on the meaning and concept of Social Stratification in Unit 1. Unit 2 familiarises the learner with the important concepts of Social Stratification. Unit 3 discusses the relationship between Social Stratification and Social Inequality. Unit 4, 5, 6, 7 explains the different theoretical perspectives on Social Stratification. The arguments of the Functionalists thinkers and the criticisms to their perspective is elaborated in Unit 4. Similarly, the views of Marxist thinkers regarding social stratification is discussed in Unit 5. Unit 6 deals with the Weberian perspective on Social Stratification and Unit 7, explains the Feminist Perspective on Stratification. Unit 8-13 familiarises the learner with the different bases of social stratification or the different forms in which stratification becomes operational in society. Unit 8 discusses Caste as a form of social stratification and how caste status is accorded differently to different groups of people. Similarly, Unit 9 explains to the learners how different groups of people in our society are stratified into different classes. Unit 10 discusses about Race and Ethnicity as forms of Stratification and Unit 11 discusses gender as another form of social stratification. Unit 12 makes the learner understand about some other important bases of stratification such as Tribe, Region etc. Unit 13 discusses about some of the emerging forms or dimensions of stratification such as deviance, disability so on and so forth. Thus the course on 'Social Stratification' is developed in such a way that the learner understands the important concepts, theoretical perspectives, and also the different bases or forms of social stratification.

UNIT 1: SOCIAL STRATIFICATION- AN INTRODUCTION

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1 Learning Objectives
1.2 Introduction
1.3 The Concept of Social Stratification in Sociology
1.3.1 Characteristics of Social Stratification
1.3.2 Dimensions of Social Stratification
1.4 Social Mobility and Stratification
1.5 Let Us Sum Up
1.6 Further Reading
1.7 Answers to Check Your Progress
1.8 Model Questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- know the meaning and basic concept of social stratification
- understand the meaning of social mobility and its significance in Sociology
- understand that the intensity and rigidity of the different forms of Stratification vary from society to society
- explain how social mobility is possible between different strata's in society.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

In common parlance the word stratification simply refers to the division of people into different groups. It is a very well known fact that the earth crust naturally consists of different layers, one above another. Like the earth crust, we have layers in human society where one group of people have been placed above another. However, it is not natural formation like earth crust. It has been socially constructed in due course of time and is known as social stratification. For example caste is one form of social

stratification. The word social stratification encompasses both inequality and difference. The issues in the Sociology of Social Stratification relates to questions of theory, structure and processes of social stratification. Here we must mention about three well known orientations in the studies of social stratification i) Functional theory and its critique (Talcott Parsons, Kingsley Davis and Moore) ii) Conflict theories (Karl Marx) iii) Weberian theory (Max Weber). However all these theories are not free from criticism. We will discuss in detail about all these perspectives and their critique in the following units.

Social stratification is a very interesting subject in sociological discourse. It is as old as human civilization and is an unavoidable feature of all human societies, though found in different degrees and forms. In every society three kinds of resources are valued i) power - the ability to impose one's will on others; ii) prestige - respect from others; iii) property - wealth owned, whether measured in yams, land etc. Unequal disribution of all these scarce resources, whether in a complex or simple society results into inequality, difference and hierarchical division within a society. Social stratification encompasses both inequality and difference, which we will discuss in detail in the next unit. A hierarchy is a set of ranked statuses from the highest to the lowest. Because both the most- and least valued traits are likely to be relatively rare, status hierarchies tend to be diamond shaped, narrow at the very top and bottom. Within the hierarchy, people at different levels or strata can claim different amounts of power, prestige and property. In this way, a set of ranked statuses based on evaluations of social significance is transformed into a hierarchy of control over societal resources. Stratification systems thus are both a cause and consequence of inequality. Although in a hunting and gathering society all members are equally valued and rewarded, it is a rare phenomenon. Once the division of labour expands beyond gathering some tasks will be considered more important than others, and the people who perform such tasks will be rewarded with power, respect and material goods. At the very least, labour is divided on the basis of sex and age so that all societies have gender and age stratification systems. The more complex the division of labour, or the more heterogeneous the

society in terms of race, religion, and national origin, the more ways there are to judge people differently- by what they do (achieved status) or by what they are (ascribed statuses). In this unit, we will discuss in details the concept of Social Stratification in Sociology.

1.3. THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN SOCIOLOGY

Lets us begin our discussion with some definitions. According to Melvin M Tumin social stratification is the arrangement of any group or society into hierarchy of positions that are unequal with regard to power, property, social evaluation and psychic gratification. Talcott Parsons regards social stratification as the differential ranking of the human individuals who comprise a given social system and their treatment as superior and inferior in relation to one another in certain socially important respects. According to P.A Sorokin , social stratification means the differentiation of a definite population into hierarchically superposed classes. Stratification therefore refers to unequal distribution of rights, duties, priviledges and responsibilities among the members of a particular society (Sharma, 1994,2010).

Thus, Social stratification is the ordering of social differences with the help of a set of criteria or a single criterion. System of stratification exists with the deliberate act of the observer who opts for a common criterion. Social stratification has various reckonings and when these systems do not match there is resistance.

Social Stratification deals with the ways in which human population is socially differentiated i.e. differentiated publicly and demonstrably (Gupta 1991: 2). The principle on which caste system is based is the principle of 'natural superiority'. Natural superiority is not based on physical ability or intelligence but on 'endowment of bodily purity'. Louis Dumont in Homo Hierarchicus opines how the society is stratified on the basis of purity and impurity. Thus, according to Louis Dumont, the extreme form of social stratification co-exists with occupational stratification, linguistic stratification, sexual stratification and religious stratification. And these stratifications have their principles



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: How has Talcott Parsons defined Social Stratification?

.....

Q 2: Name the author of 'Homo Hierarchicus

.....

1.3.1. Characteristics of Social Stratification

According to Melvin M Tumin the phenomenon of Social stratification has commanded much attention from sociologists because of the following characteristics:

- **Antiquity:** According to historical evidence stratification was present even in the small wandering societies. However, its form and base was different than present days. In those primitive societies age, sex, physical strength etc were important criteria of social stratification.

- **Ubiquitous:** Social stratification is universal. It is found in each and every society whether it is traditional or modern, literate or illiterate, with some variations in terms of its form and dimension.

- **The Social Patterning of Stratification:** Norms, values, sanctions etc determine the dimensions, base or criteria of a particular type of stratification. As norms, sanction, value are not uniform throughout all societies therefore social stratification varies from society to society. For example in some societies, physical strength is more important while in some societies wealth is more important. Physical strength, wealth, power etc are some important criteria of stratification based on which people are divided into different hierarchical groups. The social-pattern aspects of social stratification suggests that the distribution of rewards in any community is governed by norms, that is conventional rules.

- **The Diversity of Form and Amount of Stratification:** It is of utmost importance to mention here that the diversity in the amount of stratification found in societies of the past and present is matched by diversity in form. Terms like Caste, Class and Estate are most appropriate to express the different ways in which strata can be arranged. Significantly all system of the world could be classified under these terms.

- **The Consequences of Stratification:** The consequences, which always results from inequalities in the distributions in property, power and prestige, can be divided into four general headings: 1) Life Chance 2) Institutional Pattern of Conduct 3) Life Style 4) Values, Attitudes, and ideologies.

Life chance means the probabilities that one will enjoy or fail to enjoy some opportunities , achievements, and satisfy experience during the course of one's life. For example a person from a higher strata weather it is class or caste will have more chance to go for higher education. The institutional patterns of behaviour refers to patterns of behaviour of everyday life in all the basic institution of society: the economy, the political system, the family etc. The inequalities in property, power and prestige influences the pattern of behaviour of people. Life style refers to the ways in which people use their disposable energy, time and resources to lay claim to certain levels of honour, that they believe are due to them and that they consider desirable and acceptable. The terms values, attitude and ideologies refers to sets of beliefs about and orientations to questions like what defines a good society, what are the ingredients of a good personal life etc. (Tumin, 1985).

1.3.2 Dimensions of Social Stratification

Social stratification refers to the unequal distribution of power, prestige, and property. In many ways, there is a basic unity to these three hierarchies: wealth is often power, and both can be used to command respect. Max Weber, however, emphasised the need to consider three different ways of ranking, even though they cannot always be separated in real life (Weber:

1922/1968). These ways are: Class refers to the people at the same economic level, who may or may not be aware of their common interests. Status groups are based on prestige, whose members share a common lifestyle. Which qualities earn respect will vary from one society to another. Parties are political groupings that may or may not be organised around class interests.

- **Power:** Power as defined by Max Weber, is the ability to impose one's will on other social actors, regardless of their own wishes. Power is a social resource that is unequally distributed in most societies, groups and relationships. Power is also relational, that is, it can be realised only when other people obey.

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

- **Prestige:** Prestige or status honour is uniquely a social unit that depends on the respect that others are willing to give. Some societies honour the wise and humble, others the immodest and hostile, but everywhere respect from others is a valued resource. In modern industrial societies, prestige is largely based on occupational status, although income is also important. As for example, the highest scores are given to professionals such as physicians, lawyers, scientists, and college professors. A profession is an occupation that requires a long period of training and for which those already in the field control the number and type of people allowed to practice, monitor peer performance and protect their members from public review. Lowest rankings in contrast are given to people whose jobs require little training and who do dirty work or who must take orders without question; for example, nursing home

attendants, sweepers, etc. Thus, the higher the social value of the occupation, the more justified to do high income jobs. Prestige judgements are also affected by whether women or men dominate the occupation, with women's work being rated lower.

- **Property:** Certain objects of a society signify the material success of a society. In the United States for example, wealth is measured by counting the money value of everything owned by a person, family or household including houses, cars, bank accounts, stocks and bonds, life insurance, retirement funds, artwork and jewellery. Whereas, in a village property includes movable and immovable goods and services. It also includes the pets and domesticated animals and birds.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Is social stratification a universal phenomenon?

.....

Q 4: What are the different dimensions of social stratification?

.....

1.4 SOCIAL MOBILITY AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Social mobility refers to the movement of people from one strata to other strata. However, social mobility of people depends upon the particular type of stratification. Some forms of stratification like caste, estate etc. are very rigid where mobility or change of one's own strata is not easy and it takes time. On the other hand some form of stratification like Class is not very rigid. A stratification system, which provides little opportunity for social mobility, may be described as closed type of social stratification. In a closed system boundaries between the strata are rigid and people's position in the stratification system are set up by their ascribed status. Social position is hereditary and individual ability and efforts generally do not count. Therefore, caste system can be considered as closed type of stratification.

Stratification systems with relatively high rate of social mobility are termed as 'open'. In open type of social stratification, the boundaries between the levels or strata ae relatively more flexible and may be influenced by people's achieved status. For example, class.

It is important to mention here that three grounds could be mentioned with regard to social mobility: merit, egalitarianism, and historiocity. Those who have requisite abilities would change their status and can move upwardly. Secondly, when all people have equal access, no hindrances may be there in their way to a higher status. Thirdly historicity, 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.

P.A Sorokin (1964) in his work Social and Cultural Mobility has discussed in detail about the concept of social mobility and its various types. According to him, social mobility is any transition of an individual or social object or value-anything that has been created by human activity. He has divided the pheneomenon of mobility into two major types: i) Horiziontal and ii) Vertical

Horizontal social mobility refers to the transition of an individual from one social group to another situated on the same level. It implies a very high degree of dynamism. It does not affect the system of social stratification. It is intra systemic: Change within the system not of the system. For example if a peon is transferred in the same rank from one office to another office.

Vertical social mobility, on the other hand, refers to the transition of individual or group from one social stratum to another. For example, if a peon is getting promotion in the same office where he is working or getting transferred and promoted into another office. This mobility is highly valued and it occurs over a long period of time, often inter-generationally. Vertical social mobility can be sub-divided again into two type:

- Upward or ascending or climbing, which has two forms a) as an infiltration of the individuals of a lower stratum into an existing higher one. b) the insertion of a group into a higher stratum.

- Downward or descending or sinking which has also two forms: a) dropping of individuals from a higher social position into a lower one. b) degradation of a higher social group as a whole , in an abasement of its rank among other groups.

Sorokin has also distinguished between the intensiveness and generality of the vertical mobility. Intensiveness refers to the vertical social distance or the number of strata (conomic, political, or occupational) crossed by an indvidual in his upward or downward movement in a definite period of time. Generality means the total number of individuals who has changed their position in vertical direction over the period of times. By observing all these dimensions we can know about a particular society and the kind of stratification practised by that society.

Sorokin has put forth the following principles of vertical mobility:

- 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.
- There has never existed a society in which vertical social mobility has been absolutely free and transition from one strata to another has had no resitance.
- The intensiveness and generality of the vertical mobility varies from place to place and society to society and fluctuates within same society in different times.

Vertical mobility functions to some degree in any society. There must be some thin layers between the strata which allows individuals to move up and down. The most important channels of social circulation are :

- Army
- Church

- School
- Family
- Political, Professional and Economic organizations.

In addition to the above-mentioned types of social mobility, we have two other forms: Intergenerational and Intragenerational. Intergenerational mobility is the movement in the socio-economic ladder, experienced by family members from one generation to the next. For example son of a worker achieving the position of a manager in a company. On the other hand when people move or change their social strata within their own life time then it is known as intragenerational. For instance if one accountant got promotion to the post of manager during his lifetime. These are vertical form of mobility. Therefore, movement may take place either in ascending order or in descending order.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: Give an example of Closed stratification.

.....

Q 6: Name the author of 'Social and Cultural Mobility'

.....



1.5 LET US SUM UP

- The phenomenon of social stratification encompasses both social inequality and social difference.
- The issues in the Sociology of Social Stratification relates to questions of theory, structure and processes of social stratification.
- Social stratification is as old as human civilization and an unavoidable feature of all human societies.

- Unequal distribution of scarce resources whether in a complex or simple society results into inequality and difference and hierarchical division in a society.
- Stratification systems thus, are both a cause and consequences of inequality.
- According to Melvin M Tumin social stratification is the arrangement of any group or society into hierarchy of positions that are unequal with regard to power, property and social evaluation and psychic gratification.
- 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 as relative to another in certain socially important respects.
- Social stratification is the ordering of social differences with the help of set of criteria or a single criterion.
- Social Stratification deals with the ways in which human population is socially differentiated i.e. differentiated publicly and demonstrably.
- According to historical evidence stratification was present even in the small wandering societies.
- Social stratification is universal.
- Social stratification varies from society to society.
- Social stratification refers to the unequal distribution of power, prestige, and property.
- Social mobility refers to the movement of people from one strata to another strata.
- Stratification system, which provides little opportunity for social mobility is known as closed type of stratification.

- Stratification system with relatively high rate of social mobility are termed as 'open' type of stratification.
- Merit, egalitarianism, and historicity are three important ground for mobility.
- Sorokin has divided the phenomenon of mobility into two major types: i) Horizontal and ii) Vertical.
- Vertical social mobility can be sub-divided again into two type: i) Ascending and ii) Descending.
- Intensiveness refers to the vertical social distance or the number of strata.
- Generality refers to the total number of individuals who have changed their position in vertical direction over the period of times.
- In addition to the above mentioned types of social mobility we have two other forms : Intergenerational and Intragenerational



1.6 FURTHER READING

1) Gupta, Dipankar; 2010; Social Stratification, Oxford University Press: New Delhi

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4) Sharma, K.L,1994: Social Stratification and Mobility. Banglore, Hyderabad and Guwahati: Rawat Publications.

5) _____ ,2010: Perspective on Social Stratification. Hyderabad and Guwahati: Rawat Publications.

6) Saikia, Jyotiprasad and H. Buragohain, 2016: General Sociology, Vidya Bhawan, Jorhat.

7) Tumin, Melvin M ,1985: Social Stratification: The forms and Functions of Inequality; Printice Hall.

1.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Talcott Parsons defined social stratification as the differential ranking of the human individuals who comprise a given social system and their treatment as superior and inferior in relation to one another in certain socially important respects.

Ans to Q No 2: Louis Dumont

Ans to Q No 3: Yes, social stratification is a Universal phenomenon.

Ans to Q No 4: Power, Prestige and Property

Ans to Q No 5: Caste is an example of closed stratification.

Ans to Q No 6: P. A Sorokin

1.8 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Explain the concept of Social Stratification.

Q 2: Explain the characteristics of Social Stratification.

Q 3: Distinguish between open and closed type of stratification with suitable examples.

Long Question (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Discuss the various dimensions of Stratification.

Q 2: Define social mobility. Illustrate the various forms of mobility as put forth by P.A Sorokin.

** ** **

UNIT 2: BASIC CONCEPTS

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning Objectives
2.2 Introduction
2.3 Hierarchy and Difference
2.4 Varna and Caste
2.5 Class
2.6 Power
2.7 Ethnicity
2.8 Let Us Sum up
2.9 Further Reading
2.10 Answers to Check your Progress
2.11 Model Questions

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- know about the meaning of Hierarchy and Difference
- understand the concept ofVarna, Caste, Class, Power and Ethnicity.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

Stratification has been the hallmark of human societies all around the world. Stratification has been derived from the word 'stratum' which means hierarchical arrangement of layers so that one is distinct from the other just like the earth's crust. In the previous unit, we have learned that Social Stratification refers to the hierarchical ranking and ordering of social structures like caste, class, ethnicity and people into groups according to social values, wealth, status, prestige, power and privilege in society. This unit will help to understand some of the basic concepts of social stratification like hierarchy, difference, varna, caste, class, power and ethnicity.

2.3 HIERARCHY AND DIFFERENCE

Hierarchy is a defining and pervasive feature of stratification. Hierarchy implicitly or explicitly orders individuals and groups on the basis of social values, wealth, status, power, religious purity and privilege in society. Hierarchies are explicit when they are stated in terms of rules and consensually agreed upon whereas hierarchies are implicit when they are subjectively understood and taken for granted. Louis Dumont defines hierarchy as an ordering phenomenon on a constant scale which measures the elements of the whole in relation to the whole. Hierarchies thus encompass the differentiated strata within the hierarchy into a unified system through a defining criterion. Hierarchy with its principle of encompassing the elements of the whole signifies continuity, order and conformity rather than conflict. Conflicts can occur only when there are differences in the system of stratification. For example, class conflict occurs as there are differences between the castes which are encompassed within the caste system. Conflicts arise in caste society as there are not one but multiple caste hierarchies which are separate and equivalent and their positions are supported by their caste ideologies. Hierarchy is one manifestation of stratification where the strata or layers are arranged vertically along a variable measured on a continuous scale. For example, people's income can be arranged in a hierarchical scale in ascending or descending order to form a system of stratification based on income. Dipankar Gupta says that not all systems of stratification are hierarchical; some are based on difference where hierarchy may or may not feature. In hierarchy the layers are arranged vertically whereas in difference the layers are arranged horizontally or separately. For example, India is a secular country constituted by the major religions of the world which are not hierarchically privileged by law but exist by acknowledging the intrinsic horizontal differences among them. Moreover, in hierarchy, the criterion of stratification is quantitative or quantifiable, i.e. it can be expressed in more or less certain properties whereas in difference the criterion of stratification is qualitative.

Difference is another feature of social stratification which suggests that individuals and groups are ordered in terms ofa criterion or set of criteria

like possession and access to resources, skills, education, status, power so as that the differentiated stratas constitute a unified system. According to Dipankar Gupta, social stratification does not only mean differentiation but differentiation, made socially visible leads to social stratification. He says that there are certain criteria and social markers acknowledged within society which separate people and form the basis of differentiation. He adds that the criteria of difference may be one but the social display of differentiation may include a number of factors. For example, superiority in caste is in terms of natural purity which is socially displayed in the form of rituals, taboos, customs, social practices, occupations and style of life. So, social stratification is not satisfied by biological difference per se but with the social amplification of the biological differences in the form of occupation, dress, food practices, residence, mobility and a combination of all these factors and more. Dipankar Gupta says that difference is not naturally visible to the naked eye. The observer or the analyst has to make a deliberate attempt to link the manifest differences to construct a particular system of stratification. He says that difference is on the basis of a criterion which unites to form a system of stratification. For example, if we take occupations, then we can include people who have certain occupation that is socially recognized like teacher, doctor, scientist, lawyer, engineer and so on. We are not interested here in knowing their religion, language, sex and ethnicity but are only concerned with the criterion of occupation which differentiates people into various strata and unites them to form a system of stratification based on that criterion. Hierarchy and difference are manifested in all forms of stratification like varna, caste, class, power, ethnicity and so on.

2.4 VARNA AND CASTE

Varna literally means colour. Varna referred to the distinction between Arya and Dasa, referring to fair and dark colours respectively. The Satapatha Brahmana, a part of Yajur Veda, describes the four classes as four varnas. The origin of the varna model is in the Rig Veda where along with the distinction between Arya and Dasa,there is a division of society into three

orders, viz. Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vish. It was later in Purusasukra hymn, that reference was made to four orders of society as emanating from the creator-Brahmins (traditionally priests, teachers, scholars and healers) from the mouth; Rajanya or Kshyatria (rulers, warriors and soldiers) from the arms; Vaishya (merchants and traders) from the thighs; and Shudra (peasants, labourers and servants) from the feet of the creator. The particular parts of the body associated with these divisions and the order in which they are mentioned determine their status in society.Each varnais located at a specific position in hierarchical order and allocated certain duties for the functioning of society. In this varna model there is no place for untouchables or 'Harijans'a name given by Mahatma Gandhi to the group of people who were beyond the confines of varna model. However there are references in Vedic literature to groups such as the Ayogava, Chandala, Nishada and Paulkasawho were despised. Varnamodel gives us the origin of four orders with Brahmins at the top of the hierarchy. However, there are other tales of origin like the jatipuranas where the Brahmins are not at the top and which captures the essence of difference among the castes. There are some castes which even consider the Brahmins to be defiling. Though varna and caste are used interchangeably but caste should be distinguished from varna.

Caste is one of the bases of stratification and an important organizing principle of Indian society. Caste is relatively a closed system of stratification in comparison to class. Caste isderived from the Portuguese word 'casta',meaning race or breed.Caste divisions, which are viewed as, divinely ordained and graded hierarchically are an imposition of the foreign scholars to understand Indian society, which is divided into various jatiand sub-jati. Jati is derieved from Sanskrit, meaning 'to be born'. Jatiis an endogamous, hereditary social group that has a name and a combination of attributes, which are to be followed by its members sharing the jati's status in the social hierarchy of one's village.

Caste determines the functions, occupation, status, available opportunities, but sometimes even handicaps the individual. But due to the processes of modernization in India, Yogendra Singh (1973) says that there are structural changes in caste. Some of the characteristics of caste are as follows:

- **Ascribed Category:** Caste is ascribed at the time of one's birth and remains unchanged for the rest of the life. However, one can elevate one's position in the caste hierarchy through Sanskritization .

- **Hierarchy:** Caste is based on a hierarchical relationship,which is ascertained at the time of birth. However, there are regional variations in the hierarchal relationship between the castes. Sometimes the same jatiwas ranked higher in one region than in another.

- **Traditional Occupation:** Caste fixes one's traditional occupation at the time of birth. The division of labour ascertained by traditional occupation which helps in functioning of the Jajmani System, which is based on the symbiotic relationship between jajman or patron and kamin or client. The services provided by the kamin to jajmancan be remunerated in cash or kind on daily, monthly, quarterly or yearly basis. The Jajmani System regulates economic and socio-religious interdependence of the castes. However, the traditional occupations on the basis of one's caste are no longer strictly followed.

- **Endogamous Group:** Castes are endogamous groups. Matrimonial alliances have to be formed within one's caste group but outside one's gotra. Inter-caste marriagesare forbidden but it is relaxed now a days.

- **Social Restrictions:** Caste decides from which particular caste one can accept what kind of food(cooked or uncooked). It also determines the choice of utensils to offer food.Caste governs one's physical contact, social distance and social interaction.Caste determines the location and type of house in the village. These restrictions are now removed through legislations.

In spite of the structural changes in caste, in contemporary period caste consciousness is increasing due to caste associations, positive discrimination and politicization of castes. Thus, we can aptly say that caste continues to be an important principle of stratification in Indian society.

2.5 CLASS

Class is an important basis of stratification and organizing principle in modern complex societies. The word class is derived from the Latin word 'classis' which refers to a division of Roman people, a class of learners or a grade. Class refers to the socially significant economic situation, economic advantages or disadvantages enjoyed or suffered by a homogeneous group of people. Class, unlike caste, is relatively open as social mobility is permitted and it is linked with achievement criteria.According to Karl Marx, class is the basis of social stratification. He said classes emerge when the society extends and increases its capability of production beyond the requisite level of existence. He defined class in terms of group of persons sharing same relations to means of production. The relation to means of production leads to two types of classes in society not just two classes as there were other social classes also in each epoch like the journeymen, guildmaster, apprentice, petit bourgeoisie and freeman. But these social classes are descriptive classes as social change does not centre on them. Analytically Marx identified two classes in all epoch as the contradictory relationship between them defined the epoch and resulted in social change- the haves, who owns and control the means of production and the have-nots, who own labour and do not own and control the means of production. The haves are the minority of population in society owning and controlling majority of the economic resources and constituting the ruling or dominant class whereas the have-nots who are a majority of population in society do not own or control the means of production and are looked down upon as the subject class. The haves and have-nots are known by different names in each epoch such as the master and the slave in ancient or primitive

society, the lord and the serf in the feudal society and the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the capitalist society. Thus, Marx aptly says that the history of all existing society is the history of class struggle and this class struggle will end with the formation of Communist society where there would be no classes or divisions in society and equality will prevail. According to Max Weber, class refers to a group of people sharing similar economic situation with regard to their life chances in the market place. Unlike Marx, Weber does not only restrict class to ownership and control of means of production but also includes services one could offer in the market place. He stresses that class is only one dimension of the complex stratification structure of society and that status and party (or power) are the other dimensions of stratification structure of society. His understanding of social stratification was based on three axes of stratification which reflected economic, social and political aspects of society which were often interrelated: Class centred on life chances and rewards in the market place; status centred on social prestige and honour; and party centred on power.He said that the place of class was within economic order of society i.e. within the sphere of distribution of economic rewards in the market place; the place of status was within social order of society i.e. within the sphere of distribution of honour and prestige; but the place of party was within the house of power. Status refers to the process of ranking individuals or groups on the basis of prestige elicited by their roles they fulfil in a given society. Status is the honour or prestige accorded to an individual or group by a community on the basis of birth, family background, ethnicity, occupation, livelihood, education, property, income, contribution to society, lifestyle and so on.The criterion on which status is determined and specified differs from society to society. Status can be acquired either through ascription or through achievement. However, societies vary in terms of comparable importance they give to ascription or achievement criterion of status.Weber says that differences on the basis of prestige and honour create status groups. He adds that status groups are groups of people sharing similar lifestyles and same prestige and honour. Status group, unlike class, constitutes those

people whose fate in not depended on the life chances in the market place. He says that people belonging to the same class may not belong to the same status group. Class is determined in terms of owning and controlling of means of production whereas status is determined on the basis of their consumption of goods and services.Party (or power) is another dimension of the complex stratification structure of society. Weber defined party as a political group or association of people where the members participate and exercise power for their own benefit. He said that just as status groups can divide and cut across similarly parties can divide and cut across status groups and classes. Thus, we can say that Weber defined social stratification on the basis of class, status and party which, though interrelated, operate separately from one another.

2.6 POWER

Power is a significant dimension of stratification in society. According to Max Weber, power is the ability or possibility to exercise and enforce one's will in spite of the resistance of the other. At the root of relations of power lies force and domination. He said that power could be legitimate or illegitimate. Those who have power use certain resources like punitive, restrictive resources consisting of punishments or restrictive materials, encouragement resources consisting of rewards, stimulation or motivation to fulfil the orders of those in power and certain resource utilizing conviction to convince others to fulfil the objectives of those in power. Power allows people who possess it to dictate rules and acquire a position which benefits them as they have control over the resources. In this way it leads to formation of elites and the ordering of the social strata within a hierarchical social structure. Weber says that the distribution of power not only stratifies society but also creates political associations like parties. He says that economically determined power is not identical with social or legal power. For example, propertied and propertyless people may belong to the same status group. According to Weber (1925, 1946), there are three types of power- economic, social and political. A fourth type of power which is informational was added

by Svalastoga (1964). Weber distinguished between power and authority. As the source of the former could be legitimate or illegitimate, the source of the latter is always legitimate. Weber identified three types of authority- traditional authority, charismatic authority and rational-legal authority.Traditional Authority is derived from traditions and customs of a group of people which has been accepted for a long period, for example the traditional authority wielded by a tribal chief over his/her people. Charismatic Authority is derived from the charisma or the personal qualities of the person wielding such authority. For example Napolean is considered to be a charismatic leader. Rational-Legal Authorityis derived from the office, the rules and is not based on the person. For example, the rational- legal authority is vested with the Indian Parliament. Power not only affects personal relations but also larger dynamics like social institutions, organizations and government. The power of the government is not only limited to its citizens but also to migrants residing under its rule. In some instances the power of the government stretches beyond its geographical limits. The power wielded by U.S. government when it invaded Iraq and toppled the rule of Saddam Hussein or when it imposed sanctions on North Korea are exarples of this power. The conflict perspective of social stratification centres the division of individuals or groups on the basis of unequal distribution of power and resources. Those in power exploit those who are powerless to fulfil their objectives. The unequal distribution of power and resources reflect the interests of those in power rather than the societal needs. According to Ralph Dahrendorf (1959) social stratification is the interrelationship of norms, sanction and power.

2.7 ETHNICITY

Ethnicity refers to shared cultural perspectives, practices, values, beliefs, norms and distinctiveness which set one group apart from another. The most common characteristics of ethnic groups are shared cultural heritage, sense of history, language, region, religion, tradition, form of dress, food, shared group identity or we-feeling and sense of belonging to a particular

territory/homeland. In large cities one would often find ethnic enclaves which are distinct by dreses, the street signs, ethnic restaurants and types of house or place of worship. The immigrants in an ethnic enclave have a strong we-feeling, act as a local community celebrating festivals which are part of their culture, forming and building social networks in the place of destination. For example, if one visits Kolkata there is an area known as Chinatown where immigrants from China have resided since generations and have carried their culture to Kolkata in the form of Chinese street food, sauces and style of cooking. Ethnic differences are not inherited but are learned through process of socialization. In the United States of America, people from Japan, China, Philippines, Korea and Malaysia are collectively known as Asian American. This process of merging various ethnicities into one is known as pan-ethnicities. When federal funds were made available for social services for Asian Americans or American Indians, these people from different countries began to think as a larger group for gaining political and social benefits like health care services, legal rights and so on. The belief that one culture is superior to that of another ethnic group is known as ethnocentrism. Ethnicity has become an important marker for a tribe when it comes to securing political rights and marking them as distinct from others especially dominant regional community.

In this unit, we learned about features of social stratification and types or forms of social stratification. Each form of social stratification is analytically separate and separable whereas in reality one form of stratification is overlaid by another form of stratification.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Define Status.

.....

Q 5: What is Ethnicity?

2.8 LET US SUM UP

- Stratification has been the hallmark of human societies all around the world. This unit will help to understand some of the basic concepts of social stratification like hierarchy, difference, varna, caste, class, power and ethnicity.

- Hierarchy is a defining and pervasive feature of stratification. Hierarchy implicitly or explicitly orders individuals and groups on the basis of social values, wealth, status, power, religious purity and privilege in society.

- Difference is another feature of social stratification which suggests that individuals and groups are ordered in terms of a criterion or set of criteria like possession and access to resources, skills, education, status, power so that the differentiated stratas constitute a unified system.

- Hierarchy and difference are manifested in all forms of stratification like varna, caste, class, power, ethnicity and so on.

- Varna literally means colour. Varna referred to the distinction between Arya and Dasa, referring to fair and dark colours respectively. In Purusasukra hymn reference was made to four orders of society as emanating from the creator- Brahmins from the mouth, Rajanya or Kshyatria from the arms, Vaishya from the thighs and Shudra from the feet of the creator. Varna and caste are used interchangeably but caste should be distinguished from varna.

- Caste is one of the bases of stratification and an important organizing principle of Indian society. Caste is derived from the Portuguese word 'casta',meaning race or breed.Caste determines the functions, occupation, status, available opportunities but sometimes even handicaps the individual.

- Class, unlike caste, is relatively open as social mobility is permitted and it is linked with achievement criteria.The word class is derived from the Latin word 'classis' which refers to a division of Roman people, a class of learners or a grade. Class refers to the socially significant economic situation, economic advantages or disadvantages enjoyed or suffered by a homogeneous group of people.

- Power is a significant dimension of stratification in society. According to Max Weber, power is the ability to fulfil one's will in spite of the resistance of the other. According to Weber (1925, 1946), there are three types of power- economic, social and political. A fourth type of power which is informational was added by Svalastoga (1964). Weber distinguished between power and authority. As the source of the former could be legitimate or illegitimate, the source of the latter is always legitimate.

- Ethnicity refers to shared cultural perspectives, practices, values, beliefs, norms and distinctiveness which set one group apart from another. The most common characteristics of ethnic groups are shared cultural heritage, sense of history, language, region, religion, tradition, form of dress, food, shared group identity or we-feeling and sense of belonging to a particular territory/homeland.

- In this unit, we learned about features of social stratification and types or forms of social stratification. Each form of social stratification is analytically separate and separable whereas in reality one form of stratification isoverlaid by another form of stratification.

2.9 FURTHER READING

1) Davis, Kingsley and Wilbert E. Moore. (1966). Some Principles of Stratification in Reihard Bendix and Seymour, Martin, Lipset (eds.). Class, Status, and Power Stratification inComparative Perspective. New York: The Free Press.

2) Tumin, Melvin M. (1969). Social Stratification: The Forms and Functions of Inequality. New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India.

2.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: In hierarchy the criterion of stratification is quantitative or quantifiable i.e. it can be expressed in more or less certain properties whereas in difference the criterion of stratification is qualitative.

Ans to Q No 2: The origin of the varna model is traced to Rig Veda.

Ans to Q No 3: Jati is an endogamous, hereditary social group that has a name and a combination of attributes which are to be followed by its members sharing the jati's status in the social hierarchy of one's village.

Ans to Q No 4: Status is the honour or prestige accorded to an individual or group by a community on the basis of birth, family background, ethnicity, occupation, livelihood, education, property, income, contribution to society, lifestyle and so on.

Ans to Q No 5: Ethnicity refers to shared cultural perspectives, practices, values, beliefs, norms and distinctiveness which set one group apart from another.

2.11 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Discuss the characteristics of caste.

Q 2: What are ethnic enclaves? Explain with example.

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Distinguish between Varna and Caste.

Q 2: Compare and contrast Marx and Weber view on class.

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Unit 3 : UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning Objectives
3.2 Introduction
3.3 Social Stratification: Meaning and Definition
3.3.1 Social Stratification and Social Inequality
3.3.2 The Problem of Ethical Neutrality
3.3.3 Difference, Equality and Inequality
3.3.4 The Structuring of Inequalities: The Significance of Ideas and Interests
3.4 Let Us Sum Up
3.5 Further Reading
3.6 Answers to Check Your Progress
3.7 Model Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- understand the concept of Social Stratification and Social Inequality,
- understand about the problem of Ethical Neutrality
- explainhow the social structure and its processes contribute to the larger conditioning and facilitating of stratification in multiple forms and ways.

3.2 INTRODUCTION

Society is structured in nuanced ways representing diversities and differences of all kinds. The parameters of differences vary across color, creed, sex, economic status etc. Society is thus hierarchised across varying factors and these thereby contribute to inequality and access to resources and privileges enjoyed by people. They perpetuate ideas and belief systems in societies and categorically place individuals in different strata and

divisions, segregating them and perpetuating collectively held ideas of differences. Stratification thus can be found in diverse forms bearing consequences and repercussion that are not necessarily the same across contexts. The manner in which this operates is complex and often the process may be seen as natural, while on the contrary it is very much socially constructed and reinforced. This also further relates to accessibility to power, status, control and authority. Social stratification largely is thus a process that arranges the members of its society in a segregated mannerbased on certain order of differentiation or hierarchy leading to inequalities of various kinds. For instance the caste system peculiar to India is a perfect way to explain social stratification. It is a system that is based on the idea of 'purity and pollution' and one is ascribed into a certain caste by virtue of one's birth into any of the four caste folds- Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. The system has strict rules of prescription and prohibition that relates to occupation, marriage, inter-dining etc. In this unit, we shall begin with a brief revision of the meaning and characteristics of stratification that we have learned in previous units. This revision is necessary to contextualize the discussions on Social Stratification and Social Inequality, Problems of Ethical Neutrality and how the social structure and its processes contribute to the larger conditioning and in facility,ating of stratification in multiple forms and ways.

3.3 SOCIAL STRATIFICATION: MEANING AND DEFINITION

As discussed in the preceding and also in the previous units,section Social Stratification is a patterned arrangement in society based on certain basis of evaluation that privileges a section over the other leading to differences and inequalities. However, it is also important to note that inequality and difference are not the same and difference necessarily will not always lead to inequalities. The term stratification was borrowed from the science of geology and it is a process that is universal. Examples of forms of social stratification could be- the caste system in India, class, race, gender etc. A few important characteristics of the process are:

- Stratification is universal
- It is socially constructed
- It is hierarchical and preserves the status-quo
- It is inter-generational in the fact that it is learnt from one generation to the other although the manner of its practice may vary over time
- Stratification bears consequences and determines accessibility
- It is not homogenous andis found in diverse forms in all societies.

A few definitions of the term advanced by different thinkers are:

- **Melvin M Tumin:** "Social stratification refers to "arrangement of any social group or society into hierarchy of positions that are unequal with regard to power, property, social evaluation and psychic gratification".
- **Sorokin:** "Social stratification means the differentiation of a given population into hierarchically superimposed classes. It is manifested in the existence of upper and lower social layer. Its basis and very essence consists in an unequal distribution of rights and privileges, duties and responsibilities, social values and privations, social power and influences among the members of a society."
- **Karl Marx:** For Marx, the principle form of social stratification is class. For him stratification divides the society into two mutually opposed or contrary social categories where one exploits the other. For him the class that owns the means of production also gains political power.
- **Max Weber:** While for Marx the principle form of social stratification was class, Weber also sees it in economic terms and mentions that along with class status and power are the two other forms. Unlike Marx's idea, Weber did not believe that the ownership of the means of production always lead to political control.

3.3.1 Social Stratification and Social Inequality

Inequality is a certain distribution of privileges and resources as a consequence of which society get categorically divided or stratified. In theoretical terms while difference between groups may not always lead to inequalities, the existence of inequalities necessarily implies the existence of difference between them where the difference becomes the basis of the inequality. This is exactly where the value attached to the difference becomes a parameter to segregate people and hierarchize one over the other.

Kingsley Davis lays emphasis on the functional necessity of stratification. According to him, a society must provide some rewards which it can use as inducements and have some way of distributing these rewards differently according to position. The rewards and their distribution, as attached to social positions, create social stratification. These rewards may be in the form of economic incentives, aesthetic incentives and symbolic incentives. The differentiation of rewards produces social inequality.

According to Davis, social inequality is an unconsciously evolved device by which societies insure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons. Hence, every society must possess a certain amount of institutionalized inequality, or social stratification.

This view of Davis has come under criticism and theorists have also forwarded the conflict perspective to explain social stratification. Conflict theorists like that of Karl Marx, although he never directly gave a theory on social stratification, gave a theory of social class on the basis of which we derive stratification or inequality in society. His theory is a radical alternative to the functionalist view and he uses the term class to refer to the main strata of society. According to the Marxian perspective, systems of stratification derive from the relationships of the social groups to the forces of production.Except for in primitive communism- the first stage in history according to Marx, all other societies are stratified, like the master and the

slave in slavery, lord and the serf in the feudal system and the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in capitalism.

For Weber all communities are arranged in a manner that goods, tangible and intangible, symbolic and material are distributed. Such a distribution is always unequal and necessarily involves power. "Classes, status groups and parties are phenomena of the distribution of power within a community".

3.3.2 The Problem of Ethical Neutrality

To maintain objectivity in one's approach to understand human societies has been a very important component of social science and social science research. Weber spoke at great length about maintaining objectivity and being ethically neutral. Objectivity is the capacity to understand and analyse a subject without coloring the same with our own values and biases. Although objectivity is desired, it is not always easily attained like in the case of the natural sciences. In social sciences and in the study of the human world, human beings are subjected to emotions and one always comes from a particular vantage point which often makes it difficult to step back and understand something in an absolutely objective manner.

Besides maintaining objectivity, the social sciences must also remain ethically neutral i.e. the researchers must not allow her/his personal feelings or likes and dislikes, idea of the right or wrong to enter into her/his field of investigation. One must remain neutral while studying the social phenomena as it exist in society. According to the critics of objectivity in social research, there are certain influences which prevent the Social Scientist from having an objective perspective. They are as follows:

- **Personal Motives:** One's personal motives does affect beliefs adversely which may lead the researcher to adopt these beliefs without considering any evidence.

- **Custom:** Sometimes it is customary to think in a particular way which may affect or prevent the researcher from developing objectivity.

- **Social Situation:** The social scientist herself/himself is a part. According to the critics a social person or social situation gives rise to certain interests which lead to biases and prejudices and these create an adverse effect on objectivity.

Social stratification as a process clearly hints at the differences that exist in all societies, irrespective of their stages of development. As social science researchers or investigators, one always comes from a certain vantage point and hence it becomes extremely difficult to do away with it while engaging in social enquiry. Maintaining this ethical neutrality by not coloring or fabricating data with one's own values thus often becomes a challenging task to accomplish.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: What is Social Stratification?

.....

Q 2: What is Ethical Neutrality?

.....

3.3.3 Difference, Equality and Inequality

There is a group of scholars who use the term social stratification and social inequality synonymously and they donot see any difference between the two. There is yet another group of scholars who argue that a society can exhibit inequality without being stratified. In understanding the nuances within this, one cannot ignore the conceptual understanding of difference, equality and inequality. As it has been mentioned earlier differences by themselves are not necessarily bad and differences only emphasise the fact that the social world is not homogenous in nature. Inequality on the other hand is a further extension where individuals are denied opportunities and access based on certain markers of difference. Inequality is difficult to

define because it is an abstract and relative concept. It is a structured and systematic phenomenon that affects different people in different ways. While the functional perspective views stratification as a necessity to fulfill social needs, the conflict perspective negates this and views that stratification privileges one section by depriving the other. The Davis-Moore thesis, one of the most important functional perspectives on social stratification, asserts that social stratification is a universal pattern because it has beneficial consequences for the operation of society.

The difference between social stratification and social difference is nuanced and complex as they both are sometimes used in an over-lapping manner. Difference refers to the distinction of individuals and groups based on various factors such as biological, socio-economic etc that lead to the allocation of specific roles and statuses in society.Further, social inequality is a state or condition in society where members have differential access to resources, wealth, status and power. It is also important to note here that equality of access to resources will not always yield equal outcome or consequences. People's accessibility to resources and the job market will also be dependent on their intelligence and talents, regardless of social background. Marxists however, argue for a different kind of equality from this. They want resources to be distributed in terms of need rather than competition. Given equal opportunity and support, they argue, many people in low wage jobs could perform in higher level positions. The conflict perspective, therefore, characterizes social inequality as the result of a struggle for scarce resources. For instance- a poor Dalit peasant is not poor because she/he is lazy to work, but because of her/his inaccessibility to the resources to generate income.

As can be understood there is no single cause that produces inequality in society. The belief and value systems attached to certain notions of differences socially constructed in society reproduce and reinforce the practices and processes of social inequality. For instance the caste system in India which is purely based on the principle of purity and pollution, whereby

the twice-born or the Brahmins are considered pure and the lower castes the Shudras are considered pollutants. Discrimination and inequality is also seen in societies that discriminate people on the basis of their skin color and marginalize people racially. Likewise, inequality can be seen in several realms where people are evaluated and categorically segregated on the basis on their gender, sexuality, age, occupation, ethnic background etc. These forms of inequalities incapacitate individuals and dis-privileges them from resources, status, wealth and power. This also relates to the idea of social mobility or movement of people which can be either vertical or horizontal in nature. Differences and inequalities are created also by virtue of the statuses that are ascriptive or achieved. Ascriptive statuses are those that are attained by virtue of one's birth, like that of the status that one gets by being born into a Brahmin or a Dalit family. Ascriptive status determines one's access to resources in life. Achieved status on the other hand are those that are attained by virtue of one's own merit or potential. An example could be someone from a traditional farmer's family successfully becoming a government servant, professor etc on her/his own merit. However, in understanding this one also needs to carefully realize that one's achieved status comes with having access to the resources that facilitate the mobility.

3.3.4 The Structuring of Inequalities: The Significance of Ideas and Interests

As discussed above social inequality as a process is systematic and patterned that structures societies in certain ways in order of ranking and hierarchy. In no society are individuals absolutely equal and differentiation is a key factor of the human world. People differ acrossheight, weight, hair color, skin color, sexual preferences, linguistic backgrounds, ethnicities etc.Human beings, upon deciding what is important to classify, highlight the trait and give it meaning. Therefore, recognized biological, social, or cultural differences become socially meaningful inequalities. How these differences get ranked depends on a number of issues. First, what are the separate categories recognized by the group or society; in other words,

how is the difference constructed or the group demarcated? Societies are thus marked by patterns of difference and the degree and nature of this difference. The significance of the vested interest of those in power in the creation of differences is always complex. Given the various kinds of hierarchies, an individual generally finds that he/she simultaneously belongs to a number of groups, each of which may be in a different position on the various hierarchies. Noted sociologist Talcott Parsons mentions three causal factors of social differentiation:

- **Possession:** referring mainly to material possessions and the accessibility to the same which largely contributes to producing inequalities
- **Qualities:** referring to inherent or intrinsic qualities in individuals that are not equally distributed.
- **Performance:** referring to the enacting out or execution of an assigned task within a specific time and situation.

All of the above factors are inter-related and the standards of evaluation vary from one society to the other.

In order that people's access to resources be limited, there are four broad mechanisms used by groups and societies to ensure inequality. These are exclusion, disabling, decoupling, and creating scarcity. These processes can be found in all systems of inequality and stratification.

Exclusion is the process of keeping the devalued out of the competition or rewarding people unequally for the same performance. Those in the group with access to resources make the rules about what the rules are, who can be admitted to the group, and how rewards will flow. Organizations based on gender, caste, class, or ethnicity have in the past, made rules that limit membership to those with the required characteristics.

Disabling seeks to convince those with devalued characteristics that they do not have the ability to compete effectively. Women, the old, and blacks were for a long time told that they were not smart enough to succeed in certain professions or indeed do well in higher education.

Decoupling ensures that those who can benefit by certain information or networks are not connected with the requisite group. In a company or organization, the disadvantaged are often not in the know about job opportunities, advancement information, or training program openings.

Finally, resources can be madescarce. Openings at the top can be reduced, available jobs can be decreased, or the number of student scholarships or loans can be cut back.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Are inequality and difference necessarily the same?

.....

Q 4: Does equality of access to resources always yield equal outcome or consequences?

.....

Q 5: What are the two kinds of status?

.....

3.4 LET US SUM UP

- Society is hierarchized across varying factors and this contributes to inequality and the access to resources and privileges enjoyed by people.
- Social stratification largely is a process that arranges the members of its society in a segregated manner based on certain order of differentiation or hierarchy leading to inequalities of various kinds. The term stratification was borrowed from the science of geology and it is a process that is universal.

- Stratification thus can be found in diverse forms bearing consequences and repercussion that are not necessarily the same across contexts.
- Inequality and difference are not the same and difference necessarily will not always lead to inequalities.
- Inequality is a certain distribution of privileges and resources as a consequence of which society gets categorically divided or stratified.
- The rewards and their distribution, as attached to social positions, create social stratification.
- The functionalist perspective views stratification as a necessity to fulfill social needs.
- For conflict theorists, systems of stratification derive from the relationships of the social groups to the forces of production.
- The conflict perspective, therefore, characterizes social inequality as the result of a struggle for scarce resources.
- Objectivity is the capacity to understand and analyse a subject without coloring the same with our own values and biases.
- Social inequality is a state or condition in society where members have differential access to resources, wealth, status and power.
- Difference refers to the distinction of individuals and groups based on various factors such as biological, socio-economic differences, leading to the allocation of specific roles and statuses in society.
- People's accessibility to resources and the job market will also be dependent on their intelligence and talents, regardless of social background.
- There is no single cause that produces inequality in society.

- Differences and inequalities are created also by virtue of the statuses that are ascriptive or achieved.
- Ascriptive statuses are those that are attained by virtue of one's birth.
- Achieved statuses on the other hand are those that are attained by virtue of one's own merit or potential.
- How differences get ranked in society depends on a number of issues.
- Societies are thus marked by the patterns of difference and the degree and nature of this difference.
- The significance of the vested interest of those in power and in the creation of differences is always complex.
- Given the various kinds of hierarchies, an individual generally finds that he/she simultaneously belongs to a number of groups, each of which may be in a different position on the various hierarchies.

3.5 FURTHER READING

1) Davis, K. & W. E. Moore. 1945. Some Principles of Stratification. American Sociological Review, 10(2):242

2) Tumin, M. M. 1987. Social Stratification: the forms and functions of inequality. New Delhi: Prentice-Hall of India. [pp. 1-7]

3.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Social stratification is largely a process that arranges the members of its society in a segregated manner based on certain order of differentiation or hierarchy leading to inequalities of various kinds.

Ans to Q No 2: Ethical neutrality is where researchers must not allow her/ his personal feelings or likes and dislikes, idea of the right or wrong to enter into her/his field of investigation.

Ans to Q No 3: Inequality and difference are not necessarily the same.

Ans to Q No 4: No, equality of access to resources will not always yield equal outcome or consequences.

Ans to Q No 5: The two kind of statuses are- Ascriptive Status and Achieved Status

3.7 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q1: Briefly explain the concept of Social Stratification. How is it different from Social Inequality?

Q 2: Highlight the challenges in maintaining objectivity.

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Write a note on Structuring of Inequalities with example.

Q 2: How is the concept of inequality similar/different from the concept of difference? Elaborate with example.

** ** **

Unit 4 : FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE ON STRATIFICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives
4.2 Introduction
4.3 Functionalist Perspective on Stratification
4.3.1 Parson's Approach to Stratification
4.3.2 Davis and Moore's Approach to Stratification
4.3.3 Criticisms of Functionalist Perspective on Stratification
4.4 Let Us Sum Up
4.5 Further Reading
4.6 Answers to Check Your Progress
4.7 Model Questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- know about the basics of the functionalist perspectives on stratification
- be familiar with the scholars associated with this perspective
- explain the perspectives of the different functionalist thinkers on social stratification
- discuss the criticisms to the functionalist perspectives on stratification.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous units, we have learned about the meaning of Social Stratification and how it is conceptually different from Difference and Inequality. Social Stratification is viewed differently by different scholars and therefore there are different perspectives to understand it. In this unit we shall discuss about the Functionalist Perspective Social Stratification and the views of the thinkers associated with this perspective. But before going

into that let us first understand about Functionalism as a Theoretical Perspective.

Structural functionalism,or simply functionalism focuses on social structures, which are theorized to shape society as a whole. Functionalism considers society as a system consisting of a set of interconnected parts which function together in order to form a whole. Functionalism, which developed in the works of Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and was carried forth in the works of Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) and Robert Merton (1910-2003), became one of the dominant perspectives in American Sociology. The classical functionalists viewed society and biological organisms as analogous and thus the concept of social function developed by them were derived to a great extent from the models of biological functions available at the time. The scientific method is very integral to functionalism since society is perceived as an integrated organic entity and functionalist scholars stressed on the importance of studying society scientifically in the same way that organisms are studied.

We can summarize the main principles of structural functionalism as follows:

- Societies are complex systems, which are constituted of many parts that could be both interrelated and interdependent. Each of these constituent parts influences each other and thus, influences society as a whole.

- Each of the constituent parts of the social system has its own specific function. The performance of this vital function particular to each part is essential for maintaining the stability and harmony of the system. Thus, the functionality of a part explains its existence. In other words, it is the function of a part or a structure or what it does that gives meaning to why it exists.

- The tendency of social systems is to strive towards equilibrium or balance. Thus, societies are self-regulated systems where all the

constituent parts work together in order to maintain integration and harmony.

- Overall, the assumption of functionalism is that all social structures contribute to the maintenance of the system and each structure's function is 'beneficial function' which leads to maintenance of social order.

In very simple terms, functionalist perspectives on stratification stress on the functional necessity for the existence of inequality in society. The central tenet of functionalist perspective on stratification is that individual actions become integrated in the values, which are entrenched in the social structures where they exist. Inequalities among people arise because of how society deems different societal roles to be valuable, according to their importance and the talent and resource required to be able to fulfil these roles. Thus, inequality in society is inevitability in light of how different rewards are available in society for different positions.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: How does Functionalism view society?

.....

Q2: What is the relationship between classical functionalists and biology?

.....

4.3 FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE ON STRATIFICATION

From the above discussion we have learned that functionalism views society as a system of inter-related parts, each part having their own specific function, which is very vital for the survival of the society as a whole. We have also understood that Social Order and Harmony are key elements of

Functionalist theory. In the following subsection we shall try to understand how Functionalism views Social Stratification. We shall get to know from the views of the functionalist's thinkers like Parsons, Davis and Moore how according to them Social Stratification too serves a societal function and helps in maintaining social order. Let us first begin with Parson's approach to stratification in the next subsection.

4.3.1 Parson's Approach to Stratification

Talcott Parsons was one of the first scholars to pose the central question of 'freedom' and 'order' to the discipline of sociology. Parsons' contribution to sociology can be located as a mediating ground between classical thought in sociology and the more contemporary line of theorisation. He was in Harvard and was instrumental in the formation and growth of the department of sociology there. His works which have deeply influenced American society and thought, have also been widely influential through the decades of 1940s and 50s, and continue to have a lasting effect till today.

A central question that drove Parsons was how society and social order came into play.The question that followed this was about the norms and values that made it possible for American society to have maintained equilibrium and order. With his model of structural functionalism Parsons aimed to develop a grand theory, which would explain social behaviour.Parsons' focus was on social order and the central functional role that stratification played in order to maintain social order. The works of Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Karl Marx had a very deep impact on the nature of scholarship produced by Parsons, which critiques as well as extends and adds on to the theories of these classical thinkers. Durkheim's concept of 'social facts' was a deviation from the understanding of society that was devised by the likes of Hobbes and Rousseauas 'contractual'. According to Durkheim, "[social facts] consist of manners of acting, thinking and feeling external to the individual, which are invested with a coercive power by virtue of which they exercise control over him." Parsons reconciled Durkheim's view of society as external and constraining with Weber's theory

of action, whose focus is on how human beings attach subjective meanings to their actions. By involving elements from these classical ideas in sociology, Parsons developed what is known as his Action Theory. Values remain at the core of Parsons' structural functionalism since for him it is values that provide meanings to people's actions and how people live and co-exist in society.

For an action system to exist, it has to fulfil four functional prerequisites, according to Parsons. This is also called Parsons' AGIL Paradigm. These prerequisites are:

- **Adaptation:** The capacity that a system should have to be able to adapt to the environment.
- **Goal Attainment:** The capability of a society to be able to set goals for the future and work towards attaining them.
- **Integration:** This means that the society should be able to converge on a consistent and harmonized idea of the values and norms to be followed for that society. At a basic level, this also refers to a common language.
- **Latency:** This refers to the society's need to maintain latent patterns or integrative elements, such as societal beliefs and norms.

According to Parsons "...a social system is only one of the structuring of a completely concrete system of social action. The other two are personality systems of the individual actors and the cultural system which is built into-their action. Each of the three must be considered to be an independent focus of organization of the elements of the social system in the sense that no one of them is theoretically reducible to terms of one or a combination of the other two." Parsons defines the actor as "an empirical system of action. The actor is an individual or a collectivity which may be taken as a point of reference for the analysis of the modes of its orientation and of its processes of action in relation to objects." Again, action itself is "that part of the external world which means something to the actor whose

behavior is being analyzed….Specifically, it is that part to which the actor is oriented and in which the actor acts."

Parsons defines 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". Thus, for Parsons, the dominant values in the society are central for people to be evaluated, rated and thereby stratified in the given society. In order to determine which people are ranked higher or lower in the society, Parsons provides a theory of the way in which a society ranks roles or tasks according to the dominant value system in the society.

To perform the functional prerequisites outlined in the AGIL paradigm, a given society has four major subsystems comprising of people and facilities. Thus, corresponding to the four functional prerequisites, the four functional subsystems are:

- Adaptive subsystem: the economy
- Goal-attainment subsystem: the government
- Pattern-maintenance subsystem: familial and educational structures
- Integrative subsystem: police, courts, and religious structure

Which of these four subsystems (with their corresponding institutional apparatus) would be considered primary would differ in different societies. Again, these different institutions would rank different values differently according to the tasks that are considered important there. Thus, the common value system in a society would be more favorable towards the values ranked higher in the primary subsystem in that society. Therefore, the individuals who best possess the values upheld by primary institutions will be ranked higher than individuals who embody the same value to a lesser extent.

Stratification, according to Parsons, is "the ranking of units in a system in accordance with the standards of the common value system", and the fundamental core of stratification is the interplay between common values and evaluation which is necessary for judging any actor. This judgment on ranking is not done on the whole actor itself but rather on certain properties possessed by the actor. These, according to Parsons are: qualities (which refer to characteristics like beauty, intellect, kinship ties etc.) performances (which refers to the way in which the persons do things), and possessions (which refers to objects which are tangible and which can be transferred).

We can summarize Parsons' theory of stratification as:

- The evaluation of other determines a person's rank in the society or in the stratification system.
- This evaluation is done on the basis of a common value system that exists in the society.
- The common value system in turn is shaped by the functional subsystem that is provided primary stress in a given society.
- People who best live up to the values upheld by the primary subsystem receive higher status, as well as other rewards such as wealth and income.

4.3.2 Davis and Moore's Approach to Stratification

Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore first published their famous paper on principles of stratification in 1945 and, since then, it has come to represent the functionalist school of thought. This scholarly work has generated wide-ranging debates and remains a piece of academic literature which is still relevant in stratification studies. The central idea of Davis and Moore's thesis is that a well functioning "society must somehow distribute its members in social positions and induce them to perform the duties of these positions". The dominant argument of their work is:"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."

Here we can distilled, Davis and Moore's ideas into the following points:

- There are many positions to be filled in society, where the functional importance of some positions are more than others and the people talented enough to fill these positions are not easily available due to the scarcity of such talented people or due to high level of skills required or because of the resources and sacrifices (such as training time etc.) involved with acquiring such necessary talents and qualifications.

- For talented people who want to spend resource and time in order to acquire such skills, society provides the inducement value of a differential reward in the future, which can be categorized into: scarce and desired goods that contribute to comfort, things providing humour and lastly, things that add to self-respect and ego-expansion.

- Thus differential access to scarce and valued goods and differential rewards are functional necessities in order to ensure that different positions in society are filled by the people who have the most talent for performing in those positions. The social inequality or social stratification arising due to this is a functional necessity in any society, and it is an inevitable feature of social order.

According to Davis and Moore"two factors...determine the relative rank of different positions. In general those positions convey the best reward, and have the highest rank which (a) have the greatest importance for the society and (b) require the greatest training or talent."In a sense, Davis and Moore's model is a labour market model, where the supply and demand of skilled labour in the market can determine the rewards related to certain work. They contend:"If a position is easily filled, it need not be heavily

rewarded even though important. On the other hand, if it is important but hard to fill, the reward must be high enough to get it filled anyway".

One of the most important critiques to Davis and Moore's thesis comes from Tumin, who in his critical analysis of their paper (1953) shows how inequality need not be a functional necessity for a well functioning social order. In fact, "Social stratification systems function to limit the possibility of discovery of the full range of talent available in a society because of unequal access to appropriate motivation, channels of recruitment, and centers of training." Much of the criticism against Davis and Moore follow from Tumin. In reality, there might be a lot of people who have the talent or would be able to acquire the talent for highly rewarded positions, but are constrained by a variety of factors. Along with this, what would constitute as more important positions of society actually cannot be objectively determined, and usually it is people already in power positions who influence which positions are considered for accruing higher rewards compared to others. Tumin states further that, "Social stratification systems function to provide the elite with the political power necessary to procure acceptance and dominance of an ideology which rationalizes the status quo, whatever it may be, as 'logical,' 'natural,' and 'morally right.' In this manner social stratification systems function as essentially conservative influences in the societies in which they are found."

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Who are some of the scholars who influenced Parsons' work?

.....

Q 4: What is Parson's definition of stratification?

.....

Q 5: What are Parson's four major subsystems?

.....

Q 6: Who provided the strongest critique to Davis and Moore's thesis in stratification?

.....

4.3.3 Criticisms of Functionalist Perspective on Stratification

Functionalist theorists have been criticised by many scholars belonging to a variety of schools of thought. The biggest criticism levelled against functionalist perspectives on stratification is the underlying assumption it propagates about the existence of a social consensus about how different roles and positions are to be valued and the rewards that are to be accrued to it. In other words, the hierarchy that leads to some position being deemed above others in society is not as objectively given as the functionalist way of thinking makes it appear. Pitting some roles above other happens due to social, historical and economic contexts which functionalist theorists does not account for.

Continuing with the above arguments, functionalists also do not take into account how acquiring talent and ability to perform certain roles are not available to everyone due to a variety of structural barriers. Thus, there is no level playing field in society that can truly allow for a situation in which only the best individual for a role ends up acquiring that role. There might be a lot of people who are suited for positions that they cannot access due to a variety of structural barriers to entry.

Thus, the argument that Tumin implies in his critique of Davis and Moore, that social stratification serves to maintain status quo through the dominance of ideology of the elite, has been extended by detractors of the functional school, to state that functionalist school of thoughtappear asapologists for maintaining the persistence of suchinequality in society by misreading it as an objective inevitability. According to critiques functional account of stratification also suffers from a tautological fallacy (or fallacy of circular reasoning) in its argument, since it first theorizes that the social positions that are important for society are highly rewarded, and then uses the occurrence of these high rewards as evidence of their importance.

Again, the idea of what constitutes 'important' in a society itself remains to be explored within the functionalist school. The idea of scarcity of reward in society, which leads to some people being rewarded at the cost of others deemed to be in positions of less value, is purported to be natural in a society. But in fact, scarcity of reward is artificially created and thus, the forces and factors that lead to such scarcity must be investigated and cannot be left unaddressed, as has happened in functionalist accounts of stratification. The functionalist ideas of stratification, particularly that of Parsons was also found to be theoretical and abstract, which meant that it could not be empirically tested. Due to all these criticisms and shortcomings, by the late 1970s the functionalist school of sociology was no longer the dominant paradigm but this still remains very influential on account of the ideas and concepts that it introduced to study society, actors and social functions.

4.4 LET US SUM UP

- Functionalism focuses on social structures which, according to the functinalists, shapes society as a whole.
- Functionalism considers society as a system consisting of a set of interconnected parts which function together in order to form a whole.
- Functionalism developed in the works of Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and E?mile Durkheim (1858-1917) and was carried forth in the works of Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) and Robert Merton (1910-2003)
- Parson's focus was on social order and the central functional role that stratification played in order to maintain social order.
- The works of Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Karl Marx had a very deep impact on the nature of scholarship produced by Parsons
- The four functional prerequisites according to Parsons are: adaptation, goal attainment, integration and latency (AGIL).

- Parsons defines 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".

- To perform the functional prerequisites outlined in the AGIL paradigm, a given society has four major subsystems comprising of people and facilities. These are: adaptive subsystem, goal-attainment subsystem, pattern-maintenance subsystem and integrative subsystem.

- Under Parsonian theory of stratification, the individuals who best possess the values upheld by primary institutions of the subsystem will be ranked higher than individuals who embody the same value to a lesser extent.

- The central idea of Davis and Moore's thesis is that a well functioning society must somehow distribute its members in social positions and induce them to perform the duties of these positions".

- One of the most important critiques to Davis and Moore's thesis comes from Tumin, who in his critical analysis of their paper (1953) shows how inequality need not be a functional necessity for a well functioning social order.

- The biggest criticism levelled against functionalist perspectives on stratification is the underlying assumption it propagates about the existence of a social consensus about how different roles and positions are to be valued and the rewards that are to be accrued to it.

- Functionalists also do not take into account how acquiring talent and ability to perform certain roles are not available to everyone due to a variety of structural barriers.

4.5 FURTHER READING

1) Hess, Andreas. (2001). Concepts of?Social Stratification European and American Models. New York: Palgrave.

2) Davis, K and Moore, W.E. (1945). Some Principles of Stratification. American Sociological Review, 10(2), pp. 242-249.

3) Parsons, Talcott. (1937).The Structure of Social Action. New York: The Free Press,

4) -------- (1963). Toward a General Theory of Action. Mass.: Harvard University Press

5) ---------- (1954). A Revised Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification in Talcott Parsons, Essays in Sociological Theory. Glencoe: Free Press, pp. 386-439.

6) Tausky, Curt. (1965). Parsons on Stratification: An Analysis and Critique. The Sociological Quarterly, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 128-138

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4.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The classical functionalists viewed society and biological organisms as analogous and thus, the concept of social function developed by them were derived to a great extent from the models of biological function available at the time.

Ans to Q No 2: In very simple terms, functionalist perspectives on stratification stress on the functional necessity for the existence of inequality in society.

Ans to Q No 3: The works of Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Karl Marx had a very deep impact on the nature of scholarship produced by Parsons, which critiques as well as extends and adds on to the theories of these classical thinkers.

Ans to Q No 4: Parsons defines 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".

Ans to Q No 5: To perform the functional prerequisites outlined in the AGIL paradigm, a given society has four major subsystems comprising of people and facilities. These are: adaptive subsystem, goal attainment subsystems, pattern maintenance subsystem and integrative subsystem.

Ans to Q No 6: One of the most important critiques to Davis and Moore's thesis comes from Tumin

4.7 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q1: Briefly state Davis and Moore's argument?

Q2: What are some of the main principles of structural functionalism?

Q 3: Discuss Parson's AGIL paradigm?

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q1: Discuss Parson's approach to Social Stratification.

Q2: Discuss Davis and Moore's understanding of Social Stratification.

Q3: Explain the main criticisms of functionalist perspectives of stratification?

** ** **

Unit 5 : MARXIST PERSPECTIVE ON STRATIFICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Learning Objectives
5.2 Introduction
5.3 Karl Marx's Theory of Inequality and Stratification.
5.4 Seymour Martin Lipset and Reinhard Bendix's Ideas on Stratification
5.5 Melvin Tumin's Ideas on Stratification
5.6 Criticisms of the Marxist Perspectives on Stratification
5.7 Let Us Sum Up
5.8 Further Reading
5.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
5.10 Model Questions

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- know about the theoretical contribution of Karl Marx
- become familiar with the Marxian school of thought
- understand the contributions of the main advocates of Marxian thoughts
- explain the criticisms that have been levied against the Marxian theorisation on inequality and stratification in society.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

Marx's materialist conception of history and theory of labour is one of the most important theoretical ideas that have brought about profound cultural, political and economic changes in the way in which society, materiality and history are articulated, and the way in which social stratification and inequality are understood. 'Marxism' refers to critiques, theories, political ambitions that are evolved from or are inspired by the

theoretical and political work of Karl Marx (1818-1883). The Marxist theory of class and class struggle probably has impacted the world we live in more deeply than any other theory in history. Scholars and activists belonging to the Marxist tradition have been at the forefront of inequality studies and have spearheaded social and political movements against inequality in the world. The central idea in Marxist scholarship holds that capitalism or capitalist production leads to exploitative social relations. Marxists scholars view socialism as the social order where capitalist conceptions such as private property and exploitation would be eradicated. Lastly, such a transition from capitalist to socialist system would be achieved through revolution.

Marxist class analysis considers a relational approach to social inequality, whereby classes are understood conceptually as developing because of particular historical circumstances. This historical understanding of the creation of class also takes into account the how classes themselves relate dynamically to each other. Thus, Marxist perspectives on stratification go against the previously established simplistic notion that inequality of income or wealth is the indicator of the advent of class and the boundary between classes, and Marxist scholars bring to light the idea that social inequality is not the reason for class formation, rather it results from class structures. These class structures themselves arise under historical circumstance, which needs to be investigated and understood.

In the previous unit, we have discussed the Functionalist perspective on Social Stratification. In this unit, we shall discuss the approaches of Marxist Scholars towards social stratification.

5.3 KARL MARX'S THEORY OF INEQUALITY AND STRATIFICATION

Karl Marx (1818-1883) has been instrumental in effecting wide reaching and quiet fundamental changes in not only academic analysis but even

more so in political practice. Marx was a political activist first and foremost but his contribution has left a lasting impact on how scholars approach economy, society and history. Marx considered inequality as arising out of economic divisions between groups, but his aim was never to investigate or inquire how income or wealth gets distributed. Rather, Marx's object of inquiry was, the reasons that led to such unequal income distribution. In Marx's conception of inequality and stratification, the economic sphere is considered the most fundamental and pivotal since this is the domain where all production activity, the most basic human activity, takes place.

Marx "historical materialism" or the "materialist conception of history" is based on Hegel's ideas that history forms due to an opposition or conflict between two opposing forces. Marx adopted the idea of the dialectics but unlike Hegel's idealism, Marx considered real forces of history to have emerged from materiality of the real world. For Marx, material circumstances determine consciousness, rather than the other way round: "The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill society with the industrial capitalist".

According to Marx, Western societies had been through four main periods in time governed by four main modes of production. These are: primitive communism, ancient society, feudal society and, lastly, capitalist society. By modes of production, we can refer to the economic system. The specific mode of production in a society gives rise to specific relations of production and forces of production. The relation of production refers to the entirety of all the relations that human beings enter into in order to fulfill the functions for necessities and amenities of life. Some examples of relations of production are employer-employee work conditions, the technical division of labour, and property relations etc. (so factors such as private property, petty bourgeoisie, proletariat). Forces of production refer to the elements and processes involved in production where raw materials are transformed into products (such as tools, machines, factory, raw materials).

The mode of production of a given society is constitutedof two parts: the base and the superstructure. The economic base of the mode of production is constituted of the sum total of the forces of production and relations of production, while the superstructure of the mode of production of a given society is shaped by the political ideological and other institutional apparatus. It is Marx's contention that the superstructure grows out of the economic base, and the base is more dominant. On the other hand, the superstructure creates the conditions that provide legitimacy to the base through norms, values, beliefs, and ideologies permeated in the society. Thus, in a given society, this economic base reflects the interest of the ruling class that controls this base, which would always be in dialectical opposition of the interest of the working class, which is much bigger in number, but without power over the base.

Marx states that except in the first mode of production i.e. primitive communism, social stratification arising out of difference in class position is found in all other epochs. In ancient society, the class distinction was between master and slave, while under feudalism, this changed to lord and serf. According to Marx, even the 'modern bourgeois society' or the capitalist society "has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in places of the old ones." In fact, Marx further states, "Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it 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 (the ruling class) and proletariat (the working class)."

The relationships between the ruling class, which owns the means of production and the working class, which provides wage labour, is essentially dialectical because it is one of conflict as well as dependence. The ruling class requires people to work for them while the working class requires the former for their survival. Classes emerge with the extraction of surplus value by the proletariats. Surplus value is the central concept in Marx's

theory of political economy, which he distinguishes from the exchange value or use value of a commodity. Surplus value is the excess value generated by the proletariat as profits, which are created by the workers working in excess of their labour cost but which are wholly appropriated by the proletariat or the capitalist. Marx says, "The specific economic form in which unpaid surplus labor is pumped out of the direct producers determines the relations of rulers and ruled...Upon this is founded the entire formation of the economic community which grows out of the conditions of production itself, and this also determines its specific political shape."

The proletariat exists in a state of 'false consciousness' about their position in society and class relations due to the ways in which the ideological, political and social apparatus of the ruling class permeate the superstructure. This false consciousness eventually transforms to class consciousness. Class consciousness arises from the working class transforming from a objective class" or a "class in itself" to a "subjective class" or a "class for itself". This means that the working class becomes aware of their material conditions of its existence as more than an objective reality, and this forms a reason for the members of the proletariat class to form a solidarity in order to improve their conditions and change the exploitative dynamics they have been forced into and come together to struggle against the other class. Marx states, "These relations change from forms of development of the productive forces into their fetters. There then begins an epoch of social revolution."

Marx in The Communist Manifesto(1848), expresses that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, that each time ended, either in the revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes."

At the heart of Marx's writing, he accords the concept of a "classless society". This according to Marx was the ultimate end of social organization where man can finally become "fully human". Marx believed that it was the proletariats under the capitalist mode of production who would finally overthrow the ruling class through revolution and usher in the new era of socialist mode of production, which would then transition to the classless society of communism. As Marx says about the inevitability and necessity of a proletariat revolution. In this context he said, "the proletarians have nothing to loose but their chains. They have a world to win."

Thus, we see that though Marxism evolved as a theory of political economy, it is a rich site for theorizations and philosophy on history, human materiality, radical human action and, most importantly, on human freedom and liberation. Marxism has inspired numerous working class movements across the world and Marx's writings and enormous contributions continue to have a deep impact on almost all arenas of social, political and economic life.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is Marxism?

.....

Q 2: What are the central ideas of Marxists?

.....

Q 3: What are the four main modes of production discussed by Marx?

.....

Q 4: What is the difference between relations of production and forces of production?

.....

5.4 SEYMOUR MARTIN LIPSET AND REINHARD BENDIX'S IDEAS ON STRATIFICATION

Both Bendix and Lipset,individually and together, have made stellar contributions as Marxists scholars studying inequality and stratification. Bendix and Lipset's reader Class, Status and Power: A Reader in Social Stratification (1953) remains an excellent source for anyone interested in stratification in general and Marxist perspectives on stratification in particular. This volume includes a co-authored paper by Lipset and Bendix on Marx's theory of class, which remains a great resource to clarify and better understand the fundamentals and criticisms to Marx's conceptualizations.However, here we would discuss another book they co-authored, Social Mobility in Industrial Society (1959), where they delved into questioning of the nature of occupational mobility and introduced a new turning point in the way in which class mobility studies should evolve. The scope of Lipset and Bendix's social mobility research is global and they approach it with a historical perspective. In this book, they include data from the field study conducted by them in Oakland, USA as well as including data from other empirical studies on stratification and social mobility. They define social mobility as "the process by which individuals move from one position to another in society- positions which by general consent have been given specific hierarchical values."

They begin by stating that sociological research had begun to question the validity of three notions that were widely accepted during that time: "that there has been substantially less mobility in Europe than in the United States; that social mobility tends to decline as industrial societies mature; and that opportunities for entrance into the business elite become more restricted with mature industrialization." They then go on to identify and espouse upon different social and psychological causes that have led to occupational mobility and the consequence of such inequality in society and economy.

The most important conclusion that Lipset and Bendix arrived at in their work is that, "the overall pattern of social mobility appears to be much the same in the industrial societies of various Western countries.... Further, although it is clear that social mobility is related in many ways to the economic expansion of industrial societies, it is at least doubtful that the rates of mobility and expansion are correlated." From these they offered their tentative interpretation that "the social mobility of societies becomes relatively high once their industrialization, and hence their economic expansion, reaches a certain level." Thus, in other words, Lipset and Bendix find that once countries reach a certain level of industrialization, their rates of social mobility show uniform increase.

One of the main criticisms of Lipset and Bendix's theoretical offerings is that they use categories that are very general and excessively broad in nature. The data that have been used in the book along with the interpretation of the available statistics have also come under critical scrutiny. Lipset and Bendix's central proposition that social mobility rates in different industrial societies are uniformly high, has also been criticized for not being able to account for the significant variations that exists between countries in social mobility patterns. Despite the book being controversial and divisive, it remains very challenging and relevant to the study of social mobility.

5.5 MELVIN TUMIN'S IDEAS ON STRATIFICATION

Tumin described social stratification as "the arrangement of a social group or society into a hierarchy of positions that are unequal with regard to power, property, social evaluation and psychic gratification."The functionalist school of stratification has received a lot of critique from the Marxist as well as other schools of thought. One of the most important debates that took place between the functionalist understanding of inequality and stratification and the Marxist understating of the same, was between Davis and Moore's scholarly work exemplified by their essay "Some Principles of Stratification" (1944) and Tumin's refutation of their arguments on stratification in his essay

"Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis" (1953) which was published in the American Sociological Review.

Davis and Moore approach inequality as being functionally necessary in a society. How society rewards positions is proportional to how important the position is deemed for society and how scarcely available arethe peopleto fill certain positions. Thus, if factors such as inherent ability, resources needed for training or sacrifices needed for certain positions are scarcely available in people and the position itself is important for society, the rewards associated with said position would also rise proportionately. So since in society positions are filled according to who is deemed the most qualified, there is the existence of functional inequality.

Tumin argues very strongly against Davis and Moore's thesis. The first important point that he makes is that there is no way to compare the functional value of one position over another in society. Tumin's assertion against Davis and Moore's functionalist arguments can be expressed by his now famous question, "Are engineers functionally more important to a factory than unskilled workers?"Davis and Moor's notion on scarcity and talent that "Only a limited number of individuals in any society have the talents that can be trained into the skills appropriate to these positions" is dismissed by Tumin since there is no evidence in any system of stratification which displays that at a given time, only a limited number of individuals are talented enough for certain positions.

Lastly, for Davis and Moore, the relationship between reward and position based on 'inherent ability' in people is direct and simple. But Tumin raises the point that such an understanding of reward and scarcity does not take into account the control of assets by power groups and other impediments to training, education and access, which would leave a huge pool of talent unutilized in society. Tumin further states: "Social stratification systems function to provide the elite with the political power necessary to procure acceptance and dominance of an ideology which rationalizes the status quo, whatever it may be, as "logical," "natural," and "morally right." In this

manner, social stratification systems function as essentially conservative influences in the society in which they are found." Most importantly, Tumin asserts strongly that just because stratification is universal, it does not imply that stratification itself is of any functional necessity to a society.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: What is the conclusion arrived at by Lipset and Bendix regarding social mobility in industrialized societies?

.....

Q 6: How did Tumin define Social Stratification?

.....

5.6 CRITICISMS OF THE MARXIST PERSPECTIVES ON STRATIFICATION

Due to the huge impact of Marxist perspectives on almost all arenas of social life, there have been many criticisms levied against these theories. Some of the criticisms view Marxism's stress on communism and the working class' revolution as problematic since this can lead to a violence and suppression of individual agency and personal rights. Again, Marxism is found to be deterministic and to be afflicted by truisms by some detractors.

One of the central criticisms against Marxists understanding of stratification is that, Marx's focus on the two classes of bourgeoisie and proletariat is viewed to be challenged by the existence of the middle class. Critiques view the marginal position of the middle class as evidence of the inability of Marxian understanding of class to be sufficient.

A lot of feminists have criticised Marxist theory of production and capital, which leaves many facets of women's world and work outside of its theoretical domain. Marx's theories have been found inadequate in addressing the inequality that arises from arenas outside the wage-labour

relationship and outside the economic sphere. However, many Marxist feminist scholars have addressed these shortcoming by building on these limitation and evolving Marxist theorisations by applying it to issues pertaining to women's inequality and gender relations. Along with downplaying the importance of gender, Marx has also been accused of upholding economic scholars have critiqued Marx's theorizations as not taking into account the intersubjective dimension of social relations, where people engaged in social relations and actively participate in consciously attaching meanings to their social interactions.

Marx's theory is widely considered as an all-encompassing theory that can be used to explain a variety of phenomena and social problems. However, there are a lot of scholars who have pointed out that Marx's concept of economic base and class can be insufficient and unequipped to explain many domains of socio-cultural spheres, which could be relatively autonomous from the economy.

5.7 LET US SUM UP

- Marxist class analysis considers a relational approach to social inequality, whereby classes are understood conceptually as developing because of particular historical circumstances.
- Marx's "historical materialism" or the "materialist conception of history" is based on Hegel's ideas that history forms due to an opposition or conflict between two opposing forces. Marx adopted the idea of the dialectics but unlike Hegel's idealism, Marx considered real forces of history to be emerged from materiality of the real world.
- The mode of production of a given society is constituted of two parts: the base and the superstructure.
- The economic base reflects the interest of the ruling class that controls this base, which would always be in dialectical opposition of the interest

of the working class, which is much bigger in number, but without power over the base.

- Surplus value is the excess value generated by the proletariat as profits, which are generated by the workers working in excess of their labour cost but are wholly appropriated by the proletariat or the capitalist.
- According to Marx, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."
- At the heart of Marx's writing is the importance he accords to the concept of a "classless society". This, according to Marx, was the ultimate end of social organization where man can finally become "fully human".
- The most important conclusion that Lipset and Bendix arrived at in their work is, "the overall pattern of social mobility appears to be much the same in the industrial societies of various Western countries"
- Tumin raises the point that Davis and Moore's understanding of reward and scarcity does not take into account the control of assets by power groups and other impediments to training, education and access, which would leave a huge pool of talent unutilized in society.

5.8 FURTHER READING

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6) Marx, Karl (1867) 1965. Capital: A critical analysis of Capitalistic Production. Vol. 3. Progress Publishers

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5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1:'Marxism' refers to critiques, theories, political ambitions that are evolved from or inspired by the theoretical and political work of Karl Marx (1818-1883).

Ans to Q No 2: Some of the central ideas in Marxist scholarship are: that capitalism or capitalist production leads to exploitative social relations. Marxists scholars view socialism as the social order where capitalist conceptions such as private property and exploitation would be eradicated. Lastly, such a transition from capitalist to social system would be achieved through revolution.

Ans to Q No 3: The four main modes of production identified by Marx are primitive communism, ancient society, feudal society and lastly, capitalist society.

Ans to Q No 4: The relation of production refers to the entirety of all the relations that human beings enter into in order to fulfill their necessary functions for necessities and amenities of life- such as employer-employee work conditions, the technical division of labour, and property relations etc. (so factors such as private property, petty bourgeoisie, proletariat). Forces of production refer to the elements and processes involved in production

where raw materials are transformed into products (such as tools, machines, factory, raw materials).

Ans to Q No 5: Lipset and Bendix found through the countries they included in their study, that once countries reach a certain level of industrialization, their rates of social mobility show uniform increase.

Ans to Q No 6: Tumin defined social stratification as "the arrangement of a social group or society into a hierarchy of positions that are unequal with regard to power, property, social evaluation and psychic gratification".

5. 10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: What did Karl Marx mean by 'base' and 'superstructure'?

Q 2: What were the mains criticisms against Marxian approach to Social Stratification?

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Discuss Karl Marx's understanding on Social Stratification and Inequality?

Q 2: Discuss Lipset and Reinhard Bendix's contribution to the Marxists school of thought?

Q 3: Explain Tumin's approach to Social Stratification.

** ** **

Unit 6 : WEBERIAN PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objectives
6.2 Introduction
6.3 Weber's concept of Class
6.4 Weber's concept of Status Group
6.5 Weber's concept of Party
6.6 Let Us Sum Up
6.7 Further Reading
6.8 Answers to Check Your Progress
6.9 Model Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- understand Max Weber's perspective on social stratification
- describe weber's concept of Class
- explain weber's concept of Status group
- discuss weber's concept of Party
- understand the similarities and differences between Weberian and Marxist perspective of Stratification.

6.2 INTRODUCTION

The work of German Sociologist Max Weber has contributed significantly towards the stratification theory. But unfortunately Weber died beforehe could complete his work on 'social stratification'.Thus it remained fragmentary, short and unfinished. His concept of social stratification should be understood against the backdrop of Marx's conception of social stratification because much of Weber's account of stratification is the product of a long and intense debate on Marx's view on stratification. Weber's approach is said to be corrective to, or displacement of, Marx's

perspective. Therefore his view varies from Marx in several ways. In the previous unit, we have learned that according to Marx economic dimension is the most significant variable of social stratification. Weber added two more variable to the economic dimension. In this unit, we shall learn that according to Weber there are three dimension of social stratification.viz.power, prestige and property or three separate bases (though interacting) on which hierarchies are created in any society. Social stratification is precisely about the unequal distribution of people's capacity to obtain things, and to prevail over others. Thus social stratification is essentially a phenomenon of the distribution of power (John A Hughes etal, 2003).

Weber maintained that stratification is an organized manifestation of power in society. Power for Weber can be separated into three sphere of activity for analytical purposes: economic, social and political, and within each sphere power is designated according to class, status and power (Weber,1970).Weber has discussed in detail how the unequal distribution of resources results into some groups. Let us begin our discussion with power. The definition of power offered by Weber in his Wirtschaft and Gesselschaft is of central importance. Weber distinguishes between power and leadership. In addition, Weber in his essay 'Class, Status Group and Parties' discusses the importance of power. He describes 'Power' 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. Weber distinguishes between economically conditioned power and power as such. Man does not strive for power only to enrich himself economically. Economic power may also be valued 'for its own sake'. People strive for power only for the social 'honour'. Power is not the only basis of social honour. It is important to mention here that not all power entails social honour. Social honour, prestige may be the basis of economic or political power. Quite generally 'mere economic' power and especially 'naked' money power is by no means a recognized basis of social honour.Power as well as honour is guaranteed by legal order. Legal order

is only an additional factor that enhances the social honour and power but it cannot always secure them. Accoding to Weber class status group and parties are phenomenon of the distribution of power within a community (Weber: 1946).

Thus the way in which social honour is distributed in a community is called 'social order'. Social order and economic order are related to legal order. Social order and economic order are not identical. Economic order is the way the goods and services are distributed. Social order is determined by the economic order to a high degree and in return reacts upon it.Therefore, class, status group and parties are phenomenon of distribution of power within a community.

6.3 WEBER'S CONCEPT OF CLASS

For Weber, a class is not, by its nature, an actual group; it is only collection of individuals, who occupy comparable economic positions and who need not have any awareness of each other, or even recognition of the fact that they are in the same position (John A Hughes etal, 2003). According to Weber classes are not communities; they merely represent bases of communal action. A class may be defined as a group of people who commonly have a specific casual component of life chances and whose interests are basically economic in nature. The economic interest in the possession of goods and opportunities for income is represented under the conditions of the commodity of labour market. Class situation is determined by the supply of goods and services, external living conditions and personal life experiences which are further determined by the amount of power to dispose of goods and skills for the sake of income in a given economic order. Therefore, for Weber, Class refers to any group of people found in the same class situation(Weber, 1946).

Property and lack of property are the basic categories of all class situations. Within these categories, class situations are further differentiated by:

- Kind of property that is usable for returns.
- Kind of services that can be offered in the market.

While defining class Weber says: "We may speak of 'class' when i) a number of people have in common a specific casual component of their life chances, in so far as ii) this component is represent exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income, and iii) is represented under the conditions of commodity or labour markets" (Weber,1970:181).This passage therefore contains almost the essential idea of Weber's concept of class.

6.4 WEBER'S CONCEPT OF STATUS GROUP

Power in social domain is designated as social status. All persons who are accorded the same estimations of social honour or prestige and who live the same life style generally fall within the same status group of 'status situation'. In contrast to class, status groups as described by Weber are normallycommunities. Just as class is economically determined by 'market situation', status group is determined by social estimation of honour. Status honour can be knit to class situation as class distinction is linked in with status qualification. Property as such is not always recognized as status qualification. But status honour need not necessarily be linked with a class situation, as both propertied and property less people can belong to the same status group. Status group is made up of individuals who are awarded a similar amount of social honour and therefore share the same status situation and are aware of status situation. They share similar life style, identify and have we feeling, eg caste system. According to Weber status group is more important since they suggest that in certain situations status provides basis for the formation of social groups whose members perceive common interests and a group identity. Status may be conceived as a dimension of stratification which is functionally distinct and separate from class; or, to use Bendix's expression, class and status were defined in terms mutually exclusive" (Bendix,19:153).

Status honour is also determined by the specific life style. People recognize each other as equals on the basis of the kind of life style they lead, feelings that certain pattern of life are to be looked up to or looked down upon. As Weber pointed out, it is not enough to have equivalent wealth to be recognized as someone's equal; it is what one does with wealth which is decisive. Therefore newly rich are often looked down upon and disparaged as nouveau riche by those who come from background of longstanding wealth and prestige because they lack the social connections, manners and polish and because the nouveau riche consume their wealth in showy and tasteless ways. Cultural activities often mark the difference between inferiors and superiors (John A Hughes etal, 2003). The basis for status difference is not an economic one, and people of status group are seen in the United States out of traditional democracy. Weber gives an example that the residents of a certain street are considered as belonging to society, are qualified for social intercourse and are visited and invited.

Weberian perspectives also discuss how the status structure reaches extreme consequences which are held to be 'ethnic'. The caste is the normal form in which ethnic communities are socialized side by side, as caste system believes in blood relationship and practices endogamous marriages and puts restrictions on social intercourse. Therefore the caste structure transforms the horizontal segregated ethnic group into vertical system of super ordination and subordination.

Thus we can see that the place of class is within the economic order, and the place of status group is within the social order, ie is within the sphere of the distribution of honour. From these spheres, both status group and class influence each other and, in a way, influence legal order. But 'parties' rest in the house of 'power'. In examing the nature and exploring the dimensions of stratification, Weber struck to a three dimensional view of class, status and power. The critics contention of 'two -dimensional' view of class and status is rejected.At the same time Weber treated class status and power as distinct phenomenon and held the notion of disjunction among

them. Both features of Weber's thought on stratification are well expressed in the social bases of choice or preference between alternatives which lead to different types of social action generative of either class or power stratification.

6.5 WEBER'S CONCEPT OF PARTY

Parties are oriented towards the acquisition of social power. Parties may exist in a social club as well as in a state. It may also rest in the actions of classes and status groups. For party actions are always directed towards a goal which is planned. The goal may be personal or a cause. Therefore, parties are possible within communities that are socialised, which have rational order and where a group of people is ever ready to enforce it. By party Weber does not only mean those organizations which are called parties and which are constituents of an electoral system, but any kind of organization which is set up specifically to compete for power, and which organizes primarily in pursuit of this. The basis for party membership is then acceptance of its purpose and a recognition of common interest with other members. The members of a party can, but need not, be drawn from the same kind of social groups.

Parties may also be determined by class situation and status situation. The structure of parties differs in a basic way according to the kind of communal action which they struggle to influence. Parties also differ according to whether or not the community is stratified by status or by classes. Thus for Weber classes, status groups and parties presuppose socialisation and the political framework within which they operate. It does not mean the parties are confined only to the political community; on the contrary, socialisation goes beyond the frontiers of politics. Parties often represent the interests of classes or status group. In Weber's words parties may represent interests determined through class situation or status situation. In most cases they are the class parties and partly status parties. But sometimes they are neither. Weber's view of parties suggests that the

relationship between political groups and class and status group is far from clear cut.

It can be said that the Weberian perspective of social stratification is all about the unification of the factors that contribute to the formation of a social strata in a society. These factors are economic, social and political; and Weber pointed out with the help of class, status and party. Class symbolises the economic factors, status symbolises the social factors and party symbolises the political factors. And Weber unites all these factors by giving importance to the concept of power. Power thus is embedded in all these factors of stratification, which is, in a way, related to subordination and superordination.

Weber's analysis of classes, status groups and parties suggests that no single theory can pinpoint and explain their relationship. The interplay of class status and party in the formation of social groups is complex .Therefore it must be examined inparticular society during particular time periods.

Let us now compare Marxian and Weberian theories of Social Stratification. Weber agrees with Marx that the possession of economic resources is vital for achievement of ends. But Weber does not agree with the Marxian view that class is a real entity; rather he considers class as only a category or collection of individuals who occupy comparable economic positions. He also rejects Marxian view that political power necessarily derives from economic power. He argues that class forms only one possible basis for power and that distribution of power in society is not necessarily linked to the distribution of class inequalities. While class forms one possible basis for group formation, Weber argues that there are other bases for these activities.

Weber rejects the view held by some Marxist as regards the inevitability of the proletarian revolution. He sees no reason why those sharing a similar

class situation should necessarily develop a common identity, recognize shared interests and take collective action to further those interests.

Weber breaks away with Marx's unidimensional approach of economic determinism and replaced it with multidimensional approach by giving emphasis on social and political dimension which operates independently of class. Weber replaced Marx's social-structural analysis by social -action analysis and he emphasized on the significance of attitudes, values, and aspirations in his perspectives which were neglected by Marx in laying emphasis on rationality. Weber argued that irrational and non-logical motivation and other attitudes are important considerations for a theory of stratification (Pandey, 1983).

However, Weberian theory is not free from criticism. Marxist argue that Weber's concepts of class and status grouplack the close relationship with a theoretical position that Marx's concept of class exhibits. They question Weber's concept of status group, arguing that life chances are primarily shaped by class location more than anything else. The neo-Weberian scholarship has brought out certain important issues with regard to Weber's principles and theory of stratification.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Is Weberian theory of stratification is unidimensional?

.....

Q 2: What according to Weber determines class?

.....

Q3: What does Status Group mean?

.....

6.6 LET US SUM UP

- Social stratification is precisely about the unequal distribution of people's capacity to obtain things and to prevail over others.
- According to Weber there are three dimensions of social stratification, viz, power, prestige and property .
- Max Weber in his essay 'Class, Status Group and Parties' discusses the importance of power.
- 'Power' is 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.
- People strive for power only for social 'honour'. Power is not only the only basis of social honour.
- Weber broke away with Marx's unidimensional approach of economic determinism and replaced it with a multidimensional approach
- Accoding to Weber class status group and parties are phenomenon of the distribution of power within a community.
- The way in which social honour is distributed in a community is called 'social order'.
- A class may be defined as a group of people who commonly have a specific casual component of life chances and whose interests are basically economic in nature.
- Class is economically determined by 'market situation'.
- The status groups are determined by social estimation of honour.
- Status group is made up of individuals who are awarded a similar amount of social honour.

- Parties are oriented towards the acquisition of social power.
- According to Weber party means any kind of organization which is set up specifically to compete for power, and which organizes primarily in pursuit of this.

6.7 FURTHER READING

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6.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: No, Weber's perspective on Stratification is not unidimensional but it is multidimensional.

Ans to Q No 2: Class is economically determined by 'market situation'.

Ans to Q No 3: Status group is the one, which is made up of individuals who are awarded a similar amount of social honour and therefore share the same status situation and are aware of status situation.

6.9 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Explain Weber's concept of Class.

Q 2: How does Weber's perspective on stratification differ from that of Marx?

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Discuss the key feature or features through which Weber has analysed social stratification.

Q 2: Do you think Power has any role to play in social stratification? Substantiate your argument with certain example.

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Unit 7 : FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 Liberal Feminist Perspective on Stratification

7.4 Radical Feminist Perspective on Stratification

7.5 Socialist Feminist Perspectives on Stratification

7.6 Let Us Sum Up

7.7 Further Reading

7.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

7.9 Model Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- know about the basic principles, arguments and criticisms of feminist perspective on stratification
- understand the differences between different strands of feminist perspective
- discuss the basic principles of liberal, socialist and radical feminism and their perspectives on stratification.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

The word 'feminism' is derived from the French word féminisme and it gained popularity during the 1800s. Since then, feminism has been used to refer to social theories, economic ideologies, philosophy and most commonly political and social movements, all of which operate with the underlying assumption of women's oppression and subjugation in the world and Feminism aim to bring equality, liberation and empowerment to women.

Feminist movements have been divided in three waves, each of which grappled with different issues and ushered in lasting socio-political and

cultural changes in the world, and contributed in shaping the world that we live in right now. The first wave of feminism was around mid-nineteenth century to early twentieth century. The main areas for concern here were education, employment, marriage and political rights, particularly the right to vote. Practices such as sati, child-marriage or purdah, which were backed by religious and cultural institutions,also received widespread backlash by the feminists of this era, who wanted these to be eradicated from society. First wave feminist movement led to movements for equal political participation, symbolized by the right to vote. At this time in history, women still couldn't vote but finally, in 1893, New Zealand became the first country to implement universal suffrage, soon followed by other countries.

The second wave of feminism began during the 1960s. The main issues that became a rallying point for the feminist protests were issues of unemployment and lack of reproductive rights for women. The issue of sexual discrimination, both at work and in the society at large, came to the fore during this time. However, a lack of consensus among feminists during this era, on issues such as pornography, intersectionalities, between gender and other forms of oppression, such as race and class, led to an inner fracturing between feminists that led to the third wave of feminism. The third wave of feminism wanted to move away from the white middle class-centric feminism of the previous waves and accorded importance to race, class, sexual orientation and other structural bias against women.

Thus, even in Sociology, feminism created a distinct and much-needed change in the tenor of theorisations, which had hitherto placed men at the centre of all theorizations and intellectual investigations. Over the period of time , there have been many different strands of feminisms that have evolved and left their lasting mark on polity, economy and society. Here we would discuss three main feminist perspectives on stratification. It has to be noted here that apart from these there have been many different strands of feminism such as post-modern feminism, transgender feminism, ecofeminism etc., but each of them in some way or the other can be traced

back to these three broad strands of feminist theorisation of inequality and stratification.

In the previous unit, we have discussed about the Marxist approach to Social Stratification. In this unit, let us understand how the Feminist Scholars view or interpret social stratification. Here we shall focus on the Liberal Feminists, Radical Feminists, Marxist and Socialist Feminist perspectives on Social Stratification.

7.3 LIBERAL FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON STRATIFICATION

As we mentioned above, in the beginning of the feminist movement, the focus of the feminists was on procuring equal legal and political rights for women. Along with this, there was a focus on women being able to access education at par with men (since a lot of respected universities such as Oxford and Cambridge at that time did not allow female students as members until 1920 and 1947 respectively). This tradition of feminism is called the liberal feminist tradition. This feminist strand stresses that women should have equal legal rights at par with men and should have a political voice and participation that is equal to men. Women and men should first and foremost be treated as persons and not reduced to their gender categories and stereotyped into gender roles. The demand for personal autonomy and political autonomy form the core of liberal feminism.

Mary Wollstonecraft's Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792) is a pivotal work in the feminist movement since it was the first feminist manifesto and a work of feminist philosophy. This book was influenced by the famous libertarian John Locke, who had argued for men's indelible natural right to life, liberty and possession, which no government should deny. Wollstonecraft argues for women to have the same right to education as men and not to be relegated just to the roles of wives and mothers but be given the opportunity to have the same individual rights as men, since they are human beings as well. She speaks about how women are "indoctrinated

from childhood to believe that beauty is woman's scepter, spirit takes the form of their bodies, locked in the gilded cage, only seeks to adorn its prison." Thus, set free from such indoctrination and the denial of education, women can exert their individuality beyond the beauty of their physical bodies and beyond their roles as wives and mothers. Apart from philosophical treatise, Wollstonecraft also provided a plan for implementing a women inclusive national education in Britain.

John Stuart Mill's The Subjection of Women (1869) also advanced the argument for women's equality. His academic and political contribution is in furthering the movement towards women's right to vote. In fact, during his term as a Member of Parliament of Westminster in 1886, he had advanced a motion to allow for women's suffrage. The motion was defeated but the seed for the women's suffrage movement was sown.

Betty Friedan was one of the main figures spearheading the second wave of feminist movement. Her book, The Feminine Mystique (1963) remains one of the most widely popular texts from this era. This book called on women, particularly suburban women, to move beyond the confines of their home and hearth, and pursue their own careers and demand social and political equality. Over time, there has definitely been an evolution in ideas even within the liberal feminist strand, which has built on the arguments on classical liberal or libertarian feminists. Catharine MacKinnon, Martha Nussbaumand Naomi Wolf aresome of the most prominent liberal feminists of contemporary times.

It has to be mentioned here that the divisions of different strands of feminism are not distinct and impermeable. Different strands of feminism have also borrowed from each other theoretically and there are many important feminist works that cannot be clearly categorised into such divisions. One important work in this regard is Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex (1949). Beauvoir's stress on how women should be entitled to the same political and social rights as men does place her work within the liberal feminist tradition, but she also deviates from it by maintaining her

firm existential roots, which emphasises that each individual, regardless of age, sex, class should have the freedom to define themselves and be enabled to take the individual responsibility of such freedoms. Beauvoir's philosophical exposition on the construction of women as the 'other' is still instrumental in feminist theorisation and understanding of women's position in the world. Speaking about how women's subordination to men leads to her being othered, Beauvoir says, woman "is the incidental, the inessential, as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute-she is the Other." This state of being the 'Other' is what feminism grapples with.

Liberal feminist perspectives of stratification were born within the discourse on rights and legality. Thus, the issues that are dealt by feminists also belong to the domain of public life and public institutions. This leaves the domain of private and intimate lives of women and institutions, apart from the legal and political machineries, beyond the reach of critical feminist scrutiny. The distinction between the private and the public is upheld in liberal theory along with an acceptance of existing social structures. The focus here is on making these structures and institutions accessible and equitable towards women. But the other strands of feminism bring light to how private and public domains are all inter-related and how the existing structures of socio-political system themselves can be the reason for women's oppression and subjugation.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is feminism?

.....

Q 2: What is third wave feminism?

.....

Q 3: What is the liberal feminist stand on stratification?

.....

7.4 RADICAL FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON STRATIFICATION

It was the second wave of feminism that led to the rise of the radical feminists during the 1960s. The ideologies of radical feminism emerged from the ideas provided by the New Left and the context provided by the feminist movements of the mid nineteenth century. The liberal feminist understanding of gender inequality was found wanting by the racial feminists while Marxism was found to be too focussed on capitalism and the class question. Radical feminism critiques them and argues that women have been oppressed by men under the patriarchal social structure which inherently is against the ideas of women's liberation, freedom and emancipation. Thus, for women to unshackle the bonds of inequality and subordination to men, the social structure itself needs to be overthrown and changed. Radical feminism provided the base for other factions of feminist groups such as cultural feminism, revolutionary feminism and lesbian feminism.

Radical feminism has been the epicentre of some of the most radical ideas regarding gender, politics, women's sexual autonomy as well as the extent of male domination over women. Shulamith Firestone's The Dialectic of Sex (1970) is a good example of a classic radical feminist text. According to Firestone "sexual class system"predates and runs deeper than any other form of oppression, and the eradication of sexism will require a radical reordering of society". So a feminist revolution should not just aim to eradicate male privilege but remove any traces of the distinction between the sexes. She identifies the patriarchal nuclear family as the locus of the sex-class distinction and calls on women to shed their gendered roles and the burden of reproduction. Firestone points out the possibility of the biological family itself being uprooted through modern reproductive technologies of gestation, which can free women from duties of gestation.

Another book considered a radical feminist classic is Sexual Politics (1970) by Kate Millet. This book is one of the first examples of academic

literary criticism by feminists. Millet espouses the inherent sexism and underlying patriarchy of famous literary works by revered and popular writers such as D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, Sigmund Freud and Norman Mailer. Susan Brownmiller's 'Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape (1975)' also is noteworthy here; it was one of the first books to deeply engage with the subject of rape and talk about it within the context of patriarchal domination and exercise of male power over women. She described rape as "a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear". This book which has been heavily criticized as poorly researched and limited, remains very controversial. However, it still is a good example of radical feminist literature that created long lasting impact on how certain social problems were viewed and how radical feminists offered new radical frames to understand women's subjugation and inequality.

Some other radical feminists of note are Judith Brown, Andrea Dworkin and Adrienne Riche. The biggest criticism of radical feminist perspective of stratification is that much of their fundamental ideas about gender, class and sex are essentialist. The critics argue that the notion that all women are victims and all men are propagators of violence is flawed and essentialist. Again, 'woman' cannot be understood as a universal category and the experiences of all women cannot be generalized. Thus, in radical feminism as well, there has been the criticism that it hasn't been able to adequately include diversities of race, class and sexual orientations. However, the body of work offered by radical feminists still continues to inspire women's liberation movements around the world.

7.5 SOCIALIST FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON STRATIFICATION

Socialist feminist perspective on women's condition in the world is drawn from Marxist understanding of society and economy and radical feminism's understanding of the pervasiveness of patriarchy and the role of gender. Socialist feminists contend that women oppressions stems from economic

stratification intensified by the production methods inherent in capitalism. Thus, to emancipate women both from the social sphere of work and property relations as well as the private sphere of marriage, the capitalist order has to be systematically overthrown. Thus, while liberal feminists focus on individual rights within the existing social order, socialist feminists recognise the existence of women within a broader community, identifying exploitations that happen due to differences in race, class, religion, sexual identity etc., within the structure of capitalist patriarchy. An important argument underlying the socialist feminist perspective of stratification is that there is a fundamental interconnection between struggle for women's emancipation and class struggle. The liberal feminist movement was critiqued by socialist feminists as being a bourgeoisie movement, which was not representative of the oppressed working class women

Of course, the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels heavily influenced this strand of feminism. In fact, the foundation of Marxist feminism was laid by Engels' book 'The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State' (1884), where he argued that women's subordinate position in the society arose not from some naturally given biological disposition but was actually a result of social relations whose roots can be traced to modes of production and advent of private property.

One of the most comprehensive treatises on the position of socialist feminism was Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism (1978)by Zillah R. Eisenstein. Eisenstein painted a clear picture of how in a capitalist patriarchy there exists "mutually reinforcing dialectical relationship between capitalist class structure and hierarchical sexual structuring". She contends that for women to have equality in the real sense of the term, the patriarchal system itself has to be dislodged. Lise Vogel's Marxism and the Oppression of Women: Toward a Unitary Theory (1983) is another central piece of scholarship among socialist feminist authors. She argued that Marx's views on women are not satisfactory and these have to be built on. Using Marx's concepts such as individual consumption, value of labour

and industrial reserve army, Vogel extends them further and uses these ideas while discussing social reproduction at length. Vogel's work is important as a critique of the scholarship of Marx and Engels, as well as the dual systems theory, which was the focal point for most socialist feminist theorizations at that time. In place of the dual systems theorywhich saw "two equally powerful motors drive the development of history: the class struggle and the sex struggle", Vogel proposed a unitary theory transcending both production and reproduction.

The biggest criticism against socialist feminism is that since the basis of this strand rests on Marxian ideas of production and class division, gender becomes just an addition to this, instead of being the central concern. We must keep in mind that theorization itself can become a process which is dynamic and which does not remain static in time. This is particularly true in the way in which Marxism and socialist theory has evolved over time in order to capture the realities of an ever-changing world. Donna Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century" is one of the most striking feminist narratives of the twentieth century. Here, Haraway attempts to address the interaction of culture and technology in a postmodern world, discussing how the analytical frames of race, gender and class itself are in a process of transition. Using socialist feminist ideas, Haraway develops a critique that stands firmly in a post-modern world. According to Haraway "there is nothing about being female that naturally binds women together into a unified category. There is not even such a state as 'being' female, itself a highly complex category constructed in contested sexual scientific discourses and other social practices".



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: What does the radical feminist strand argue regarding women's inequality?

.....

Q 5: What is the socialist feminist perspective on stratification?

.....



7.6 LET US SUM UP

- The word 'feminism' is derived from the French word féminisme and gained popularity during the 1800s.
- Feminist movements have been divided in three waves: first wave, second wave and third wave.
- In the beginning of the feminist movement, the focus of the feminists was on procuring equal legal and political rights for women.
- Mary Wollstonecraft's Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792) is a pivotal work in the feminist movement since it was the first feminist manifesto and a work of feminist philosophy. This book was influenced by work of the famous libertarian John Locke.
- Liberal feminist perspective of stratification was born within the discourse on rights and legality. Thus; the issues that are dealt by feminists belong to the domain of public life and public institutions.
- The ideologies of radical feminism emerged from the ideas provided by the New Left and the context provided by the feminist movements of the mid nineteenth century.

- Socialist feminist perspective on women's condition in the world is drawn from Marxist understanding of society and economy, and radical feminism's understanding of the pervasiveness of patriarchy.

- The divisions of different strands of feminist are not distinct and impermeable. Different strands of feminism have also borrowed from each other theoretically and there are many important feminist works that cannot be clearly categorized into such divisions.

7.7 FURTHER READING

1) Beauvoir, Simone de (1949) 1989. The Second Sex. Translated by H. M. Parshley. New York: Vintage Books

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3) Eisenstein, Z. R. (1978). Capitalist patriarchy and the case for socialist feminism. New York: Monthly Review Press.

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6) Locke, John. (1690) 1992. Two Treatises of Government. New York: Classics of Liberty Library.

7) Mill, John Stuart. (1869) 2001. The Subjection of Women, ed. Edward Alexander. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

8) Kate Millett, 1970. Sexual Politics. Garden City, New York: Doubleday

9) Wollstonecraft, Mary. (1792) 1989. Vindication of the Rights of Women. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus.

10) Vogel, Lise. (1983) 2013, Marxism and the Oppression of Women: Toward a Unitary Theory. Chicago: Haymarket Books.

7.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The word 'feminism' is derived from the French word féminismeand gained popularity during the 1800s. Since then, feminism has been used to refer to social theories, economic ideologies, philosophy and most commonly political movements, which operate with the underlying assumption of women's oppression and subjugation in the world, and which aim to bring equality, liberation and empowerment to women.

Ans to Q No 2:A lack of consensus among feminists during the Second Wave Feminist movement, on issues such as pornography, intersectionalities between gender and other forms of oppression such as race and class, led to an inner fracturing between feminists that led to the Third Wave of Feminism. The Third Wave of feminism wanted to move away from the white middle class- centric feminism of the previous waves and accorded importance to race, class, sexual orientation and other structural bias against women.

Ans to Q No 3: This feminist strand stresses that women should have equal legal rights at par with men and have a political voice and participation that is equal to men. Women and men should first and foremost be treated as persons and not reduced to their gender categories and stereotyped into gender roles. The demand for personal autonomy and political autonomy form the core of liberal feminism.

Ans to Q No 4: Radical feminism argues that women have been oppressed by men within the patriarchal social structure, which inherently is against the ideas of women's liberation, freedom and emancipation. Thus, for women

to unshackle the bonds of inequality and subordination to men the social structure itself needs to be overthrown and changed.

Ans to Q No 5: Socialist feminists contend that women's oppression stems from economic stratification intensified by the production methods inherent in capitalism. Thus, to emancipate women both from the social sphere of work and property relations as well as the private sphere of marriage, the capitalist order has to be systematically overthrown.



7.9 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Mention three feminist scholars and their work.

Q 2: Differentiate between liberal feminist and radical feminist perspectives of stratification?

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Discuss the liberal feminist perspective of stratification.

Q 2: Discuss the socialist feminist perspective of stratification

Q 3: Discuss the radical feminist perspective of stratification.

Q 4: What is feminism? What are the different waves of the feminist movement?

** ** **

UNIT 8: CASTE SYSTEM AND STRATIFICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives
8.2 Introduction
8.3 Caste System as a Form of Social Stratification
8.4 Caste Hierarchy and Discrimination
8.5 Changing Nature of Caste in Contemporary Society
8.5.1 Caste, Class and Power
8.6 Let Us Sum Up
8.7 Further Reading
8.8 Answers to Check Your Progress
8.9 Model Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- understand caste system as a form of Social Stratification
- understand the nature of Caste Hierarchy
- describe the discriminations associated with Caste system
- explain the changes undergone by the caste system over the period of time
- discuss the nexus between caste, class and power in the contemporary society.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

Indian Society is known to be perhaps one of the most stratified society amongst all other human societies in history and the Caste System of India is one of the oldest forms of social stratification in existence. No understanding of Indian Society is complete without an engagement with its caste system, which shapes social relationships in India. In the previous units and especially in unit 2, we have got an idea about the concept of Caste. This unit will be an elaboration of what we have already learned in the previous units but here the focus will be more on how caste stratifies

the Indian Society, how this system is a privilege for a few and a disadvantage for others and the changes that have taken place in the Indian Caste system in the contemporary society. We shall also try to understand the nexus between caste, class and power in the modern day Indian Society.

8.3 CASTE SYSTEM AS A FORM OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

The word caste isderived from the Portuguese word casta, meaning breed, race, or kind. We now already know that caste is a 'closed rank status group' where a person's status is fixed at the time of his/her birth. Caste status is therefore known as an 'Ascribed Status' because a person does not or cannot achieve it but rather automatically becomes a member of his/her parental caste from the time birth. A person is born with a caste and continues to be a member of the same till the end of his/her life. Membership of a Caste is therefore not voluntary; it is not determined by selection, but by birth. Bougle (1985) therefore describes caste as 'hereditarily specialized and hierarchically arranged group'. The caste system is one of the oldest forms of social stratification. Even though there are legal prohibitions toward caste practices such as Untouchability, Caste still continues to divide and discriminate people.

Traditionally one's occupation too was fixed on the basis of his/her caste. Each caste has its own occupation which has to be taken up by its members. Further a person's marital relation, social interaction so on and so forth is also is also determined by Caste. However with the advent of modern education and economy, these has changed to a great extent which we shall elaborately discuss in the latter section where changes in the caste system shall be dealt with. Despite the changes, caste status still plays a significant role in one's life even today. Understanding the Caste system is therefore very vital while studying about social stratification in the context of Indian Society.

Now the question is how the Caste system stratifies Indian Society. While discussing about the Caste system in Unit 2, we have learned that Caste is a hierarchical system which accords different positions to different caste group's i.e placing one group on top or below the other. The groups are hierarchically placed either in a super ordinate or a subordinate position in relation to the others. And since this system is associated with privileges as well as disabilities, there is a sense of superiority and inferiority attached with the system. Those groups placed at the top are considered to be superior to those placed at the bottom. The one's on top enjoys the privileges bestowed upon by the system, while those below suffers from disadvantages and discriminations. The ranking of the groups in the caste hierarchy is based on the notion of 'Purity and Pollution'. Only those groups which are considered to be ritually pure are placed at the top of the Caste hierarchy and those groups considered impure or polluted are placed at the bottom. Now, this purity and pollution also has to do with the nature of job one is engaged in. For example the Brahmins are a priestly caste and hence accorded the topmost position but the groups associated with cleaning, sweeping so on and so forth are considered to be polluted and thereby positioned at the bottom.

Caste system was thought to be functional in the sense that each Caste had its own functions which its members performed for the smooth running of the society. Further the four Varnas were believed to be born out of created from the different body parts of Brahma and functions were allotted to them based on the body part they were created from. Brahmins were believed to be born from the mouth of Brahma and therefore had to perform priestly functions, Kshatriyas believed to be born from the arms got the task of protecting others i.e they had to function as warriors and rulers. The Vaishyas believed to be born from the thighs had to work for agriculture and commerce and finally the Shudras believed to have born from the feet of Brahma served as artisans and servants. From these four Varnas sprang several occupational caste groups or jati. The fifth category was of the 'untouchables' who were considered to fall outside the Varna Scheme and had to perform

menial works which was deemed as polluting. Mahatma Gandhi called them 'Harijans' or 'Children of God'. Since 1935 they came to be known as Scheduled Caste as per Government of India regulation. Government of India also abolished the practice of Untouchability. The Castes group's falling in the top three ranked varnas are referred to as the "twice-born," caste as the male members of these groups undergo the initiation ceremony and wear the sacred thread as an indicator of ritual rebirth.

From the above discussion we have learned that the Caste system hierarchically arranges different groups into superior and inferior positions in a society. Apart from the ranking of different groups, caste system also defines and governs social interactions and social relationships. For example, a person can only marry from his/her own caste. Inter-caste marriages are strictly prohibited in order to maintain caste purity. The restriction is even more severe in the case of marriage between an Upper caste Women and a Lower Caste men. The various incidences of Honour-Killing reflects how Caste status and Caste rules are so important even today and how violation of such can even take one's life. Apart from marriage and sexual intercourse, Caste system restricts social interactions or social intercourse too. There are clearly defined rules regarding acceptance of food and water. For example a person will not eat Kaccha food i.e food prepared using water from members of other caste. He/She will accept Kaccha foor only from his fellow-caste men. In places like Gujrat or South India, an upper caste man especially a Brahmin will not even drink water from a lower caste man. The notion of purity and pollution is so intense that even the shadow of an untouchable caste was considered to be polluting. The Upper caste therefore ensured that the social distance between them and the lower castes was always maintained to retain their purity. In the next section, when we discuss about Caste Discriminations we will get to learn about these issues in greater details.

From what we have learned above, the Caste system stratifies the society into different castes and sub castes where a person born to a

particular stratum cannot change it. Given this rigidity in terms of a person's caste status, Caste system is therefore referred to as a Closed System of Stratification. The system of Stratification, as we already know, may be closed or open depending upon the scope of mobility among the different strata's. Since the Caste system is characterized by fixed status of its members, it denies the scope of mobility to its members and therefore is a closed system of stratification.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: From which Portugese word is the English word 'Caste' derived?

.....

Q 2: Is Caste membership voluntary?

.....

Q 3: Name the four varnas?

.....

8.4 CASTE HIERARCHY AND DISCRIMINATION

In the above discussion, a brief mention has already been made on the social restrictions imposed by the Caste system of social interactions and social relationships. Let us now discuss it in details and try to understand how the restrictions imposed by Caste system discriminates the lower caste people.

The lower castes especially those who were referred to as untouchables and deemed to fall outside the four Varna scheme were the worst sufferers of caste-based discriminations. They were made to suffer several socio-religious disabilities. The members of the upper caste maintained social distance from them as they were considered to be the 'polluted' caste. Social intercourse with them was completely restricted. It was believed that the touch of lower caste man would pollute or defile a man of higher

caste. In highly rigid societies, if an upper caste man, especially belonging to the top three Varnas and considered 'Twice born' comes in physical contact with a man belonging to the untouchable caste, he/she has to purify himself/herself through some rituals. Even the shadow of a lower caste was considered enough to pollute a higher caste man. They were made to live in the outskirts of the village and were not allowed to draw water from the public wells. Some even had to live in the most unhygienic places with lack of public health and sanitation facilities.Their entry to public places wasrestricted. Their entry to temples and other places of religious importance were forbidden. In most cases they were not even allowed entry to the higher caste homes, and in cases where they were allowed to visit houses of upper castes, they were made to eat and drink from separate utensils. Same was followed in the public places as well.The higher-caste people do not accept food or water from the untouchable because it would transmit the pollution permanent and inherent in the person of the untouchable.They were denied educational facilities, legal rights and political representation for a very long time. In some societies this extent of harassment was even more. The people from the untouchable caste were required to carry a broom hanging from his waist so that it could sweep the path he was walking through. Again in some cases they were asked to carry an earthen pot hung around their neck and spit only in that pot anywhere else because his spit, if fallen elsewhere could pollute it. Thus the lower caste people especially those considered as untouchable had to suffer from enormous discrimination and distress.

The members of the upper caste especially the Brahmins on the other hand led a very prestigious life with all the privileges bestowed upon them by the Caste system. They enjoyed the sense of superiority accorded to them by the caste system. If the lower castes had to suffer from several disabilities, higher castes like the Brahmins enjoy many privileges like conducting prayers in the temples etc.They commanded respect and reverence from the lower caste people. They were considered to be very enlightened and thereby played a key role in the decision making process

in the village. Their caste status thus enabled them to exert dominance in every aspect of the village life.

8.5 CHANGING NATURE OF CASTE IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

In the present era, Indian society has been experiencing tremendous changes in its different facets. Caste System too, despite its rigidity, has undergone enormous changes. It has, to certain extent, adapted to the changing social system and its survival till date may be because of its adaptability to the new social system. The erstwhile existing inflexible, rigid distinctions of the caste system have been gradually on the wane, even though the process is slow. The restrictions in food habits and occupation are declining and in urban areas we hardly find a trace of it. Today we find Brahmins eating non-vegetarian food, consuming liquor etc. which was earlier considered almost a taboo Again we can often witness people belonging to different castes dining together. Thus noteworthy changes have taken place regarding the ideas of Purity and Pollution. The notion of purity and pollution which was earlier very intense, especially in the context inter-caste relations; accepting cooked food, drinking water etc have lost its significance particularly among the educated and urban people. Apart from that, it is no longer possible for one to identify a person's caste by looking at his occupation. Even the practice of Untouchability has almost disappeared with the Constitutional provisions. Further, we observe a decline in the Supremacy of Brahmins. Brahmins, once considered as the representatives of supreme power, were accorded the topmost position in the caste hierarchy and were given extreme importance in the society. But now, with the emergence of modern capitalist system and with class status gaining increasing importance, the supremacy of the Brahmins have declined. It is the dominant caste, which is now gaining power and supremacy, even if the dominant caste is from a lower caste group. Thus the Brahmins have lost its earlier power to the Dominant Caste to a great extent. Another significant change is the declining importance of Caste

Status. Today educational and economic advancements, which are achieved statuses, are of more importance than caste status in society. A person may belong to a lower caste but with his/her educational and economic advancements; he/she commands greater respect in society than those having merely the caste identity as their sole identity marker or status symbol. People are no more identified and acknowledged according to their caste identity or ascriptive status; rather they are identified, acknowledged and accredited according to their achieved status. Educational qualification, occupational position, income etc. have therefore assumed greater importance than caste position in the contemporary society.

Along with this, the individual mobility, which was earlier restricted due to the fixed nature of occupation in the traditional caste system, has also changed to a large extent. Now, one can choose to work in his/her field of interest according to his/her abilities and skills and can achieve a higher position and a higher status. Thus, there is a greater chance of individual social mobility with the increasing importance of achieved status, which was not the case earlier. Lastly one can observe major change in the socio-economic conditions of the lower caste people. With various polices and provisions of the Indian Constitution for the socio-economic advancement of the people belonging to the lower caste, they have been able to uplift their conditions.

Thus, Caste system has been subjected to several changes, even if its nature and extent varies from region to region. While discussing about the modern trends or the changes in the caste system, it is undeniable that a distinction still prevails in this regard, when we compare rural India with urban India. In Rural India, caste still prevails even though it has become weaker. But in Urban India Caste system is rapidly changing; its rigidity is declining. Changes initiated by the British rule brought, Modern education, Industrialisation, Urbanisation, Provisions laid down by the Indian Constitution so on and so forth has resulted in the changes or the undermining of the

caste system in India. We shall now discuss the factors behind these changes in details:

- **MODERN EDUCATION:** It was the spread of Modern Western Education, initiated by the British, which played a fundamental role in the decline of the importance of caste in Indian society. Modern education, based on the principles of democracy, equality, liberty and fraternity, nibbled the roots of the caste system and rendered it weaker. It made people more rational and critical and hence developed within them an urge to question the validity of the prevailing norms and rules of the caste system and, with this there began a gradual downfall of the system. Further, as modern education encouraged co-educational institutions, it facilitated inter-caste interactions and interrelationships. Modern Education also became a powerful force behind the ousting or removal of untouchability.

- **SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENTS:**The Social Reform Movements also played a significant role in the elimination of caste distinctions from the Indian Society. The Brahmo Samaj movement led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, stood against the barriers of caste divisions and strived for Universal brotherhood. Similarly, the Prarthana Samaj bring introduced important social reforms like inter-caste marriages, inter-dining, widow remarriage so on and so forth.

Again the Arya Samaj movement founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati and Ramakrishna Mission movement voiced against the caste system, discrimination based on birth and worked for its abolition. Thus, in this way the various social reform movements could succeed in thrashing the structural features of the caste system.

- **INFLUENCE OF INDIAN CONSTITUTION:** Indian Constitution declares all its citizens, irrespective of Caste, Creed, and Religion etc to be equal. It confers equal fundamental rights and opportunities on the citizens irrespective of caste, creed, colour or sex. It offers equal opportunities to all. It bans practice of untouchability and it has also laid several provisions

for the socio-economic upliftment of people belonging to the lower castes and tribes. This clearly is a strike on inherited inequality of the caste system and has resulted in the withering away of the caste system gradually.

- **INDUSTRIALIZATION:** Caste system has been affected to a notable extent due to the process of industrialization. Industrialisation brought in a new system of production; provided new sources of livelihood and occupational avenues to people and made occupational mobility possible. Thus people could secure jobs in Factories, mills, offices so on and so forth. They no longer had to depend upon their traditional caste based occupations. It also developed a new work culture where people belonging to different caste groups work together, under one roof thereby making caste divisions and caste segregations redundant.

- **URBANIZATION:** Industrialization has paved the way to urbanization and with the growth of urbanization; people from the rural areas have been migrating to towns and cities in search of better employment and livelihood opportunities. The new towns and cities, with their cosmopolitan nature, accommodate everyone irrespective of caste and creed. And it being a open, secular space, makes it difficult for one to maintain their caste restrictions and taboos. The educational institutions, hotels, restaurants, theatres, clubs, which are all free from the caste bindings, gives little scope to an individual to continue or uphold caste distinctions and demarcations. The growth of city life, the exigencies of office work, railway travelling etc also have made people to overlook caste-restrictions. Thus it promotes a Caste-free environment facilitates inter-caste interactions. Kingsley Davis therefore rightly observes that the anonymity, congestion, mobility, secularism and changeability of the city make the operation of the caste virtually impossible.

- **MODERN MEANS OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION:** Modern means of transport and communication are fundamental in the sinking of the caste system. It has helped or facilitated spatial mobility of the people, thereby rupturing the prevailing caste restrictions. The different

means of public transport, be it, bus, train, tram, airplane etc. cannot provide for distinctions between castes or reserve seats on the basis of caste and this has created or generated a sense of equality in society.

8.5.1 Caste, Class and Power

Despite the inescapable changes that we have discussed in the preceding section, certain characteristics of Caste system have endured and hold strong ground even today. One such and very important characteristic of caste system which has persisted, especially in the rural areas, is Endogamy. Though Indian society has become tolerant in case if inter-caste marriages and the number of inter-caste marriages are increasing but it has remained confined mostly to a handful urbanised and educated people. In most of the cases one's Caste status is given preference or become the most important criteria rather than his/her educational achievements and economic affluence even today. An Indian, however, highly placed and advanced in education still prefers a bride from his own caste. However this is again truer in the case of rural areas in particular. Further again especially, in agrarian societies, one can witness the interximing or nexus between Caste and Class. It is the people from the upper caste who usually constitute of the upper class. The Upper Caste own huge plots of land and are economically affluent. The lower caste people at times work as wage labourers for the Upper Caste people. We shall learn about this in greater details in the next unit where we are going to discuss agrarian classes in India.

Another striking feature of the contemporary times is the intermixing of Caste and Politics which have also stimulated the endurance of the caste system in India. Caste has been politicized and elections are contested with caste as an important issue. Caste loyalties play a major role in Indian Polity. Thus elections in India provoke casteism. The vote bank policy has dragged caste into politics and hence caste system has gained strength.

Further, the reservation policy has also contributed to the sustenance of the caste system. The special rights provided to the people on the basis of caste have not only encouraged the continuance of the caste system but have perpetuated the nexus between Caste, Class and Power in India.

To conclude, one can say with certainty that the restrictions laid down by the caste system on diet, occupation, life style, behaviour, etc are breaking down. It has undeniably been affected to some extent by the influences of western education and western culture, and, its form has undergone immense transformations. One can envisage that this form of the Caste System may further change in the future with the influence of development, industrial growth and by new political and economic movements. But as illustrated above, Caste System is being fuelled and encouraged by casteism and caste practices in election, which on the other hand again provides a strong ground for caste system to endure and reinforce itself instead of dying down.

8.6 LET US SUM UP

- Caste System of India is one of the oldest forms of social stratification in existence. No understanding of Indian Society is complete without an engagement with its caste system, which shapes social relationships in India
- Caste is a hierarchical system which accords different positions to different caste group's i.e placing one group on top or below the other.
- This system is associated with privileges as well as disabilities and there is a sense of superiority and inferiority attached with the system. Those groups placed at the top are considered to be superior to those placed at the bottom.
- The ranking of the groups in the caste hierarchy is based on the notion of 'Purity and Pollution'.

- Caste system stratifies the society into different castes and sub castes where a person born to a particular stratum cannot change it.
- Since the Caste system is characterized by fixed status of its members, it denies the scope of mobility to its members and therefore is a closed system of stratification
- Caste system also leads to several discriminations. The lower castes especially those who were referred to as untouchables and deemed to fall outside the four Varna scheme were the worst sufferers of caste-based discriminations. They were made to suffer several socio-religious disabilities.
- In the present era, Indian society has been experiencing tremendous changes in its different facets. Caste System too, despite its rigidity, has undergone enormous changes, even if its nature and extent varies from region to region.
- Even though there has been changes in the caste system yet we witness newer ways in which it is gaining strength. Its nexus with class and power has enabled its influence to continue. Caste System is being fuelled and encouraged by casteism and caste practices in election, which on the other hand again provides a strong ground for caste system to endure and reinforce itself instead of dying down.

8.7 FURTHER READING

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2) Ghurye, G.S. 2004. *Caste and Race in India.* Bombay: Popular Prakashan

8.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The word caste isderived from the Portuguese word casta.

Ans to Q No 2: No Caste membership is not voluntary but is fixed as it is determined by birth.

Ans to Q No 3: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra are the four varnas.

Ans to Q No 4: Raja Ram Mohan Roy led the Brahmo Samaj Movement.

Ans to Q No 5: According to Kingsley Davis the anonymity, congestion, mobility, secularism and changeability of the city make the operation of the caste virtually impossible.

8.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Explain the functional notion of Caste.

Q 2: Explain the nexus between caste, class and power in the contemporary Indian society.

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Discuss how caste system stratifies Indian society.

Q 2: Critically discuss the caste based discriminations in Indian society.

Q 3: Explain the factors that have led to changes in the Caste system.

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UNIT 9: CLASS AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives
9.2 Introduction
9.3 Concept of Class
9.3.1 Characteristics of Class System
9.4 Sociological Perspectives on Class as a Basis of Stratification
9.5 Social Mobility and Class Structure
9.6 Let Us Sum Up
9.7 Further Reading
9.8 Answers to Check Your Progress
9.9 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- know about the concept of class
- understand the characteristics of class system
- explain the perspectives of various thinkers on class system as a basis of social stratification

9.2 INTRODUCTION

Social Stratification, as we know by now, is a common phenomenon in all societies- Modern or Ancient. Stratification, mostly in the contemporary modern societies, is manifested in the division of society into innumerable classes. Societies comprise of various hierarchically arranged classes, with each class being assigned a particular status. Class because of its universal and pervasive nature; and because of its influence or rather its centrality in social relationships, has been one of the vital topics of discussion and deliberation in Sociology. In the previous unit, we have discussed caste as a basis of stratification. In this unit, we shall discuss how class stratifies different groups in a society. We shall

first try to understand the concept of class and characteristics of class system. We shall also try to understand the perspectives of different thinkers on the class system as a basis of social stratification.Let us first begin with the concept of class in the next section.

9.3 CONCEPT OF CLASS

Sociologists have given varied definitions and perspectives on the concept of Class and the Class System. According to MacIver and Page a Social Class is any portion of the community marked off from the rest by Social Status. P. Gisbert opines that "A social class is a category or group of persons having a definite status in society which permanently determines their relation to other group - feeling of superiority & inferiorities. The relative position of the class in the social scale arises from the degree of prestige attached to the status".Again according to Ongburn&Nimkoff, "A social class is the aggregate of persons having essentially the same social status in a given society." i.e. a class consciousness.According to Giddens (2000), "a class is a large-scale grouping of people who share common economic resources, which strongly influence the type of lifestyle they are able to lead". Horton and Hunt (1968) writes: "A social class is defined as a stratum of people of similar position in the social status continuum."

From the above definitions, we can state that,

- Society is divided into numerous classes
- Class refers to a group of persons with similar status in a society
- Class status is determined by one's economic position
- There is a feeling of superiority and inferiority attached with the class status.

Now, when it comes to class, the most important aspect that one needs to know about it is that Class is an economic category. One's class status in society is determined by his/her economic condition. Therefore, people

having similar economic condition are clubbed together into one class. So members of a particular class has possess similar economic resources and share same status in society.

Now coming to Class system and Social Stratification, Class system is a Universal System of Stratification present in almost every society. The Primitive Tribal Societies, which were erstwhile egalitarian or at least considered so, have also now developed Classes within them. Thus Class has been the most widespread and mounting or growing system (in terms of its relevance) of Stratification which has gradually even engulfed the primitive egalitarian societies. Being an economic category, Class in an open system of stratification, unlike castes, because class is an achieved status. One's class depends upon his/her achievements. One may be born in a poor family, but by dint of hard work, merit, and talent one may achieve a higher position in Society. Class Status is Open for all. With ones endeavour one can climb up the ladder and attain a higher status. Thus unlike caste, the status of Class is not fixed and restricted. Having said so, one cannot however deny the influence of family background in determining ones class status. One who is born to a family belonging to higher class would definitely have an upper hand in terms of facilities, exposure and life chances than the one who has to struggle to achieve a higher position. Class though is considered to be an open system has its own set of restrictions as well. The Concept of class will perhaps be clearer when we discuss its characteristics in the next sub-section.

9.3.1 Characteristics of Class System

- Class system is a hierarchical arrangement of group, with each group being assigned a particular status, prestige and role in society. Further there are Sub-classes within each class too. For example, within the Middle Class itself, which comprises the largest class group in India, there are upper middle class and lower middle class.

- Class hierarchy is based on the economic condition of people.

- Classes are de facto groups. This means that they are neither religiously nor legally sanctioned.

- As class system, similar to that of caste, is marked by unequal distribution of status and power, there is a feeling of superiority & inferiority amongst the different classes. The differences between classes, due of their respective position in the class structure of the society, creates this sense of superiority and inferiority. Since the members of the upper class are accorded higher position and endowed with higher status and greater power, they consider themselves as superior to the others in the society who are deprived of this position, power and privilege.

- Each class has a feeling of class consciousness and solidarity. Further, each class has a culture of its own as well. The life style; the values, behaviour and actions of people are all determined by their class status. Members of a particular class are bound by the in-group feeling.

- Class is not hereditary. One's class status is not determined by or fixed by birth as in the case of caste.It is a systemin which status is achieved by one's own efforts rather than ascribed, assigned or inherited. Thus,birth is not the determining factor of a person's class status in this context.

- Following from the above point, Class system is an open system. The boundaries of the Class system are rather fluid than rigid or fixed. Since class status is achieved and not ascribed, it gives scope or allows individuals to move up and at times even down the class ladder. The Class system allows one to change his/her position. With talent, skill and hard work one can change his/her class status. Here we can take APJ Abdul Kalam as an example.

- Even though class system is open and its boundaries are fluid, there's social restriction in class system as well. In general, class too is endogamous to a great extent, though it is implicit in nature. Especially

in case of the upper class members who consciously maintain their status & position, may mix with members of lower class but hardly prefer to let their family members to marry someone below the rank of theirs. In case of social interaction as well, they mostly prefer to interact with people from the same class. Thus, their social circle is determined to a large extent by their class status. However, this rigidity especially in case of marriage and social intercourse is not as much as that of the Caste system.

From the above discussions we have not only been able to understand the characteristics of class but havealso understood that though Caste and Class are both systems of stratification how class is different from caste.

Thus Class, in simple words, refers to a group of persons sharing a similar status in society. The basis of class is economy and hence it is an economic group. People having similar economic conditions are considered to be the members of the same class group. Therefore, when we talk of class in Sociology, we mostly refer to a group of people occupying similar position in the economic system of production and having similar economic resources which distinguishes them from other groups in society.Each Social Class has its own lifestyle. Further Class, being neither religiously nor legally sanctioned like the Caste or the Estate, are referred to as de facto group.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: Why is Class called an universal system of Stratification?

.....

Q2: Is Class an ascribed status?

.....

Q3: Why is Class known as an Open system of Stratification?

.....

9.4 SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CLASS AS A BASIS OF STRATIFICATION

Sociological Perspective on class is mostly based on the conceptualisation of Class by Karl Marx and Max Weber. The study of Class is traditionally associated with Karl Marx and his theory of Class is of great significance to the modern social thought. We have already understood the Marxian perspective on social stratification in unit 5, and we have an idea about Marx's view on the class system. Let us discuss it in details now. Karl Marx defines Class in the context of the Mode of production. According to him, the three big classes in society based on the capitalist mode of production comprises of - the owners merely of labour power whose income is wage, owners of capital whose source of income is profit, and landowners whose source of income is ground-rent. Marx in his distinction between the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat shows how two classes have always existed in the society based on its mode of production.

Marx was of the opinion that we can break up history into a number of epochs or periods, for example, ancient civilisation, feudalism, and capitalism. Each of these have had a class structure comprising of two classes i.e the ruling class and the oppressed class. The class structure of a particular period emerges from and is based on the Mode of production of that period. A social class, in this sense, would refer to a group of persons performing the same function in the production process and thereby occupying the same position in the class structure. Hence according to Marx, the position which the individual occupies in the social organization of production that indicates to which social class he belongs. He stressed on the organization of the production as the sole determinant of Class because he was of the view that income, consumption patterns, educational attainment, or occupation and other parameters, which too determine the prestige and privilege one would be accorded, are actually based on the social organization of production. Therefore even if occupation, income,

educational achievement might play an important role in deciding the way of life of an individual, but these parameters are themselves the consequence of the organization of production; and not identical with it. Income or Occupation thus, according to Marx, is not a determinant of the class position of an individual. For example, if two men are carpenters, they belong to the same occupation, but one may run a small shop of his own, while another works in a plant manufacturing pre-fabricated housing; the two men belong to the same occupation, but to different social classes.

Further according to Marx, a man's position in the production process not only determines his class but also shapes, in due course of time, his beliefs and actions. The class position of a man in the production process makes him confront varied experiences which in turn influences his beliefs and determines his future actions. The experiences and challenges that a man encounters while earning his living is akin to his fellow members, who too share the same class position in the economic structure, and this facilitates or paves the way for the development of common beliefs and ideas among them. This development of common beliefs and ideas creates and sense of solidarity among them. The members of the working class or the have-nots, who are the victims of the exploitative and oppressive production system, thus tend to unite and develop a common class consciousness. As Bendix and Lispset has stated, Marx pointed to following aspects which triggers the growth of common beliefs and ideas and finally culminates in the development of class consciousness among the members of a class:

- Conflicts over the distribution of economic rewards between the classes;
- Easy communication between the individuals in the same class position so that ideas and action-programs are readily disseminated;
- Growth of class-consciousness in the sense that the members of the class have a feeling of solidarity and understanding of their historic role.;

- Profound dissatisfaction of the lower class over its inability to control the economic structure of which it feels itself to be the exploited victim
- Establishment of a political organization resulting from the economic structure, the historical situations and maturation of class-consciousness.

From the above discussion it is clear that the exploitation involved with the Organization of production leads to the development of class consciousness and this according to Marx is the basis of a class. Class exist only if there is class consciousness. Class consciousness is the prerequisite for class formation and in Marxian sense, individuals having similar position the class structure, remaining isolated and detached from each other cannot lead to the formation of a class. In case of isolated individuals, there is no room for the development of common beliefs and ideas and thereby class consciousness even if their economic position and condition is same and hence formation of class won't take place in such a situation. Thus though according to Marx, Class is the outcome of social organization of production, yet there has to be class consciousness in order for class to form and exist. He again asserted that class consciousness is utmost necessary to the formation of class but only when the members of a "potential" class enter into an association for the organized pursuit of their common aims, does a class in Marx's sense exist. Thus only having class consciousness would be futile until and unless the members organize themselves to fight against their oppression and exploitation. Class therefore exists when the individuals having class consciousness, arising out of their similar oppressive working conditions, come together; unite to fight against the oppressive production system and the ruling class. A common class enemy is hence also essential to this formation of class.

From the above discussion, we can conclude that for Marx, Class was merely not a group of people sharing similar position in the production process or economic structure. It was the organization of these individuals

for a greater economic and political struggle, a struggle against the oppressive and exploitative economic structure and production system, which was fuelled by a common class-consciousness, actually lead to the emergence of a class. Marx was optimistic about a class struggle and its culmination into a classless society. Marx asserted that the industrial working class in the capitalist system would realise about their exploitation and thereby unite to fight against it. This would subsequently lead to a revolution and finally abolition of all the classes and form a class less society. He identified each historical epoch as consisting of two classes in which the owners of the means of production oppresses the workers and this leads to antagonism and class conflict. He therefore said history of hitherto existing societies in the history of class struggle and every society sows the seeds of its own destruction.

Thus, in nutshell we may say that Marxian understanding of class and how it stratifies a particular society was based on the organization of production. In Marxian terminology, the mode of production creates class-based stratification in a society. It is the mode of production, which divides the society into two groups of people i.e the owners and the workers. Marx throws light upon how the oppressions in the production process gradually leads to the development of class-consciousness and how solidarity arising from it results in class formation.

Max Weber another intellectual doyen in sociology conceptualised class as a group of individuals who share a similar position in market economy and by virtue of that fact receive similar economic rewards. While conceptualising class, Max Weber gave importance to Market situation and according to him, a person's class position is actually his position in the Market. Weber further opined that people having similar class status also have similar life-chances. It is a person's economic position that will determine his/her chances of acquiring those things that are considered as desirable in a society.

We may speak of class when: 1) A number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances , in so far as 2) this component is represented under the conditions of commodity or labor markets.

Ferdinand Toennies while discussing about class explained the distinction between Class and Estate, which are otherwise commonly thought of and understood as synonymous. He argued that though often there is an interchangeable use of the terms Class and Estate, yet they refer to two different systems. He conceptualised estates as communal and classes as societal collectives. Classes are more fluid and flexible in nature in contrast to the extreme rigidity of the estates. Classes are changeable and there is a greater chance of mobility in the class system unlike that of the estates, which are closed in nature and where mobility is restricted. While distinguishing Class from Estate Toennies further argued that the relationship between Classes is contractual and antagonistic in nature. Though classes are interdependent, but they confront each other as opponents. The relationship between them turns hostile the moment one class becomes dissatisfied with another class. But estates according to him are related to one another like the different parts of a body. However estates may also, as explained by Toennies, turn into classes when one estate becomes hostile to another. He argues that once the estates becomes hostile and engage in conflict and rivalries they take the form of class and the struggles between them should be understood as class struggles rather than struggle between estates. Furthermore, estates become similar or identical to class when the mobility among its members takes place with the changing socio-political and economic scenario. Increasing mobility among its members results in the disintegration of the estates and finally leads to its transformation into more of a class like structure.

Class system, although predominant in the industrial western societies, has also sown its seeds in the Indian society, which is already stratified on

the basis of caste. Indian society is often understood as being caste ridden, but stratifications on the basis of class too undeniably coexist in it. Though India society, especially its rural areas is predominantly agrarian, but it too has a class character, and several thinkers and scholars have analysed and classified it into number of agrarian classes, each distinct from one another. Thus in the Indian context as well, different scholars have discussed about class system and how it stratifies the Indian society. Let us, in the subsequent discussions, understand the different perspectives on nature and categories of classes that exist in Indian Society.

Daniel Thorner was of the view that to understand the types and the nature of classes that exist in the agrarian society of India, one must have the answers to the following questions-

- What is the nature or the form of income from the soil- Is it rent; Is it fruit of cultivation or Is it payment for labour
- What type of rights does an individual enjoy over a particular plot of land and How much land is held under these rights
- To what extent does the individual actually perform the required fieldwork or does he hire others to do it for him

On the basis of these, though there are several regional variations, Thorner argued that we can identify three classes common to every Indian agrarian society. They are- Big Proprietors, Working peasants, and labourers or whom Thorner named Malik, Kisan and Mazdur. By Malik, Thorner referred to that class of people who derives their main income from their property rights in the soil. Maliks have a high property rights on land, has considerably high land holdings and major part of his family income comes from the land. Though the Maliks may have several other source of income but majority of their income is derived from the share of produce from the lands belonging to the family. This income comes mostly in the form of rent. This rent is again mostly in the form of money and sometimes in the form of crop if the land is let out in crop sharing basis. Maliks may

even, instead of letting out lands to tenants, hire labourers to cultivate for him in his field. He may appoint a manager to supervise these labourers or might perform the supervision work himself. Further he may also work along with the hired labourers in his field, but Thorner still calls Malik, if the agricultural income he receives from working in a part of his field himself is less than the income he earns from the remaining part of his land which he lets out on rent.

Within the class of Maliks, Thorner identifies two subgroups- Large Absentee Landlords and Smaller Proprietors. Thorner describes large absentee landlords as those who typically have holdings in more than one village. Further smaller proprietors identified by him are those who reside personally in the village in which they own land, and exercise some degree of management and control over its cultivation.

Kisans or the working peasants, the second category of class identified by Thorner are those who also have property rights on land but their land holdings are much less when compared to the Maliks. They are those categories of people who work on their own plot of land, seldom hiring labours and that too only in the peak harvesting seasons. They earn by working in their own field. They don't earn rent unlike the Maliks. Thorner further stated that the income received from agricultural holdings by the Kisans may not be sufficient in comparison to his family expenses and therefore he shall need to work for others as well. But the income he receives from his own agricultural holdings is more than the income he earns from other sources like working in others fields as labourers so on and so forth and that differentiates him from a Mazdur..

Thorner defines the Labourers or Mazdurs as that class of people who gain their livelihood primarily from working on other peoples land. This group of people may have land holdings of their own, but their size of land holdings is very meagre and income received from cultivating their own plot of land by themselves or by letting it out is lesser than the income or wages that Mazdurs earn from working for others.

Thus based on the amount of actual labour contributed to the production process and the share in the product, Thorner made distinction between the three different agrarian classes. Apart from the economic differentiation, Thorner also points to the social differences between these three classes of people and while doing so, Thorner made an attempt to delineate the relationship between caste and class in Indian agrarian society. According to Thorner, Maliks who are at the apex of the agrarian class structure comprise of a small group of people usually belonging to the Brahmans and other higher castes. Their higher class status can be discerned from their lifestyle itself- the kind of houses they live in, the kind of clothes they wear and the diet they follow. They may send their children to higher schools, subscribe to newspapers, listen to battery radios, or own bicycles- all luxuries usually quite beyond the compass of the debt-ridden Kisans, to say nothing of the landless Mazdur-log. Unlike the Maliks, Kisans belong to the cultivating and the artisan castes and Mazdurs mostly belong to the Scheduled castes.

Thus in Daniel Thorner's analysis of the agrarian class structure we see an interplay between the caste and class in agrarian societies. Members of the upper caste are also the members of the upper class and they enjoy the fruits of others labour. Lower class, on the other hand, being born to lower caste as well, are doomed to survive solely through their toil.

D.N Dhanagare in his essay on 'The Model of Agrarian Classes' in India talks about the complexity of class structure in Indian Society. According to him since agrarian social structure is not homogenous across all societies and further class composition and social relations among classes are also varied and diverse in India, it is difficult to have one general class structure incorporating all the diverse classes' that exist in Indian Society. He spoke about the nexus that operates between caste and class in Indian Society and how upper class mostly comprised of people belonging to the upper castes. He cited examples of the Brahmins, Takurs or Banias of Northern India, the Kammas, Reddis and Raos of Andhra Pradesh so on and so

forth who are also the members of upper class owing to the huge tracts of land that they own. Similarly he also cited examples of Landless labourers and Agricultural workers belonging to the lowest caste group in Uttar Pradesh. Thus he attempted to reveal the how ones caste position influenced or rather determined to a great extent ones class position as well. However he also talked about exceptions to this schema that too exist in Indian society and which should also be taken into consideration. According to him, though members of the Upper Caste also often belong to the upper class yet this is not true in all cases. Not all members of the upper caste belong to upper class. There is a vertical spread in terms of classes within every caste. While some members of an upper caste may be economically affluent owning huge amount of land, some others of the same caste may farm labourers. This vertical spread though present among lower caste is however mostly found in case of upper caste.

Thus in Dhanagares illustration on Agrarian Classes we find similarity with Daniel Thorner on the point of how caste exists within class and how both caste and class co-exist in Indian social structure.

From the above discussion we can say that there are different perspectives on class and pertinent to understanding of class as a basis of social stratification is its economic nature, the social relationships which emerge from it and are shaped by it, how it determines our life-style and antagonisms and conflict between classes, and class mobility. Further, we have also learned about how there is caste-class nexus operating in Indian society.

9.5 SOCIAL MOBILITY AND CLASS STRUCTURE

By reading the previous units, we have already learned about the meaning of social mobility. We have also learned that Social Stratification accords different position to groups and individuals in a society and therefore we have different social strata's in a society. When an individual or a group move from one social strata to another, it is termed as social mobility. Now, social mobility is not permitted in all systems of stratification. Therefore,

we have closed and open systems of mobility. As we know, in the case of caste, which is highly rigid in nature, there is hardly any scope of social mobility. Here a person's status is fixed at the time of birth and this remains unchanged till the end of his life. Mobility is therefore closed in the case of caste. Class however is an example of open system of mobility. We have already discussed in the first section of this unit that an individual's class status in not determined by birth or fixed at the time of birth. Class status is therefore not ascribed but rather achieved in nature. A person born to a particular class need not necessarily die with the same class status. He/ She shall have the scope to change his/her class status during his lifetime. Since class status can be achieved, an individual with his/her hard work and talent may elevate his/her class status. For example an individual may be born to a lower class but can die as a member of upper class if he/she is able to change his/her class position through hard work and professional achievements. For example the present Prime-Minister of India Narendra Modi came from a lower class background but with his talent, and hard work he could change his class position and become the Prime Minister. Similarly APJ Abdul Kalam too was born to a lower class family but with his efforts he could change his class status. Thus Class is not a closed system of stratification and it allows social mobility among the different strata's unlike caste. Class is also therefore not very rigidly hierarchized and as it allows individuals to change their position. Both upward and downward mobility takes place in the case of class. In the previous examples of Narendra Modi and APJ Abdul Kalam, we have understood how upward mobility takes place in a class. But an individual can also experience downward social mobility in the case of class status. A very affluent man may also lose his class position and thereby become member of lower class. Thus as moving upward in the class position is possible, similarly falling down from one's class position too is possible.

9.6 LET US SUM UP

- Class is an economic category. One's class status in society is determined by his/her economic condition.
- Members of a particular class possess similar economic resources and share same status in society.
- Class system is a Universal System of Stratification present in almost every society.
- Class in an open system of stratification, unlike castes, because class is an achieved status
- Karl Marx defines Class in the context of the Mode of production
- Marx was of the opinion that we can break up history into a number of epochs or periods, for example, ancient civilisation, feudalism, and capitalism. Each of these have had a class structure comprising of two classes i.e the ruling class and the oppressed class
- The class structure of a particular period emerges from and is based on the Mode of production of that period. A social class, in this sense, would refer to a group of persons performing the same function in the production process and thereby occupying the same position in the class structure.
- According to Marx, the position which the individual occupies in the social organization of production that indicates to which social class he belongs. Further according to him, a man's position in the production process not only determines his class but also shapes, in due course of time, his beliefs and actions.
- Class exist only if there is class-consciousness. Class consciousness is the prerequisite for class formation and in Marxian sense, individuals having similar position the class structure, remaining isolated and detached from each other cannot lead to the formation of a class.

- He identified each historical epoch as consisting of two classes in which the owners of the means of production oppresses the workers and this leads to antagonism and class conflict.
- While conceptualising class, Max Weber gave importance to Market situation and according to him, a person's class position is actually his position in the Market.
- Ferdinand Toennies conceptualised estates as communal and classes as societal collectives
- Class system, although predominant in the industrial western societies, has also sown its seeds in the Indian society, which is already stratified on the basis of caste. Indian society is
- Daniel Thorner while discussing about agrarian classes in India argued that we could identify three classes common to every Indian agrarian society. They are- Big Proprietors, Working peasants, and labourers or whom Thorner named Malik, Kisan and Mazdur.
- Daniel Thorner's analysis of the agrarian class structure shows how there is an interplay between the caste and class in agrarian societies. Members of the upper caste are also the members of the upper class and they enjoy the fruits of others labour
- D.N Dhanagare too spoke about the nexus that operates between caste and class in Indian Society and how upper class mostly comprised of people belonging to the upper castes.

9.7 FURTHER READING

1) Gupta, Dipankar. 2010. *Social Stratification.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press

9.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Class is an Universal System of Stratification because it is present in every society.

Ans to Q No 2: No Class is not an ascribed status. It is an achieved status.

Ans to Q No 3: Class is known as an open system of stratification because it allows social mobility among the different strata's.

Ans to Q No 4: According to Marx, a man's position in the organization of production determines his class position.

Ans to Q No 5: No class and estate is not the same.

Ans to Q No 6: Malik, Kisan and Mazdur are the three agrarian classes identified by Daniel Thorner.

9.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Mention the Characteristics of Class.

Q 2: Explain Weber's conceptualisation of Class

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Explain Social Mobility in the context of Class system

Q 2: Discuss Marx's analysis of Class

Q 3: Explain Class structure in Indian Agrarian society.

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UNIT 10 : RACE & ETHNICITY

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objectives
10.2 Introduction
10.3 Natural Differences and Social Inequality
10.3.1 Theoretical Positions on Race and Ethnicity
10.3.2 Race and Ethnicity: Are they the same?
10.4 Identities, Nationalities, and Social Inequality
10.5 Let Us Sum up
10.6 Further Reading
10.7 Answers to Check your Progress
10.8 Model Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- understand the concept of Race and Ethnicity, and how both are similar or different.
- explain whether race and caste are similar.
- discuss difference between natural difference and socially constructed differences that largely contribute to the creation of inequalities.
- discuss the idea of ethnicity, nationalism and how identities are created.

10.2 INTRODUCTION

Attack against students from northeast India in Delhi; Bangalore or other metropolitan cities; attack against Indian nationals in Australia and the States; Nigerian students in India being attacked in the heart of Delhi, cricketers of certain nationalities being called names on the cricket ground because of their physical appearance etc are almost a regular news item. Often we associate the term 'racism' with almost all the above examples. Historically,

the concept of race has changed across cultures.It has eventually become less connected with ancestral and familial ties, and more concerned with superficial physical characteristics. In the past, theorists have posited categories of race based on various geographic regions, ethnicities, skin colors, and more. Their labels for racial groups have connoted regions (Mongolia and the Caucus Mountains, for instance) or denoted skin tones (black, white, yellow, and red, for example). However, this typology of race developed during early racial science has fallen into disuse, and the social construction of raceis a far more common way of understanding racial categories.

According to the social construction school of thought, race is not biologically identifiable. When considering skin color, for example,the social construction of race perspective recognizes that the relative darkness or fairness of skin is anevolutionary adaptation to the available sunlight in different regions of the world. Contemporary conceptions of race, therefore, which tend to be based on socio economic assumptions, illuminate how far removed modern understanding of race is from biological attributes or features. The social construction of race is also reflected in the way that names for racial categories change with changing times. It is worth noting that race, in this sense, is also a system of labeling that is a source of identity. Specific labels fall in and out of favor during different social eras. For example, thecategory "negroid," popular in the 19th century, evolved into the term "negro" by the 1960s, and thenthis term fell into discuss and was replaced with "African American." This latter term although was intended tocelebrate the multiple identities that a black person might hold, has been critiqued for other reasons.

It often happens that the terms race and ethnicity, or even a minority groups are sometimes used interchangeably although there lies a huge difference between these concepts. An ethnic group consists of people who share a common orientation towards the world, who develop a sense of people-hood, and who are perceived by others as having distinctive

cultural elements such as religion, language, traditions, and heritage. This might include shared language, religion, and traditions, among other commonalities. The ongoing struggle of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and the extreme xenophobia are examples of ethnic communities and the debates around the same.

Minority groups on the other hand are subordinate groups that are dominated or suppressed by the majority. Sociologist Louis Wirth defined a minority groupas "any group of people who, because oftheir physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they livefor differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination." The term minority connotes discrimination, and in its sociological use, the termsubordinatecan be used interchangeably with the term minority, while the term dominantis often substituted for the group that's in the majority. These definitions correlate to the concept that thedominant group is that which holds the most power in a given society, while subordinate groups arethose who lack power compared to the dominant group. It is important to note here that being a numerical minority not necessarily always would amount to a subordinate position. Even numerical minority groups can be dominant groups in some societies. In the previous unit we have discussed about class as a basis of social stratification. In this unit, we shall learn about race, ethnicity and how they stratify societies.

10.3 NATURAL DIFFERENCES AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

The first racial classification of humans can be found in the Nouvelle division de la terre par les différent sespècesou races qui l'habitent (New division of land by the different species or races which inhabit it) by Francois Bernier, published in 1684. In 1790, the first North American census classified the population as composed of free whitemen, free white women and other people (Native Americans and slaves). The 1890 census, inturn, classified the population using terms suchas white, black, Chinese, Japanese and

Indians. Carolus Linnaeus (1758), founder of moderntaxonomy and the term Homo sapiens, recognized four varieties of humans:

- American
- European
- Asian
- African

Linnaeus also recognized a fifth race without geographical definition, the Monster (Homo Sapiens monstrosus), comprising of various real types and other types contrived by the imagination that did not fit into the four 'normal' categories. Linnaeus' biased classification assigned to each race specificphysical and moral characteristics.In 1775, Linnaeus' successor, J. F. Blumenbach,recognized "four varieties of mankind":

- European, East Asian, and part of NorthAmerica.
- Australian.
- African.
- The rest of the New World.

The outward signs on which most definitions of race are based-such as skin color and hair texture-are dictated by a handful of genes. But the other genes of two people of the same "race" can be very different. Conversely, two people of different "races" can share more genetic similarity than two individuals of the same race. By far the significance of race and biology is social, meaning that we are culturally socialized to define race in biological terms. In fact, throughout the history of the world, most cultures define race in cultural rather than biological terms.

The terms stereotype, prejudice, discrimination are used interchangeably when discussing race. But discussing these terms from a

sociological perspective, it is important to define them: stereotypes are oversimplified ideas about groups of people; prejudice refers to thoughts andfeelings about those groups, while discrimination refers to actions toward them. Racismis a type ofprejudice that involves set beliefs about a specific racial group. In the last century in South Africa, Blacks were by far the most numerous, yet Whites ruled cruelly with racial supremacist ideologies that led to international outcry and eventual collapse of Apartheid rule there. Apartheid happened when South Africa formalized seperation between Blacks and Whites, mandating White supremacy and privileged treatment between 1948 and 1990. Apartheid was abolished by the combined international efforts of other countries that put economic and political pressure on the South African Government.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes can be based on race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation-almost any characteristic. They may be positive but are often negative. In either case, the stereotype is a generalization that doesn't take individual differences into account. Stereotypes therefore are beliefs that all members of specific social groups share certain common characterstics; stereotypes are cognitive frameworks that strongly influence the processing of incoming social information.

Prejudice

Prejudice refers to beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes that someone holds about a group. A prejudice is not based on experience; instead, it is a prejudgment, originating outside of actual experience. In a very precise manner, it can be referred to as an attitude (usually negative) towards the members of same group, based solely on their membership in that group. Racism is a type of prejudice that is used to justify the belief that one racial category is somehow superior or inferior to others.

Discrimination

While prejudice refers to biased thinking, discrimination consists of actions against a group of people. So it can be said as negative behaviour directed towards people who are the object of prejudice. Discrimination can be based on age, religion, health, and other indicators; race-based discrimination and antidiscrimination laws strive to address this set of social problems. Discrimination based on race or ethnicity can take many forms, from unfair housing practices tobiased hiring systems. Overt discrimination has long been part of U.S. history.

However, discrimination cannot be erased from our culture just by enacting laws to abolish it.Sociologist Émile Durkheim calls racism a social fact, meaning that it does not require the action of individuals to continue. The reasons for this are complex and relate to the educational,criminal, economic, and political systems that exist.

Genocide is another term that can be closely related to discussions around race and ethnicity. The deliberate annihilation of a targeted (usually subordinate) group with an absolute aim to completely wash it away, is referred to as genocide. Historically, we can see that genocide has included both the intent to exterminate a group and the function of exterminating a group, intentional or not. The genocide in Rwanda against the Tutsis by the Hutus is a classic example of genocide.

10.3.1 Theoritical Positions On Race And Ethnicity

Issues of race and ethnicity can be observed through three major sociological perspectives: functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism.

- **Functionalist Perspective:** In the view of functionalism, racial and ethnic inequalities must have served an important function in order to exist for as long as they have. This concept, of course, is problematic. Sociologists who adhere to the functionalist view argue that racism and discrimination do contribute positively, but only to the dominant group. Historically, it has indeed served dominant groups well to discriminate

against subordinate groups. Slavery, of course,was beneficial to slaveholders. Holding racist views can benefit those who want to deny rights and privileges to people they view as inferior to them, but over time, racism harms society. Outcomes ofrace-based disenfranchisement-such as poverty levels, crime rates, and discrepancies in employment and education opportunities-illustrate the long-term (and clearly negative) results of slavery and racism in American society.

- **Conflict Theory:** Conflict theories are often applied to inequalities of gender, social class, education, race, and ethnicity.In the late 19th century, the rising power of black Americans after the Civil War resulted in draconian Jim Crow laws that severely limited black political and social power. The years since then have showed a pattern of attempted disenfranchisement, with gerrymandering and voter suppression efforts aimed at predominantly minority neighborhoods.

Feminist sociologist Patricia Hill Collins developed intersection theory, which suggests that we cannot separate the effects of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and other attributes. When we examine race and how it can bring us both advantages and disadvantages, it is important toacknowledge that the way we experience race is shaped, for example, by our gender and class. Multiple layers of disadvantage intersect to create the way we experience race. For example, if we want to understand prejudice, we must understand that the prejudice focused on a white woman because of her gender is very different from the layered prejudice focused on a poor Asian woman, who is affected by stereotypes related to being poor, being a woman, and her ethnic status.

- **Interactionism:** For symbolic interactionists, race and ethnicity provide strong symbols as sources of identity. In fact,some interactionists propose that the symbols of race, not race itself, are what lead to racism. Interactionist Herbert Blumer suggested that racial prejudice is formed through interactions between members of the dominant group: Without

these interactions, individuals in the dominant group would not hold racist views. These interactions contribute to an abstract picture of the subordinate group that allows the dominant group to support its view of the subordinate group, thus maintaining the status quo.

10.3.2 Race and Ethnicity: Are they the same?

The term race has a wide array of definitions commonly used to describe a group of people who share certain morphological characteristics. Most authors have learned that race is an unscientific term, which can only have a biological meaning when the human being is fully homogeneous or 'thoroughbred', as in some animal species. These conditions, however, are never found in humans. Historically on the other hand, the word ethnicity stems from the Greek adjective Ethnikos and means "heathen." The adjective is derived from the noun ethnos, which means foreign people or nation.It is a multifaceted concept, which builds the identity of an individual through: kinship, religion,language, shared territory and nationality, and physical appearance. Ethnicity lies within the cultural realm. An ethnic community is determined by linguistic and cultural affinities and genetic similarities. These communities often claim to have a distinct social and political structure, and a territory.

Race refers to biological distinctions,phenotypes and/or cultural characteristics that are believed to be the basis for the creation of racial groups. What this suggests is a reality created out of a belief system, and reinforced institutionally, that humanity is the result of racial groups. Every racial or ethnic group also has differences within it. The members of these groups even differ on what to refer to themselves and who should and shouldn't be included. Race justifies social inequalities as natural.Ethnicity connotes shared cultural traits and shared group history. It 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. The Tamil-Sinhala conflict in Sri Lanka is an example of ethnic conflict. In the

northeastern part of India, the diverse heterogenous demography of the region has also resulted in endemic ethnic struggles, like that of the Kuki-Naga conflict etc.

10.4 IDENTITIES, NATIONALITIES, AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

This discussion on race and ethnicity is very closely related to debates on identity, nation making and struggles of various kinds. One's socialization, social orientation and the struggles and the oppressions one largely go into the making of one's identity. Identity is thus very much embedded within the micro and macro processes of our being and our belongingness to the contexts that we are part of. It is a result of social relationships and the everydayness. Both race and ethnicity are important elements in the shaping of identities that are both individual and collective. This identity also narrates a particular history of struggle, oppression, dominance, power or resistance. It is a part of a larger framework of shaping us and the who's and the how that shape the same. Looking at the minority group in countries like the United States, ethical and racial identities are demonstrated in extremely cognizant ways. This demonstration is mostly generated with two contradictory cultural and social influences.

In the recent Rohingya Muslim crisis in Myanmar, UN human rights officials had termed the mass exodus as a perfect "textbook example" of ethnic cleansing. The Rohingyas are a Muslim minority in Buddhist dominated Myanmar and More than 310,000 people have fled to Bangladesh, with others trapped on the border, amid burning of villages and extrajudicial killings. The extended problem of this crisis is the conflict in Bangladesh where Rohingyas are fleeing, and the problems faced by the indigenous minorities like the Chakmas in Bangladesh where they are dominated by the Muslim majority. This has further worsened the crisis and drawn attention from diverse quarters and international media. At the same time, the debate around nationality and ethnicity has always been jolted amidst this crisis. While Ethnicity refers to the person's identity in relation to the social, cultural or religious group, Nationality connotes membership of a person in the

country, describing his/her connection with the political state. Nationality means the identity of a large group of people having a legal connection and personal allegiance to a specific place, because of being born there. It indicates the country, where the individual is from and is the legal citizen. Ethnicity denotes the person's ethnic identity, on the basis of descent attributes and cultural inheritance. On the other hand, nationality is the person's membership in the nation, which reveals the individual's relationship with the nation. The ethnicity of a person can be determined by his/her dialect, culture, food habits, dressing style, race, physical appearance and so on. As against this, the nationality of a person can be determined by his/her country of origin.

Talking of race and inequality, there have been occasions when the concept of race and caste in India have been conflated. Many argued that both these processes of social stratification are more or less the same. While fundamentally both are determined by birth and modes of hierarchy, the nature and process in which they operate are different. Noted sociologist Andre Beteille argued that caste is specific to India and needs to be understood how it came to be embedded in Indian society which involves the study of its cultural implications if it is seen as a religious phenomenon or its materialistic roots if it is analysed as a form of economic exploitation. In this context, Beteille says that treating caste as a form of race is "politically mischievous and scientifically nonsensical". There, on the other hand, have been Dalit rights activists who have seen caste and race as same in the manner in which inequality is intergenerationally transmitted.

One of the solutions to the problem of institutionalized inequality is thus affirmative action.It refers to a general policy framework to redress injustices of a historical nature. Affirmative action is defined as a policy or program that seeks to rectify past discrimination by increasing opportunities for historically underrepresented groups. Race, ethnicity and similar processes of inequality thus operate within larger macro-politics of the society and need to be understood within its multiple nuances and subtleties of how they operate.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is race?

.....

Q 2: What is ethnicity?

.....

Q 3: Are race and ethnicity the same?

.....

Q 4: Are race and caste the same?

.....

Q 5: What is nationality?

.....

10.5 LET US SUM UP

- Race refers to biological distinctions, phenotypes and/or cultural characteristics that are believed to be the basis for the creation of racial groups justifying social inequalities as natural.
- An ethnic group consists of people who share a common orientation toward the world, who develop a sense of people-hood, and who are perceived by others as having distinctive cultural elements such as religion, language, traditions, and heritage.
- The term minority connotes discrimination, and in its sociological use, the term subordinate can be used interchangeably with the term minority, while the term dominant is often substituted for the group that's in the majority.
- Stereotypes are oversimplified ideas about groups of people,prejudice refers to thoughts and feelings about those groups, while discrimination refers to actions toward them.

- The deliberate annihilation of a targeted (usually subordinate) group with an absolute aim to completely wash it away, is referred to as genocide.
- Both race and ethnicity are important elements in the shaping of identities that are both individual and collective.
- While Ethnicity refers to the person's identity in relation to the social, cultural or religious group, Nationality connotes membership of a person, in the country, describing his/her connection with the political state.
- Although race and caste have been said to be the same, they are not the same in practice and operation.

10.6 FURTHER READING

1) Blumenbach, J. F. (2005). On the Natural Varieties of Mankind. Elibron Classics, Boston, MA: Adamant Media Corporation.

2) Collins, P. H. (2012). Toward a New Vision: Race, Class, and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection. In Race andEthnicity in Society: the Changing Landscape,edited by Elizabeth Higginbotham and Margaret L. Anderson, 216-222.Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

10.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Race refers to biological distinctions, phenotypes and/or cultural characteristics that are believed to be the basis for the creation of racial groups justifying social inequalities as natural.

Ans to Q No 2: Ethnicity refers to a group that consists of people who share a common orientation toward the world, who develop a sense of people-hood, and who are perceived by others as having distinctive cultural elements such as religion, language, traditions, and heritage.

Ans to Q No 3: Although, race and ethnicity are sometimes used interchangeably, they are not the same.

Ans to Q No 4: Race and Caste as concepts have similarities in certain ways, but its nature and process are very unique in their own ways and cannot be conflated.

Ans to Q No 5: Nationality means the identity of a large group of people having a legal connection and personal allegiance to a specific place, because of being born there. It indicates the country, where the individual is from and is the legal citizen.

10.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: How are the concepts of stereotype, prejudice and discrimination related?

Q 2: How is the functionalist perspective on race different from the conflict perspective?

Q 3: Discuss how race and ethnicity are similar or different.

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Is the concept of identity related to debates of race and ethnicity? Discuss with an example.

Q 2: How has the debate between race and caste as similar or different been divided? Discuss.

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UNIT 11 : GENDER AND STRATIFICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1 Learning Objectives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 Gender and Stratification

11.3.1 Patriarchy and the Subordination of Women

11.3.2 Family as Site of Inequality

11.3.3 Gender, Work and Entitlements

11.3.4 The Community, The State and Patriarchy

11.4 Let Us Sum Up

11.5 Further Reading

11.6 Answers to Check your Progress

11.7 Model Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- know the relationship between gender and stratification
- understand the plight of women under patriarchal system

11.2 INTRODUCTION

The question of the impact of gender was not posed until very recently in not only Sociology, but in academia and politics in general. Since the 1960s there has been an increasing global focus on gender and its role in stratification of society and community. This has been possible because of the groundwork in political mobilisation and social awareness brought forth by the feminists of the 18th and 19th centuries. Until recently, the importance of gender as an analytical category and gender inequality as a lived reality was wholly unrecognized. The International Encyclopaedia of Social Science defines gender as "a set of socially constructed practices linked to biological sex that shape how individuals understand the categories

of woman and man. Gender as a process is historically and culturally specific; manifestations of women's subordination are highly varied yet intricately connected. Not only does the form and extent of women's oppression vary from country to country, but it is also always shaped by relations of power based on race, class, ability and sexual orientation".

Gender is a primary category in the ordering or structuring of sites of production and reproduction, such as economic life in the workplace and in the household. Thus, it is a central frame with which social life is to be understood and studied.For socio-biologists, the biological difference between men and women is argued to be the main reason for the existence of male control over women. Whereas from the social constructionist viewpoint, gender roles are actively created through action in the social and cultural setting that imbues a given structure with meanings.

There are socio-cultural beliefs about each gender's specialized traits and qualities which have been so ingrained in our socio-cultural psyche that they appear to be natural. These beliefs are translated into real consequences in the arena of work and labour and are the root cause of the existing gender inequality, an inequality which had been obfuscated for many centuries under the guise of sexual division of labour between genders. This sexual division of labour refers to the pervasive idea that men and women are capable of,and suitable for, doing different work due to the differential specialization in economic production or reproduction between men and women, with men historically being accorded the role of hunters or engaged with activities outside the household and women being accorded the role of gatherers and relegated to the tasks inside the house such as cooking, cleaning and care work.

The sexual division of labour has been criticised by feminists as it has been used in order to justify the exclusion of women from many arenas of society, polity and culture, and has led to the limitation of women's liberty and freedom. It is the argument of feminists that women and men are born

with equal potential to succeed in all arenas. They are born with equal potential to learn, to develop and to contribute as members of the society, state or community. But the social organization of gender and the structural barriers created by gender roles and gendering of work lead to gender inequality that keeps women from realizing their abilities fully. In the previous unit, we have discussed about race and ethnicity. In this unit, we shall discuss about Gender as a basis of social stratification.

11.3 GENDER AND STRATIFICATION

From the above discussion we have learned that gender also acts as a basis of social stratification. In the following subsections, we shall undertand how Gender inequality operates in our society.

11.3.1 Patriarchy and the Subordination of Women

Patriarchy is a central concept in the understanding of gender and stratification and an essential tool in analysing gender relationships. There have been varying strands of thinkers who have offered varying definitions and ideas about patriarchy which have evolved and changed over time. Classical thinkers such as FriedrichEngles and Max Weber have talked about patriarchy. In 'The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation' (1947), Weber talks about patriarchy as a system of domination where societies were ruled by men by dint of their position as head of household. In Weber's theorization, the domination of younger men by older heads of households was as important as the domination of women by men. This idea has been employed particularly by radical feminists, in order to sharpen the focus on the domination of women by men. Here, the dual systems theory becomes pertinent, where two dominant systems of inequality, patriarchy and capitalism are theorized as working closely, leading to even more fissured gender divisions and intensification of the subjugation and oppression of women.

There are thus many differing ideas about what patriarchy entails and how it came to be. In the essay Theorizing Patriarchy (1989), Sylvia Walby

defines "patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate oppress and exploit women. The use of the term social structure is important here since it clearly implies rejection of both biological determinism, and the notion that every individual man is in a dominant position and every individual woman in a subordinate one." Walby further contends that "...there are six main patriarchal structures which together constitute a system of patriarchy. These are: a patriarchal mode of production in which women's labour is expropriated by their husbands; patriarchal relations within waged labour; the patriarchal state; male violence; patriarchal relations in sexuality; and patriarchal culture." Each of these structures have their own sub-structures and practices.

Thus, patriarchy as a social structure consists of the central tenets of power: dominance, hierarchy and competition. Under patriarchy, the traits associated with 'male' and 'masculine' is upheld and rewarded, while the 'female' and 'feminine' are othered and marginalized. Patriarchy underlines and propagates the notion that men are strong and women are weak, that men are superior and women are inferior. Patriarchy underlies the base of economy, society and polity and even in intimate arenas of human lives.

11.3.2 Family as Site of Inequality

That the household is the primary unit of oppression and subjugation of women in patriarchy is a radical feminist notion. The household assumes centrality within this theoretical model since it is the primary site of production and reproduction. Engels saw both patriarchy and monogamy as processes that developed historically with the development of the concept of private property. Walby's characterization of the existence of public and private dimensions of patriarchy is crucial in understanding the family as a site of inequality. According to Walby, "Private patriarchy is based upon the relative exclusion of women from arenas of social life apart from the household, with a patriarch appropriating women's services individually and directly in the apparently private sphere of the home."

Much of what leads to creation of barriers in the path of women's equal participation in the workforce begins within the family and the household. The girl child remains one of the most vulnerable entities in the society. Along with threat of male violence, there is also unequal access to education, to food and nutrition, to capital and property, prevalence of early marriage and unsafe pregnancy and lack of awareness about their reproductive rights. In case of India, there have been numerous reports and literature, which have discussed issues such as son preference within families, which has led to reprehensible phenomena such as female foeticide. Today, the sex ratio in India has shown a declining trend and is one of the worst in the world. This is a serious indication of the severity of male-female inequality here. When we attempt to understand issues such as these, the deep entrenchment of these social phenomena in structural reasons becomes evident.

While India's fight against female infanticide has failed, maternal health and primary healthcare for women remains low on the priority of the state. When we start focusing on reproduction and the ability of women to exert agency on their bodies and reproductive health and reproductive decisions, it is clear that the patriarchal state and family structure exerts control even in these intimate dimensions of women's life and bodies.

Within the household or the family, the role of the stay-at-home wife and the nature of this labour have been theorized by several feminist scholars in sociology. The seminal book in this regard is Ann Oakley's The Sociology of Housework (1974). Here, Oakley wanted to find out about housework from the very people who did it, through in-depth interviews of London housewives. This book came at a time when sexism was not recognized as a rampant and persistent presence in social life, and labour such as housework was seen as nothing but a natural extension of women's roles in society as wives or mothers. Oakley's findings disturbed and destabilized the view of housework as natural for women and showed that housework and power are inter-related within the household, with real power

resting in the hands of male authority figures within the family, the females being able to exert some power only within the routines of their housework. Again, Oakley showed housework to be monotonous, frustrating and alienating and marital relationships to be unequal (for the women interviewed).

Marilyn Waring in Counting for Nothing: What Men Value and What Women are Worth (1999) makes the cogent and contentious point that indicators for development of the state such as GDP (Gross Domestic Product) or GNP (Gross National Product) do not take into account factors that lie outside what in common parlance is termed as 'economic activities', such as unpaid work done by women and care work done by women. Thus, there needs to be changes in the social policy at the level of the state to enable such an accounting.

The focus on women's roles as caregivers, nurturers and mothers, at the cost of her role as an individual and a member of the economy and society means that there is less attention that is paid to her well being as an individual. Divorce, infertility or childfree living still comes with very serious consequences for women, leading to a disruption in their position in the society that they live in.

11.3.3 Gender, Work and Entitlements

Before discussing gender inequality at work it has to be stated that in social science, work has largely been defined as an activity that is performed in economic or public sphere for wages, and that is done outside the home. The sexual division of labour in our society has been normalized in our society to the extent that it is taken as an occurrence that happens naturally and is organic to human beings. In this sort of division of labour, men happen to be at the top and women at the bottom. The work delegated to men, deemed skilled and requiring intelligence is worthy of more monetary compensation, in comparison to work deemed to be best performed by women, which are viewed as unimportant and monetarily unvalued or

undervalued. This comes under the realm of public patriarchy. Walbydefines it as, "Public patriarchy does not exclude women from certain sites, but rather subordinates women in all of them. In this form, the appropriation of women takes place more collectively than individually."

In a patriarchal system, there has already been a male-monopolisations of the best jobs. This leads to gender identification of jobs, the jobs; graded as 'women's jobs'; such as cooking, cleaning etc, are considered unimportant, lower in skill requirements and outside the sphere of what is considered as work in the economy. With the inherent biological argument in the sexual division of labour, women's housework comes to be deemed as a natural extension of her biological identity as women.

Today, in the modern globalized world, women ostensibly have the same opportunities for success and freedom to choose the kind of work that they want to do. But the reality of the situation is much more grim. While in the urban areas, women continue to join the labour force, they have been found to be consistently underpaid compared to men, less likely to be promoted, not be provided adequate maternity leaves or have their career negatively affected because of taking time off during pregnancy and childbirth, lack of support at home and in childrearing in case of working mothers, instances of sexual harassment at workplace as well as while commuting to and from work. Thus, the proverbial 'glass ceiling' that stops most women from accomplishing their potential at work is sustained by a host of structural and systemic forces working against women. Numerous surveys show how even with full-time jobs, women still bear full or majority of the burden of housework within a family, often receiving no help from their partner.

In India, the economic reforms of 1991opened up the predominantly agricultural economy to the forces of globalization and development, which led to ushering in fundamental changes in the structure of the economy with increasing role of privatization and liberalization that led to phenomena such as urbanization, rural-to-urban migration, the rise of nuclear family as well as an increasing participation of women in the labour force. But a variety

of factors stand in the way of women being unable to realize their full potential. The rate of dropout as well as illiteracy and malnutrition remains higher for women compared to men. Even among school-going children, the girl-child is expected to help in the housework along with schoolwork. Factors such as unsafe transportation or sexual harassment on the way to job or school also has been found to be a major deterrent for women. Along with this, very often, especially in tertiary sectors, women are relegated only to working on the factory floor or doing menial labour, and never get the chance to rise to managerial positions, which are filled by men even in those sectors where the gender balance favors women. Overall, women continue to be clustered into occupations seen as 'feminine' or in nurturing roles, such as teaching, nursing etc.

11.3.4 The Community, The State and Patriarchy

In the formal legal and political systems at the level of the state, there is a growing awareness of the existing gender inequalities and a lot of policies have been initiated in order to address these issues. However, there has been a very poor implementation of these enshrined legal and political codes. The extension of legal and political rights to women has not led to their increasing participation in these arenas. In fact, feminists contend and underline that at its core, the nature of the state itself is patriarchal. The patriarchal nature of the state is clearly reflected in the contentions created by the state's ruling on divorce and marriage, on women's fertility and reproductive health, legalization of abortion, wage discrimination, prostitution, pornography and male violence, with the lack of proper and accessible institutional measuresto address the persistent threat of rape or sexual and physical abuse in the hands of both people within the household and outside.

Gender inequality is perennially persistent in religious institutions across the world. Whether it is Hinduism, Christianity, Islam or Buddhism, women continue to be relegated to an inferior position to men, with leadership position within religious institutions being often forbidden for them. Along

with this, women's physical bodies very often become the site to exert religious control and express notions of purity and pollution held by the religious institutions. Indeed, the stress in Indian society on purity and honour rests on the assumption of servility and subjugation of women.

Women continue to be the marginalized section of the population, and even in backward communities, women bear the brunt of the negative socio-economic consequences of the community. Compared to men, they carry the double weight of being subjugated due to their community's position and due to their inferior position as women even within the community itself.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is gender?

.....

Q 2: What is patriarchy?

.....

Q 3: What is the sexual division of labour?

.....

Q 4: Does gender inequality exits in the household?

.....

Q 5: What argument does Ann Oakley make in The Sociology of Housework (1974)?

.....

Q 6: What are some of the factors that impede women's full participation in the labour force?

.....

Q 7: Is care-work done by women at home, considered as economic activity?

.....

Q 8: Do women have legal and political rights?

.....

11.4 LET US SUM UP

- Gender is a primary category in the ordering or structuring of sites of production and reproduction, such as economic life in the workplace and in the household, and thus, it is a central frame with which social life is to be understood and studied.

- For socio-biologists, the biological difference between men and women is argued to be the main reason for the existence of male control over women. While from the social constructionist viewpoint, gender roles are actively created through action in the social and cultural setting that imbues a given structure with meanings.

- Patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. Patriarchy as a social structure consists of the central tenets of power, dominance, hierarchy and competition.

- Much of what leads to creation of barriers in the path of women's equal participation in the workforce begins within the family and the household. The focus on women's roles as caregivers, nurturers and mothers, at the cost of her role as an individual and a member of the economy and society means that there is less attention that is paid to her well being as an individual.

- Gender inequality at work is reflected in the gendered nature of work, existence of wage inequality between men and women for the same job and existence of the 'glass ceiling' for women in most jobs.

- In the formal legal and political systems at the level of the state, there is a growing awareness of the existing gender inequalities and a lot of policies have been initiated in order to address these issues. However, there has been a very poor implementation of these enshrined legal and political codes.

- Gender inequality is perennially persistent in religious institutions across the world.

11.5 FURTHER READING

1) Engels, Friedrich, 1820-1895. (1942). The origin of the family, private property and the state. New York :International Publishers

2) Guha, Martin (2008).International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (2nd edition). Detroit: Thompson Gale

3) Oakley, Ann (1975). The Sociology of Housework. New York: Pantheon Books

4) Walby, Sylvia (1989). Theorizing Patriarchy. Sociology, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 213-234

5) Waring, Marilyn (1999). Counting for Nothing: What Men Value and What Women Are Worth. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

5) Weber, Max(1947). The Theory of Social and Economic Organization. New York: Free Press.

11.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The International Encyclopaedia of Social Science defines gender as, "a set of socially constructed practices linked to biological sex that shape how individuals understand the categories of woman and man. Gender as a process is historically and culturally specific; manifestations of women's subordination are highly varied yet intricately connected. Not only does the form and extent of women's oppression vary from country to country, but it is also always shaped by relations of power based on race, class, ability and sexual orientation".

Ans to Q No 2: In the essay Theorizing Patriarchy (1989), Sylvia Walby defines "patriarchy as a system of social structures, and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. The use of the term social

structure is important here since it clearly implies rejection of both biological determinism, and the notion that every individual man is in a dominant position and every individual woman in a subordinate one."

Ans to Q No 3: Sexual division of labour is the delegation of different work, between male and female according to the gender. This refers to the pervasive idea that men and women are capable of doing different work due to the differential specialization in economic production or reproduction between men and women, with men historically being accorded the role of hunters or engaged with activities outside the household, and women being accorded the role of gatherers and relegated to the tasks inside and related to the house such as cooking, cleaning and care work.

Ans to Q No 4: Yes, gender inequality exists in the household and it can be understood through the concept of 'private patriarchy' theorised by Walby.

Ans to Q No 5: Oakley's findings disturbed and destabilized the view of housework as natural for women and showed that housework and power are inter-related within the household, with real power resting in the hands of male authority figures within the family, the females being able to exert some power only within the routines of their housework. Again, Oakley showed housework to be monotonous, frustrating and alienating and marital relationships to be unequal (for the women interviewed.)

Ans to Q No 6: A variety of factors stand in the way of women being unable to realize their full potential. The rate of dropout as well as illiteracy and malnutrition remains higher for women compared to men. Even among school-going children, the girl-child is expected to help in the housework along with schoolwork. Factors such as unsafe transportation or sexual harassment on the way to job or school also has been found to be a major deterrent for women.

Ans to Q No 7: Indicators for development of the state such as GDP (Gross Domestic Product) or GNP (Gross National Product) do not take into account factors that lie outside what in common parlance is termed as 'economic

activities', such as unpaid work done by women and care work done by women. Therefore, care work is not considered as 'economic activity' which has been problematized by feminist scholars.

Ans to Q No 8: Women do have political and legal rights but the extension of legal and political rights to women has not led to their increasing participation in these arenas. Along with this, a lot more still remains to be done in terms of existing legal and political inequality globally.

11.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: What are some of the factors that impede the full participation of women in the work force?

Q 2: What is patriarchy?

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: How does family emerge as the site of inequality?

Q 2: Discuss why gender is a key concept in attempting to understand the stratification of social life?

Q 3: What is patriarchy and how does it manifest itself within the family?

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UNIT 12 : OTHER BASES OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning Objectives

12.2 Introduction

12.3 Race

12.4 Ethnicity

12.5 Tribe

12.6 Religion

12.7 Region

12.8 Language

12.9 Let Us Sum Up

12.10 Further Reading

12.11 Answers to Check your Progress

12.12 Model Questions

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- understand race as a basis of stratification
- understand how ethnicity can be a basis of stratification
- explain stratification in the context of tribe
- discuss religion, region and language as bases of stratification

12.2 INTRODUCTION

Stratification has been the hallmark of Indian societies. The term 'social stratification' has been borrowed from Geology to depict the various layers of society with regard to shared socio-economic conditions. In the previous units we have learned that Social Stratification refers to hierarchical ranking and ordering of social structures like race, ethnicity, tribe, religion, region, language and people into groups according to social values, prestige, power and privilege. Race, ethnicity, tribe, religion, region and language are the

defining features of social stratification, the primary determinant of persistent social inequality and advantages in society that shape lives of individuals in a significant way without their realization. Systems of social stratification are not static, but they change and are replaced by new norms and criteria of social ranking. In this unit we shall study the various aspects of social stratification like race, ethnicity, tribe, religion, region and language which would help in understanding the inequality prevalant in society and it also unfold ways for formation of an egalitarian society.

12.3 RACE

Race is one of the bases of stratification in society. The term 'race' refers to biological traits, phenotypes, ancestry and physical features which are considered socially significant and which are believed to the basis for creation of racial groups. Social Scientists have showed that race is not real, meaning that race is a social construct to differentiate or unite people based on certain biological and genetic traits for social or political interests. Wolf believed that race was constructed during European mercantile expansion to mark inequalities in terms of prestige, power and wealth. According to Sergio Romero, historical moorings show how the concept of race was formed during colonial rule to emphasize the superiority of the colonizers over the colonized people and to enslave labour on the basis of this superiority and how the stratified institutions laid the groundwork for it. As an aspect of stratification system, race provides resources, privileges and advantages to those who are at or near the top of the hierarchy whereas it disadvantages, discriminates against and deprives as one goes down the hierarchy. For example under the Apartheid laws the white government in South Africa in 1948 enacted and institutionalized differential privileges and restrictions based on racial and genealogical origins. The genealogy was traced up to 14 generations and individuals carried cards based on their ancestry and were treated differently. People from European descent, basically English and Dutch people received the highest privileges, resided in the best locations and had a good lifestyle. Coloureds (offspring born out

of intermixing of European people and other races) had a separate residential area and occupation marked differently from Bantu people (native African). Asians (mostly immigrants from India) received higher salaries than Bantu people but less than people of European descent. This system of preferential discrimination collapsed under international pressure and with the first president Nelson Mandela in 1994 but the remnants of racial discrimination would take generations to die out.

Race has been categorized into four types depending on the geographical place of origin, Mongolia, Caucus Mountains, East Asia, Africa into Mongolioids, Caucusoids, Australoids and Negroids or on the basis of skin colour like black, yellow, white, red and black. Risley in 'The Peoples of India' has classified the population of colonial India into seven types- Indo-Aryan type (includes Jats, Rajputs, Punjabis and Kashmiri Khatris), Turko-Iranian type (includes people from Baluchistan and North-West Frontier), Dravidian type (people from South India, southern Madhya Pradesh and Chottanagpur region), Aryo-Dravidian type (people from Central province-Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and from princely state of Rajasthan), Scytho-Dravidian type (includes people from Coorg province and Maratha Brahmins), Mongoloid type (includes people from North-East Frontier, Assam, Burma and Nepal) and Mongolo-Dravidian type (include Bengali Brahmins and Kayastha people). However, B.S. Guha based on his anthropometric surveys has classified people of India into five types-the Mongoloids, the Negrito, the Mediterranean, the Nordic, the Proto-Australoid and the Western Brachycephals. The study of genetics has proved that differentiation of people on the basis of skin colour, hair type, physique, size of skull or nose, height and so on are merely conjectural. This has led sociologists to understand that the categorization of race is ambiguous and empirical studies show that there are combinations of physical and genetic features in individuals and groups. When one racial group is favoured over another which has intentional or unintentional consequences on people belonging to the minority community, it is known as racism. Does racism exist in modern society? Yes, racism does exist in modern society. It is

much evident if the victim of racism is a celebrity who can reach out to masses easily. Be it Shah Rukh Khan over security check in United States or Shilpa Shetty as a contestant in the reality show Big Brother. These were examples of racism faced by individuals as they belong to a minority community in comparison to those who were discriminating against them on the basis of their belief in their racial superiority. Minority community consists of those people who lack power and are subordinated and dominated by majority group in society despite their skin colour or country of origin. However, less known form of racism is institutional discrimination which consists of practices through which majority group (the group that wields more power in comparison to minority group in a specified area) acquires benefits and privileges disproportionately in comparison to minority group. For example, the extermination of Jews during Hitler's regime as they were considered a defective race- source of illness and hereditary diseases- legitimized the atrocities and genocide committed by German soldiers. When hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana in August 2005 rescue services were directed towards the upscale neighbourhoods whereas the lower-income districts, where most of African Americans lived and, many did not have any means to leave, rescue services were not provided, which led to increased death toll in that area.

Studies have shown that there is a positive correlation between race and health disparities. Racial minorities in United States of America are more affected by stress, hypertension, high infant mortality, pregnancy related complications, HIV, diabetes, homicide, heart ailments and mental health than whites. Apart from health disparities, disparities are also seen in wage income and discrimination in employment.

12.4 ETHNICITY

Like race, ethnicity is also a way of stratifying social groups. Ethnicity and race are often used interchangeably. But the two concepts are not same. The difference between race and ethnicity is that while race is imposed, ethnicity can be imposed or chosen. Moreover, race is associated

with biological traits whereas ethnicity is learned cultural practices. But like race, ethnicity is also a social construct which shapes how people view themselves and how they view others.

Ethnicity refers to shared cultural perspectives, practices, values, beliefs, norms and distinctiveness which set one group apart from another. The most common characteristics of ethnic groups are shared cultural heritage, sense of history, language, region, religion, tradition, form of dress, food, shared group identity or we-feeling and sense of belonging to a particular territory/homeland. In large cities one would often find ethnic enclaves which are distinct by the street signs, ethnic restaurants, types of house or place of worship, dresses etc. The immigrants in an ethnic enclave has a strong we-feeling, act as a local community celebrating festivals which are part of their culture, forming and building social networks in the place of destination. For example, if one visits Kolkata there is an area known as Chinatown where immigrants from China have resided since generations and have carried their culture to Kolkata in the form of Chinese street food, sauces and style of cooking. Ethnic differences are not inherited but are learned through process of socialization. In the United States of America, people from Japan, China, Philippines, Korea and Malaysia are collectively known as Asian American. This process of merging various ethnicities into one is known as pan-ethnicities. When federal funds were made available for social services for Asian Americans or American Indians, these people from different countries began to think as a larger group for gaining political and social benefits like health care services, legal rights and so on. The belief that one culture is superior to that of another ethnic group is known as ethnocentrism. Ethnicity has become an important marker for a tribe when it comes to securing political rights and marking them as distinct from others especially dominant regional community.

12.5 TRIBE

Rural India comprises the largest number of tribes. Tribes refer to a group of people or community who are distinct from dominant regional

communities, depend on their land for their livelihood, whose culture, economy and way of life are usually primitive. However, their contact with larger society and the forces of globalization, industrialization, modernization, westernization and urbanization have introduced tremendous changes in tribal society. In India, scheduled tribes are those tribes who are historically disadvantaged and included in the schedule under article 342 of the Constitution of India. Scheduled tribes are notified in 30 states and union territories of India comprising of 705 tribal groups. The Census of 2011 enumerated that the tribal population constituted 8.6 per cent of the total population of India. According to A.R. Desai, purest tribe consists of following characteristics:

- Tribal people are early inhabitants of the soil, associated with a particular defined territory.
- They live in isolation in hills and forests away from larger society.
- They belong to one of the three stocks- Negritos, Austroloids or Mongoloids.
- They share common ancestry and historiography, whether genuine or fiction.
- They speak tribal dialect.
- They profess primitive religion known as Animism where spirits and objects with supernatural power are worshipped.
- They are involved in primitive occupation such as hunting and food gathering.

Studies conducted by K.L. Sharma, A.R. Desai, Ghanshyam Shah, R.K. Prasad, S.L. Doshi, and P.K. Bose show that some form of social differentiation and ranking in terms of age, sex, family and kinship existed among tribal people also. Tribes are in transition and they are being absorbed into the social order created by government of India, depending upon their

level of economic development, exposure to modern society, education, industrialization, growth of market economy and technological development in agriculture. Social Stratification existed among tribal people even prior to independence in the form of induction of group members to positions of societal importance, power, allocation of resources/cultivable land and distribution of produce. Tribal social stratification could be understood from the example of Meiteis of Manipur before their conversion to Hinduism. Meitei society was traditionally divided into seven clans-Ningthauja, Angom, Khuman, Moirang, Luwang, Khaba Nganba and Chonglei- which is called as Salai. Each of the Salai is further subdivided into sub-clans called Yumnak and Sagai. There were feuds between the clans for supremacy and Ningthauja clan dominated the other clans and established its rule as Meitei which is another name of Ningthauja clan. All the clans came under the rule of Meitei king. The Meitei society was stratified according to the degree of distance of kin ties with the king. People who had close kin ties with the king formed the nobility and were in-charge of administrative, judiciary and military services in the king's residence. The nobility owned good quality of land which enhanced not only their status but also their lifestyles. People who were distant kin of the king formed the commoners and owned low quality of lands and paid land tax in kind.

Similarly, stratification among the Chaudri tribe studied by Ghanshyam Shah shows the development of economic strata on the basis of land ownership and occupation. Shah has observed four kinds of strata among the Chaudri tribe- (a) Agricultural labourers and poor cultivators, (b) Middle Cultivators, (c) Rich Cultivators and (d) White Collar Employees. Shah found that agricultural labourers and poor cultivators occupied the lowest rung of the tribe-class hierarchy whereas the white collar employees comprised the top strata of the tribe-class hierarchy. He observed that the first three strata comprised of the 93 per cent of the total working population whereas the white collar employees constituted 7 per cent of the total working population.

12.6 RELIGION

Religion is another form of social stratification which has existed in all human societies and determines people's access to resources. Emile Durkheim defined religion as a unified system of beliefs, values and practices relative to sacred things which unites people into a single moral community called church. The practice of religion includes worship of God or gods, sacrifice, service, feasts, festivals, rituals, initiation ceremony, music and other aspects of culture. Although there are laws to provide equal protection to all religion, in reality religion helps in maintaining social inequality in society. Karl Marx said that religion is the opium for the masses which dulls their life experiences. He said that ruling class through their wealth and power can control the belief system and appropriate religious ideologies that legitimizes the current form of social inequality. Max Weber also believed that religion is appropriated by the dominant class to legitimize their good fortune and to make believe that they deserve their higher status in society whereas the subordinate class, doomed to misfortune, deserve their lower status in society. Weber in his 'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism' observed that the Calvinist doctrine of predestination served to legitimize inequality existing in society, where success was seen as a divine reward and poverty was seen an indicator of moral failing. Similarly, Liston Pope's study 'Millhand and Preacher' shows how religion is appropriated to justify inequality existing in mill towns in North Carolina. He observes that the uptown churches justify the prevailing economic inequality existing in mill town whereas the mill churches act as recourse for the downtrodden/ workers to escape the miseries of life. Religion has been used to justify the 'divine right' of the oppressive monarchs and to perpetuate unequal social structures in society. Religion as a source of social stratification could be understood through the conversion of Meitei tribe to Hinduism. Conversion of Meitei tribe to Hinduism could be traced during the rule of Kyamba (1697-1709) and the migration of Brahmins to Manipur. The spread of Vaishnavism in 19th century Manipur also contributed to the conversion of Meiteis to Hinduism. As discussed in the previous section the Meiteis were composed

of seven clans and after conversion each clan was assigned different gotras. Gangmuimoi Kabui says Ningthauja were assigned Shandillya gotra, Angom were assigned Gautam gotra, Khuman were assigned Moudhgalya gotra, Moirang were assigned Atreyee Angiras, Luwang were assigned Kashyap gotra, Khaba Nganba were assigned Bharadvaj gotra and Chonglei were assigned Vasistha gotra. Most of the Brahmins who had migrated to Manipur have been assimilated with the clans and have the surnames of Sharma. The ruling class who were first to convert to Hinduism were given the surnames of 'Rajkumar' or Rajkumari'. The men wore dhoti, put sandalwood mark on their forehead, adorned the sacred thread which consisted of seven threads representing the seven clans and changed their food habits to that of upper caste Hindus. Those who had later converted to Hinduism from commoner were given the surname of 'Singh' who are considered as the purest among Meities, but lower than the 'Rajkumars'. Lois constitute of scheduled castes of Manipur who practice their traditional Meitei religion. They were traditionally blacksmiths and involved in cultivation, brewing of liquor, poultry and piggery. Unlike the traditional Hindu caste society, Lois are not suppressed by the upper castes and they are free to practice their tradition and customs without interference from upper castes. However, social distance is maintained between Lois and Brahmins. Earlier, Lois could come near a Brahmin but could not enter the house of the Brahmin. Moreover, like scheduled castes in rural India, they are located at the periphery from the settlement of upper castes. The restrictions regarding commensality and inter-caste marriage are also observed in Meitei society. If a Brahmin girl marries a kshatriya boy then after marriage she accepts the caste of kshatriya. Similarly, if a kshatriya girl marries a Brahmin boy after marriage she belongs to her husband's caste but she is not allowed to cook in the family kitchen for some time. The rigidity of Brahmins in their social behaviour found in rest of India is not present in Meitei society. Flexibility in social interaction between the castes is seen with some reservations on commensality and inter-caste marriage.

Religion can also be an important political symbol dividing people into different political blocs. Take the case of state politics in Uttar Pradesh where vote banks are segregated in terms of religion and caste. Religion can also be a source of conflict if people believe one's religion is superior to others or if people of majoritarian religion in India feel that they will be overpowered by the religion of the minority community it may result in conflict. Communal conflicts in India have been used as a tool to divide people of India which challenges India's nationhood.

12.7 REGION

Region is an important aspect of social stratification. People of India are stratified according to region as belonging to North India, South India, North-East and Deccan. Haddon had classified people of India into three geographical regions- the Himalayas, the Northern Plains and the Deccan corresponding to three different racial stocks. The Himalayas were inhabited by Indo-Aryan and Mongoloids, the Northern Plains by Jats and Rajputs and the Deccan by pre-Dravidian and Negritos. Within a region again people are differentiated on the basis of the sons of the soil and outsiders. The sons of the soil claim that they are the original inhabitant of a particular region and they should get priority in terms of access to resources and benefits than the outsiders/immigrants of that region. Article 19 of the Constitution of India states that every citizen of India has the right to move freely throughout the Indian territory and to live and settle in any part of the Indian territory as well as to practice any profession and carry on any occupation, trade or business But the violence exerted by the sons of the soil on the migrants, be in Maharashtra or Assam or Bangalore is an outright violation of the right of a citizen of India guaranteed by the Constitution of India. Reorganization of states in post-independent has been formed on the basis of access to resources and predominant language in a region.

12.8 LANGUAGE

Language in contemporary India has become the pronounced marker of social stratification which divides people into different levels of status according to sets of ranked categories. The constitution of India recognizes 22 languages as scheduled languages which include Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithali, Malayam, Marathi, Meitei, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu. People of India speak various languages like Maghi, Tulu, Pahari, Bhojpuri, Sylleti and so on which though not recognized as scheduled languages, are spoken by large number of people and have their own form of writing. India has no national language owing to the linguistic diversity in the country. However, Hindi in Devanagri script is the official language of India. Language is a means through which socialization takes place. It helps in communication and shapes our world-views. There has been a covert fear that the language of the minority may become more prevalent than the language of the majority in public sphere, which would lead to corruption of the language and culture of the majority. For example, take the case of language movement in Assam in 1960s where it was feared that Bengali which was the language of court and government schools, would overpower and corrupt Assamese language and culture. Moreover, the debate over Hindi or English being the official language of Independent India led to the rise of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam as a political party of South India. Language can also stratify people as a marker of status and upward social mobility. For example, depicts the movie 'Hindi Medium' the struggle of parents to enrol their child in an English medium school because English language is seen as a vehicle for upward social mobility and enhancing one's status in society.

12.9 LET US SUM UP

- Race, ethnicity, tribe, religion, region and language are the defining features of social stratification, the primary determinant of persistent social inequality and advantages in society, shaping lives of individuals in a significant way without their realization.

- Race is one of the bases of stratification in society. The term 'race' refers to biological traits, phenotypes, ancestry and physical features considered socially significant which are believed to be the basis for creation of racial groups.

- Social Scientists have showed that race is not real, meaning that race is a social construct to differentiate or unite people based on certain biological and genetic traits for social or political interests.

- Like race, ethnicity is also a way of stratifying social groups. Ethnicity refers to shared cultural perspectives, practices, values, beliefs, norms and distinctiveness which set one group apart from another.

- Ethnicity has become an important marker for a tribe when it comes to securing political rights and marking them as distinct from others, especially the dominant regional community.

- Tribes refer to a group of people or community who are distinct from dominant regional communities and who are enumerated as scheduled tribes in the Constitution of India.

- Studies conducted by K.L. Sharma, A.R. Desai, Ghanshyam Shah, R.K. Prasad, S.L. Doshi, and P.K. Bose show that some form social differentiation and ranking in terms of age, sex, family and kinship existed among tribal people also.

- Religion is another form of social stratification which has existed in all human societies and which determines people's access to resources. Emile Durkheim defined religion as a unified system of beliefs, values and practices relative to sacred things which unites people into a single moral community called church. Although there are laws to provide equal protection to all religion, in reality religion helps in maintaining social inequality in society.

- Region is an important aspect of social stratification. People of India are stratified according to region as belonging to North India, South India, North-East and Deccan. Within a region again people are differentiated on the basis of the sons of the soil and outsiders.

- Language in contemporary India has become the pronounced marker of social stratification which divides people into different levels of status according to sets of ranked categories.

- Thus, in this unit we have discussed the various basis of social stratification like race, ethnicity, tribe, religion, region and language and how they can be basis of perpetuation of social inequality in society.

12.10 FURTHER READING

1) Sharma, K.L. (1974). The Changing Rural Stratification System. New Delhi: Orient Longman.

12.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q No 1: The term 'race' refers to biological traits, phenotypes, ancestry and physical features considered socially significant which are believed to the basis for creation of racial groups.

Ans. to Q No 2: The difference between race and ethnicity is race is imposed whereas ethnicity can be imposed or chosen.

Ans. to Q No 3: Traditionally Meitei tribe was constituted of seven clans.

Ans. to Q No 4: Lois constitute of scheduled castes of Manipur who practice their traditional Meitei religion.

Ans. to Q No 5: There are 22 Scheduled Languages in India.

12.12 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Does racism exist in contemporary society? Support your answer with examples.

Q 2: Can language be a basis of social stratification? Discuss.

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Discuss the role of religion in social stratification of Meitei society.

Q 2: Are tribal societies egalitarian? Support your answer with examples.

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UNIT 13 : CONTEMPORARY DEBATES IN STRATIFICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.1 Learning Objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.3 Contemporary Debates in Stratification

13.3.1 Deviance and Stratification

13.3.2 Disabilityand Stratification

13.3.3 Sexualityand Stratification

13.4 Let Us Sum Up

13.5 Further Reading

13.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

13.7 Model Questions

13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you would be able to

- Know more about causes of stratification other than factors such as gender, class and ethnicity.
- Be familiar with concept of deviance and its role in stratification and inequality.
- Be familiar with various aspects of stratification due to disability.
- Be familiar with the contemporary sociological debates regarding sexuality and inequality.

13.2 INTRODUCTION

Due to the intellectual history of Sociology and the ways in which the discipline has developed and spread across the world, the primary preoccupations of this discipline are those areas that are related towhat the classical thinkers Durkheim, Weber and Marx have also engaged with, particularly the industrial society in Europe. However, with time, these debates have been broadened and the scope of Sociology extended to include diverse issues of contemporary and global interest. Thus, even in

the case of stratification study, we need to take into account the changes brought about in contemporary society either through social movements, or changing awareness and perception, or by scholars identifying problems of social importance and studying them sociologically.

In the previous units we have discussed about the various bases of social stratification. This chapter seeks to consider stratification beyond issues of class, caste, gender and ethnicity, by delving into the role of deviance in stratification. We would discuss the impact of disability in stratification as well as sexuality and inequality. However, even though we would not discuss the other factors of stratification, it has to be borne in mind that these different aspects causing stratification do not operate in isolation and are often bundled together and intersect each other in an individual's life. This is also called theory of intersectionality, in which social categorizations such as gender, caste and class overlap and connect to each other creating interconnected systems of disadvantage or discrimination. For example, the nature of disadvantage experienced by a woman with disability might be much more severe than that of a man with disability, with the marginalization from disability in case of a woman being exacerbated and multiplied due to the marginalized gender identity and the disadvantages that it brings.

13.3 CONTEMPORARY DEBATES IN STRATIFICATION

In the subsections below we shall discuss about some of emerging debates in social stratification such as Deviance, Disability and Sexuality. In discussing these we shall understand how they bring different set of experiences for different groups of people.

13.3.1 Deviance and Stratification

The study of deviance and deviants has a long and complicated history within Sociology. There has been a tremendous evolution in the ways in which deviance was theorized and understood by scholars, which reflects the ways in which there have been overarching changes in the cultural,

political and social contexts in which different categories operate in contemporary times. Theoretical approach to deviance often operates with the underlying notion that each member of a given society learns and abides by the conventional norms of behaviour, ways of thinking and follows the informally and formally enacted rules in that society. Thus, any action or behaviour that violates this conventionally established norms and rules are termed as deviant. Thus, deviance or deviant behaviour is relative to the society or culture within the context of which it occurs. This means that what is considered acceptable in one culture might be considered deviant in another. Though deviance has a negative connotation, it does not always imply a negative act but merely as defiance of established conventions and patterns.

According to Durkheim, deviance is integral to a society since "Deviance affirms cultural values and norms. Any definition of virtue rests on an opposing idea of vice: There can be no good without evil and no justice without crime". Thus, deviance can affirm boundaries between what is morally acceptable in a society and what is not. The existence of deviance also leads individuals in society to come together and react in unison against what that society perceives as deviant behaviour, thereby increasing social solidarity. On the other hand, deviance from established norms itself is essential for a society to be introduced to change and new ways of thinking, which uplifts a society from stagnation and propels it towards social change and progress.

George Simmel wrote on the essential nature of deviance for a society that, "An absolutely centripetal and harmonious group, a pure "unification," not only is empirically unreal, it could show no real life process . . .. Just as the universe needs "love and hate," that is attractive and repulsive forces, in order to have any form at all, so society, too, in order to attain a determinate shape, needs some quantitative ratio of harmony and disharmony, of association and competition, of favourable and unfavourable tendencies.

Society, as we know it, is the result of both categories of interaction, which thus both manifest themselves wholly positive."

Other important sociological thinkers whose work on deviance still deeply impact deviance studies are:

Robert Merton, who devised his Strain Theory of Deviance in the 1940s, which was contextualised within the then-prevalent idea of the 'American Dream', which for a lot of people led toa widening gap between goals and inability to attain those goals through conventional means. This led to strain and frustration among people provoking certain reactions. These are categorised into conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion.

Howard Becker presented his Labeling Theory in his 1963 book The Outsiders, which challenged a lot of established notions about deviance and normality in society. According to Becker, "...social groups create deviance by making rules whose infraction creates deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application, by others of rules and sanctions to an 'offender.' The deviant is one to whom that label has been successfully applied; deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so label." Thus, Becker brings to the fore the complicity of social groups in categorizing 'deviance' and then operationalizing these categories.

Erving Goffman too is instrumental in deviance studies for his contribution in presenting a theoretical frame to study stigma, which today deeply informs deviance studies. In his words, "While a stranger is present before us, evidence can arise of his possessing an attribute that makes him different from others in the category of persons available for him to be, and of a less desirable kind--in the extreme, a person who is quite thoroughly bad, or dangerous, or weak. He is thus reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one. Such an attribute is a stigma..."

Thus, it is clear from the above discussion that deviance can lead to people being discriminated against and thus give rise of inequality and a stratified society. Deviance constitutes a wide variety of identities within itself, and thus the extent of disadvantage or discrimination would differ according to the nature of deviance or deviant behaviour. The discussion around what should be considered deviant behaviour and what deviant behaviours should be criminalized or decriminalized, is one that is on-going and unlikely to end since social change and progress itself can lead to new forms of deviance.

13.3.2 Disability and Stratification

For a long time, like other areas of social life that deviated from the norm, disability studies was also not given its due place in Sociology. But over the course of the last few decades, there have been some progress made in this aspect. There have been numerous studies that have shown how disability has a strong relationship to class. Richard Jenkins argues in his paper 'Disability and Social Stratification' (1991) that "disability must be considered as a factor contributing to the production and reproduction of stratification in its own right, independently of class relations". Even in case of disabled people who have participated in the economy and are active in the labor market, disability forms an impediment making them poorly paid,rendering their employed statuses precarious and placing their economic locations outside the mainstream employment possibilities. In case of disabled people who are economically inactive, their non-participation in labor market and economic activity itself can be a measure of the extent of their global marginalization.

There have been several models of disability that have been offered by theorists over the years. These different models are important because they not only serve as lenses to regard the social attitude and cultural understanding of disability in a given society but also help in understanding the formation of disability policies and legislations politically. The most dominant model of disability is the individual model of disability. The fully

enjoying their rights and capacities. Thus, this social model for disability is also called 'barriers approach'. According to Barton (1960)

"Disability is a significant means of social differentiation. To be disabled means to be discriminated against and involves experiencing varying degrees of stereotyping, social isolation and restriction ... This perspective is a key aspect of a social model of disability, one which seeks to identify the ways in which society disables people. The task then is to remove those disabling material, economic, ideological, attitudinal barriers that cumulatively prevent disabled people from experiencing the entitlements of citizenship. This includes challenging the mythology of the rhetoric of democracy in the light ofthe position and experiences of marginalized and oppressed groups".

It has to be noted that these three models are not exhaustive and there are many more categories and sub-categories of models employed to view and study disability. The given models are merely the most dominant frames available today.

As per the Census 2011, there are about 26.8 million differently abled people in India. The Constitution of India lays down equal rights and freedom for all Indian citizens, including for people with disability. But disability rights have not been promoted in India to the extent that it should have been. Participation of disabled individuals in primary and higher education is still very low due to schools and educational institutions still not being made inclusive enough to be able to equally accommodate people with physical or learning disabilities. However, there have been some progress made by the government in recent times to include technologies in educational institutions that could aid individuals as well as designing infrastructures that are accessible to people with disabilities that impede mobility. In fact, a separate Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disability was carved out under the aegis of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in 2012.

According to Person with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, disability broadly includes blindness, low vision, leprosy-cured people, people with hearing impairment, locomotor disability, mental Retardation and mental illness. Even with these legislations mandated by the state, a lot more still needs to be done legally as well as in terms of changing people's attitudes to disability and the disabled. Discrimination against the disabled is very common and in the workplace, it can lead to severe marginalization of the disabled, irrespective of their employment status. So in order to address these shortcomings, the Indian government replaced this act with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 according to the principles enshrined in United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Here, the definition of disability was broadened, along with framing policies for equal opportunities, in the forms of rules that apply to both public and private sectors. These rules have to do with equal opportunities policy to recruit and retain people with disabilities, provides for adequate facilities and benefits to the employees with disabilities, prohibits any kind of workplace discrimination or harassment, as well as creating a system of grievance redressal and complaints in case of any non-compliance with the Act.

13.3.3 Sexuality and Stratification

According to a World Health Organization report from 2006,

"Sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors."

The construction of sexuality and gender are thus, very close to each other and the debate around each inform and constrain each other. Inequalities related to sexuality and sexual orientation happen due to the ways in which gender and sexuality are understood and judged. While a person's gender can be understood as an interplay of femininities and masculinities, influenced by a set of cultural, political and social processes, distinct from the biological sex of the person, socio-cultural norms about the distinctions between gender according to one's sex weighs heavily on individuals, especially in conservative and traditional societies. Thus, a person who is biologically born a male would be expected to perform masculine roles assigned to men and is also expected by societal norms to be in a heterosexual relationship with a woman. However, with sociological studies in sexuality and gender, we now know that these norms and categories are not as simple as they appear to be and a lot of times, they are very damaging to individuals who do not adhere to these normalized patterns of behaviour.

Sexuality or sexual orientation beyond established hetero-normativity or the existence and acceptance of many different kinds of sexualities as an issue, has received widespread attention politically and academically only in the recent times. Sexual orientation is defined as an individual's preference for or attraction to a particular sex. This can be typically divided into four categories: homosexuality, in which a person has a preference for the same sex as themselves; heterosexuality, in which a person is attracted to the opposite sex, bisexuality, when there is attraction to either sexes and asexuality, when a person is attracted to neither sex. Alfred Kinsey, the pioneer of sex research, was the first person to argue that sexuality is not fixed and unchanging but it actually exists in the form of a continuum and this understanding has been accepted by much of progressive culture and academia. Queer theory and queer politics, by extension, is an offshoot of this line of thinking which rejects the dichotomization of sexual orientations into two mutually exclusive categories, homosexual or heterosexual, and

challenges the ways in which socialization, legislation and religious dogma play a role in oppressing people of alternate sexuality and sexual orientation.

For a long time, anything deviating from conventional heterosexuality and hetero-normativity was categorized as 'deviant behaviour', even within sociology itself. Today, the study of sexuality has moved far beyond homosexuality and has been broadened to include transgender, bisexuality and queerness. The most important factor which has brought sexuality study to the fore not only in academics but also politically around the world have been the LGBTQ movement (Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgendered, Queer) which now has a global presence and which has effectively led to governments in various countries overturning legislations which until recently criminalised such behaviour and led to countries enacting legislations to provide protection against discrimination to people with such alternate sexuality, where once discrimination was considered justified. Even more important has been the attitudinal shift and awareness of alternate sexuality that has been brought about culturally and socially among people. However, a lot more still needs to be done.

LGBTQ youths have been shown by studies to be vulnerable to violence, abuse and bullying, even in an educational setting. Along with this, the rates of addiction and suicide are also inordinately high among this group due to the social and psychological pressure associated with deviating from hetero-normative expectations of their family or society. Marriage equality and rights against discrimination for LGBTQ individuals have now been enacted in many developed countries such as Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Sweden and in many states of the United States of America. But in developing and under-developed countries, issues related to alternate sexuality still remain unaddressed and highly contested, with some countries having very high criminal penalties for any display or proof of such behaviour still deemed 'deviant' in those countries. In India, this movement is still in its infancy and India still falls in the category of countries where such behaviour is often

socio-culturally equated with mental illness and sexual and psychological dysfunction.

In a very welcome move, the Indian Psychiatric Society (IPS) issued a statement in 2014, stating that, "Based on existing scientific evidence and good practice guidelines from the field of psychiatry, the Indian Psychiatric Society would like to state that there is no evidence to substantiate the belief that homosexuality is a mental illness or a disease." In case of legislations, these have been slow to change compared to the changes in orientation to LGBT issues in academic and intellectual circles. In a historic decision in 2009, the High Court of Delhi decriminalized homosexuality, stating, "We declare section 377 of Indian Penal Code in so far as it criminalizes consensual sexual acts of adults in private is violative of Articles 21,14,and 15 of the Constitution". The demand to eliminate Article 377 has been a rallying cry uniting human rights activists as well as gay rights activists. This Article itself originated under the British colonial rulers and criminalizes any "unnatural acts against the order of nature". This implies that any sexual act other than penile-vaginal intercourse stands as illegal. This Article is not only a relic of a past legal- political system that does reflect the contemporary realities and scientific facts, but also has been used to systematically harass and abuse numerous people by those in power.

However, following the strong backlash and legal appeals from both the central government of the time and conservative opposition forces, the Supreme Court of India quashed the High Court dictate of 2009. Till recently, this case was still pending with the Supreme Court of India upholding that citizens do have the right to privacy and "sexual orientation is an essential attribute of privacy", the court would from a bench to hear the numerous petition filed by individuals and NGOs who have filed cases to decriminalize homosexuality. But in a recent verdict of the Supreme Court of India, Homosexuality has been decriminalised. It shall, according to the verdict, no longer be considered as an ooffence in India.

With regards to transgendered rights, Rights of Transgender Persons Bill, 2014 was passed by the Rajya Sabha in 2015 which seeks to provide protection against discrimination, reservation in jobs as well as guaranteeing legal rights and benefits to all transgendered people in India. This bill is still remains pending in Lok Sabha. Again, the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2016 was also introduced in the Parliament and still remains pending. A lot of policy changes thus remains to be implemented, including rights of individuals to marry same-sex partners, rights to adoption as well as freedom to live a life where they can express their full capabilities and potential as human beings, without being victimized due to their sexuality and sexual orientation.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is Merton's Strain theory?

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Q 2: Why is Goffman important in the study of deviance in Sociology?

.....

Q 3: Mention some models of disability.

.....

13.4 LET US SUM UP

- The theory of intersectionality stresses that social categorizations such as gender, caste and class all overlap and connect to each other creating interconnected systems of disadvantage or discrimination
- Each member of a given society are assumed and expected to learn and abide by the conventional norms of behaviour, ways of thinking and follow the informally and formally enacted rules in that society. Thus, any action or behaviour that violates this conventionally established norms and rules are termed as deviant.
- According to Durkheim, deviance is integral to a society.

- Deviance from established norms and social expectations can lead to people being discriminated against and thus, give rise of inequality and a stratified society

- While in case of disabled people who have participated in the economy and are active in the labour market, disability forms an impediment making them poorly paid, their employed statuses precarious and their economic locations placed outside the mainstream employment possibilities. In case of disabled people who are economically inactive, their non-participation in labour market and economic activity itself can be a measure of the extent of their global marginalization.

- The construction of sexuality and gender are very close to each other and the debate around each, inform and constrain each other. Inequalities related to sexuality and sexual orientation happen due to the ways in which gender and sexuality are understood and judged.

- For a long time, anything deviating from conventional heterosexuality and hetero-normativity was categorized as 'deviant behaviour', even within sociology itself. However, today this is changing and even in legislations, new policies are being introduced to curb discrimination and violence against LGBT. However, a lot still remains to be done to introduce legal implementation of rights and freedoms, as well as to change societal attitude to these issues.

13.5 FURTHER READING

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13.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Merton's Strain theory alludes to the gap between goals and inability to attain those goals through conventional means. This inability leads to strain and frustration among people provoking certain reactions. These are categorised into conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion.

Ans to Q No 2: Erving Goffman is instrumental in deviance studies for his contribution in presenting a theoretical frame to study stigma, which today deeply informs deviance studies.

Ans to Q No 3: The three most important models of disability are: individual model, medical model and social model.

13.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: What does Durkheim theorise about 'deviance'?

Q 2: Discuss the LGBTQ movement in a few sentences.

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: What are the three dominant models of Disability?

Q 2: How is disability related to inequality?

Q 3: How does sexuality relate to stratification?

Q 4: What is the present scenario of LGBT movement in India?

** ** **



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