

## **UGC NET - SOCIOLOGY**

### **SAMPLE THEORY**

### **Paper - II**

- ▣ SOCIAL STRATIFICATION
- ▣ FORMS OF STRATIFICATION
- ▣ THEORIES OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

# VPM CLASSES

For IIT-JAM, JNU, GATE, NET, NIMCET and Other Entrance Exams

1-C-8, Sheela Chowdhary Road, Talwandi, Kota (Raj.) Tel No. 0744-2429714

Web Site [www.vpmclasses.com](http://www.vpmclasses.com) E-mail-[vpmclasses@yahoo.com](mailto:vpmclasses@yahoo.com)

## 1. SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

### i. Introduction

Stratification refers to a division of society into groups which are ranked as superior or inferior. Inequality is a more general term which refers to the ranking of the individuals as well as of groups. Thus stratification is a particular form of inequality. Both stratification and inequality refer to social and not natural differences between people. People are different in terms of natural endowments such as physical strength, mental ability, beauty, etc. But these do not form the basis of social ranking. Ranking in society is always in terms of the differences of wealth, power and prestige. Another way of saying this is that stratification in society refers to economic, political status differences. It is with reference to an individual's position in these aspects that the rest of his life will be determined. Stratification is a study, how social position determines other aspects of life such as the organization of the family, adherence to religion, political participation, style of life, extent of education, etc., the study of stratification is therefore the basis of Sociology because it is very important in the study of all aspects of individual and social life. In fact Sociology received its importance for growth from the study of stratification by the founding fathers of the discipline Marx and Weber in the 19th century. The term stratification is derived from a Geological Analogy i.e., on the basis of similarity between division in society and division in the earth's crust.

### ii. What is social stratification

The social strata and layers, divisions and sub-divisions have over the time been accepted on the basis of sex and age, status and role, qualification and inefficiency, life chances and economic-political ascription and monopolization, ritual and ceremony and on numerous other basics. It is of varied nature. It is no less based on the considerations of superiority and inferiority, authority and subordination, profession and vocation. Social stratification has remained despite the revolutionary ideas and radicalism, equality and democracy, socialism and communism. Classless society is just an ideal. The stratification, has something to do, it appears, with the very mental make-up of man.

### iii. Origin

The origin of the social stratification cannot be explained in terms of history. The existence or nonexistence of the stratification in early society cannot be pinpointed. The differentiation between classes existed as early as the Indus Valley Society. Thus, it appears having the priestly and other classes. The stratification possibly was simple and the first conscious effort in the direction was the Varna, ashrama, Dharna. The social layers in the western countries consisted of the freemen, slaves and serfs. It involved estate and 'status' consideration. Privileges and immunities, obligations and duties arose out of it. The technological revolution of nineteenth century radically influenced the society.

The new stratification has come to consist of the numerous classes, such as, the capitalist, the bourgeois, the upper class, the middle class, the working class and all others. There is the elimination of some classes and the rise of others as was not the case with the older stable societies. Social mobility and change in social stratification was comparatively a slow process. The stratification increasingly becomes politically oriented. It affected the body politic.

### 1.1. Hierarchy

#### i. Meaning of Hierarchy

Hierarchy describes a system that organizes or ranks things, often according to power or importance. At school the principal is at the top of the staff hierarchy, while the seniors rule the student hierarchy.

Also known as a pecking order or power structure, a hierarchy is a formalized or simply implied understanding of who's on top or what's most important. All that sorting and ranking can be helpful if you're a business administrator, but if you find yourself arranging all the produce in your fridge according to a hierarchy of color, size, and expiration date, you might want to consider visiting a therapist.

Typically, hierarchy is defined as a rank ordering of individuals along one or more socially important dimensions, yet hierarchies come in many different forms. For example, group members can be rank ordered in terms of their power, or their ability to influence others their status, or the respect

and admiration they enjoy in the eyes of the group and their leadership, or the degree to which they use influence to attain shared goals.

## ii. Functionalist theories of hierarchy

Working in groups presents at least three major problems. First, because group members often disagree over the group's goals, the strategies to pursue those goals, and possible solutions to problems, groups must make collective decisions in a peaceful and efficient manner. Second, groups must motivate members to behave selflessly and contribute to the group's success, even when such behavior requires personal investment and sacrifice. Third, groups must coordinate individual behavior so that members work in concert toward collective success; for example they must allocate tasks and responsibilities, maintain communication among members, and minimize intra-group conflict. According to the functionalist perspective, hierarchies help groups solve each of these problems.

### a. Collective decision-making

Hierarchies help groups solve the problem of collective decision-making by giving disproportionate control to one or few members. Group leaders are given control over decisions and allowed to direct others' actions, whereas lower ranked individuals are expected to defer to others and keep their opinions to themselves. This concentration of control at the top helps groups make decisions more efficiently and avoid conflict over control.

Hierarchies are also thought to increase the quality of group decisions by giving disproportionate control to the most competent individuals. Decisions about a group's goals or strategies are often fraught with ambiguity and intimidating complexity. Competent individuals presumably will make better decisions for the group than would those with lesser or average acuity. Therefore, groups strive to put their most competent members in charge.

In support of these arguments, much research has shown that groups tend to give higher rank to members who have the specific abilities required to attain high rank. The specific abilities required to attain high rank can depend on the group's specific tasks but in general individuals are given higher rank if they exhibit expertise related to the group's technical problems as well as social and leadership skills. Moreover, studies

have found that when a group's hierarchy is based on expertise it performs better which supports the notion that meritocratic hierarchies promote group success.

## **b. Motivating members**

To help overcome the second major challenge, that of motivating individual members to contribute to the group, hierarchies are thought to provide social, material, and psychological incentives. For example, high rank comes with greater respect and admiration, autonomy, power, social support, self-esteem, wellbeing, lower physiological stress, and material resources.

Groups allocate higher rank to members believed to contribute to the group's goals. Individuals perceived as making important contributions are granted higher rank, whereas those believed to be making fewer contributions, or even to be undermining a group's success, are assigned lower rank. Valued contributions can take several forms, such as expending effort for the group or providing expertise to fellow members. By rewarding group-oriented behavior, hierarchies compel individual members to work toward the group's goal, which facilitates collective success.

## **c. Intra-group coordination**

Finally, hierarchies are thought to help groups address the third major challenge, that of intra-group coordination, by reducing conflict and facilitating communication. As previously mentioned, hierarchies putatively facilitate an orderly division of resources and influence among group members, using such means as allowing or denying different individuals access to resources and the rights to perform certain behaviors. Differential allocation of responsibilities and control helps mitigate the common problem of having "too many cooks in the kitchen," wherein too many individuals desire access to the scarce resource of leadership.

Hierarchies are also thought to allow information to flow between members more efficiently and for the integration of this information to occur more easily. For example, in the prototypical pyramid hierarchy, information travels up through hierarchical levels until it reaches group leaders. The leaders integrate this diverse information and make the relevant decisions. Their decisions then flow down to each respective hierarchical level and get implemented according to leaders' plans.

Research has shown that group members perceive differences in influence and control among their members very clearly and with high consensus. In fact, group members even accurately perceive

their own rank within the informal, implicit hierarchies that emerge in small groups – in spite of the psychological benefits that positive illusions about one's rank might provide. Moreover, research has shown that when group members disagree about their relative rank in the group hierarchy the group suffers from higher levels of conflict.

## 1.2. Inequality

### i. Meaning

Unlike poverty, which concentrates on the situation of those at the bottom of society, inequality shows how resources are distributed across the whole society. This gives a picture of the difference between average income, and what poor and rich people earn, and highlights how well different Member States redistribute or share the income they produce.

### ii. How is it measured?

Income inequality in the EU is normally measured in two ways: the S80/S20 ratio and the Gini coefficient. Both these measures can be difficult to understand and have some basic limitations in terms of capturing an accurate picture on inequality.

**The S80/S20 ratio** is the ratio of the total income received by the 20% of the country's population with the highest income to that received by the 20% of the country's population with the lowest income. The higher the ratio the greater the inequality.

**The Gini coefficient** is a way of measuring the inequality of distribution of income in a country. It takes account of the full income distribution whereas the S80/S20 ratio only looks at the top and bottom. It is a technical formula which identifies the relationship of cumulative shares of the population arranged according to the level of income, to the cumulative share of the total amount received by them. If there were perfect equality (i.e. if each person received the same income), this coefficient would be 0%. If the entire national income were in the hands of only one person then the coefficient would be 100%. The higher the coefficient - the greater the inequality in the distribution of income in a country.

## 2. FORMS OF STRATIFICATION

### 2.1. Caste

---



Caste is the basis of Hindu society. The link between Caste and Hinduism is from the Rigveda concept of the Varna System which started in the Vedic Period. When Aryans came to India they conquered weaker sections of the society and made them slaves. Aryans who came from outside were barbarian, uncultured and people who were residing here were civilized, cultured and cultivators of crops. Aryans were cattle breeders.

The four Varnas are not denoted by birth but they are distinguished on the basis of occupation.

1. Caste is the basis of Hindu society
2. Varna which means colour also refer to occupation
3. Once the Varna system was established it was further divided into sub groups. Possibility of inter-marriage between them was not right. Possibility of food exchange i.e., commensality was also prevalent.
4. When occupation started on the basis of birth then the matter of purity of blood come into practice in the form of restricting other occupational groups from marriage and Commensality.
5. Varnas were four excluding the untouchables.

## ii. Study of Caste

1. **Varna and Caste.** The Purushasukta of the Rigveda give only four castes called varnas and This is in sharp contrast to the reality of castes in India, which consists of about 3000 castes called Jatis. The distinction between Varna and Jati is two-fold.

First Varna provides an all India framework into which the large number of castes may be fitted roughly to show their ranking. It is the Jati which is the effective local group and the unit of interaction. Hence the characteristics of caste such as endogamy, occupation, panchayat, commensality.

Therefore the characteristics of caste operate at a level of Jati and it is the external group. Second distinction between Varna and Jati is that Varna defines the normative aspect of caste, while jatis show the actual working of the normative model. The normative aspect of caste is the clear distinction between the Brahmin and Kshatriya i.e., distinction between ritual status and political power and the superiority of Brahmin i.e., ritual status over the Kshatriya or political power. The norm in Hindu society is for ritual status to be more important than political power in the ranking of

castes. Thus the Jatis do not follow the normative model of the varna and mobility is possible between jatis on the basis of acquisition of power.

2. A distinction is often made between structural and cultural views of caste. The structural view of caste considers caste to be universal principle of stratification which can apply to all societies. The cultural view of caste looks at caste as a system unique to India. Thus the difference between structural and cultural view is that the former regards caste as the system of stratification different from other systems only in degree but not in kind.

Important thinkers giving the cultural view of caste are Weber, Srinivas and Dumont. Weber can be cited as an example of cultural view of caste which can be distinguished from structural view because he says that caste is an example of status group based on the style of life. This ensures restriction on inter course and intermarriage and caste emerges as a close group based on birth in which no mobility is possible. Beteille has given the following four features of a cultural view of caste.

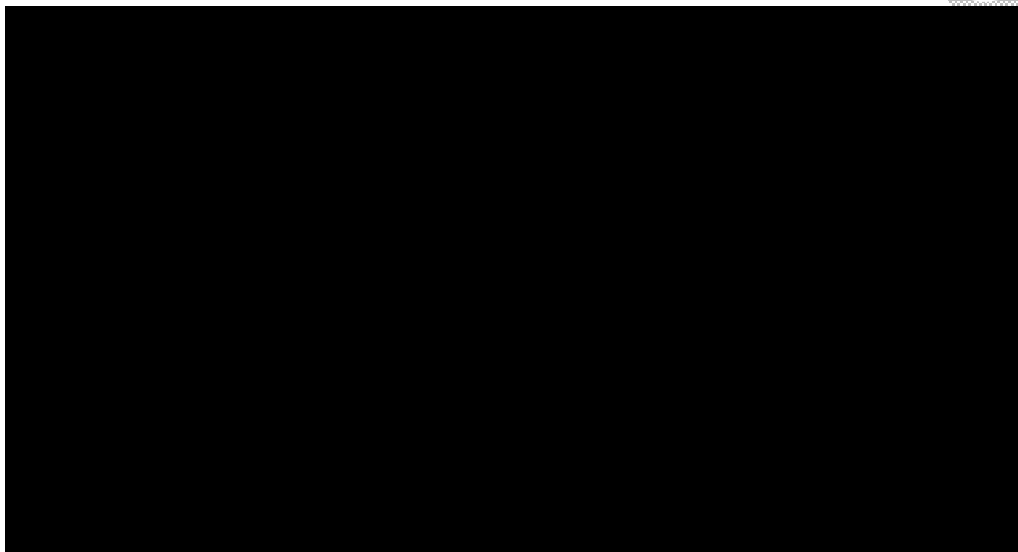
- (i) It emphasizes ideas and values.
- (ii) It emphasizes those ideas which are based upon the view and certain sections of people (population) and upon observed behaviour.
- (iii) It attaches importance to the spiritual texts.
- (iv) Castes are regarded as complementary and not antagonistic units.

The view of Dumont is the most typical representation of the cultural view of caste and embodies all the four characteristics of this view given by Beteille. He contrasts the caste system as containing hierarchical view of man with the class system of the west containing an egalitarian (equality) view of man. Thus he names his book "Homo Hierarchical" or the Hierarchical Man in which the ideology of Hinduism is contrasted with the ideology of the west. The first four Varnas as a group are purer than the untouchables. The first three Varnas are called the Dwija or twice born and are as a group purer than sudras. The first two varnas are purer than the vaishyas and in the first two varnas Brahmins are of higher ritual status than the Kshatriya.

This means that caste status is always determined by ritual ideas irrespective of the power and wealth of the individual e.g., a poor Brahmin will always have a higher status compared to a powerful kshatriya and a poor kshatriya will always have higher status compared to a wealthy



vaishya. The problem with Dumont's work is that it does not explain the changes in caste status which have taken place owing to the changes in power of a group. Nor does it explain the disputes about ranking that are there the caste system. Especially in the middle regions of the hierarchy it is for these reasons that some sociologists prefer the Structural View for the study of caste.



### iii. Characteristics of Caste

Bailey highlights three characteristics of caste

1. Based on birth
2. Hereditary specialization
3. Interdependence

Bereman gives three different characteristics of Caste

1. Stratification
2. Cultural Pluralism
3. Interaction

Barth gives three characteristics as

1. Opposition

2. Segmentation

3. Hierarchy

## 2.2. Class

### i. Introduction

The Structural Approach, in general, distinguishes between caste and class as extreme forms of stratification. This polarity is often expressed by saying that caste is characteristic of India and class of western society. Indian society as understood to be based on ascription (birth), closed, collectivity, ritual sanctions interdependence and particularistic values western society is based upon opposite values of achievement, openness, individual merit, competition and universalism. Thus this view of caste and class predicts that westernization, urbanization, industrialization, etc. change caste into class, but this understanding of caste and class has been challenged by Yogendra Singh and K.L Sharma. Caste and class are found as a part of the same reality in India and it cannot be concluded that caste will change into class. Caste has been emphasized in Indian society because it has certain peculiar features and because it is a native category but this does not mean that there have been no classes in India.

### ii. Stratification in Simple Society

Simple Societies or Tribal Societies are also called pre-literate societies or small scale societies or subsistence societies. The characteristics of simple of simple societies are as follows:

1. They are small in scale because they have relatively small population spread over a limited territory.
2. They are simple in the sense that they have simple technology of hunting and food gathering variety or pastoral or shifting cultivations variety and a simple division of labour based on age and sex.
3. They have a subsistence economy in the sense that they consume what they produce, leaving very little surplus.
4. They are pre-literate in the sense that they do not have a written language and so they lack history, written documents and developed theology. Such societies are studied mainly through observation and it is found that many of them do not have the kind of stratification based on differences of prestige, power and wealth found in Agrarian or Industrial Society. In the absence of Historical and

Documentary data, it is difficult to study the characteristic of the stratification prevalent in such simple societies and so the following points have been made by Marshall Sahlins.

Sahlins says that some form of ranking is universal and so present in all societies including primitive societies there are differences based on age, sex and personal characteristics-bravery and wisdom. Thus Sahlins confines the word stratification only to those societies in which there are groups with permanent distinction of power, prestige and wealth and wants to find out the reason for the existence of such distinction. There are many societies where those in high position enjoy privileges in production and consumption of wealth a great amount of power in inter-personal relation so that they can use sanctions against offenders, and also high social status especially in ritual and ceremonial matters. Sahlins attributes these distinctions to the process of distribution. When primitive societies have an economy which starts generating a little surplus, it is the way in which this surplus is distributed which determines the system of stratification. In most such primitive societies the surplus is brought to a centre and then it is redistributed. This centre may consist of a chief or a council of chiefs and they derive their wealth, power and prestige from their right to redistribute the surplus. In other words, Power is a result of acting as the tribal banker who collects the surplus, stores it and then uses it for the benefit of the tribe.

Malinowski says that the principle in primitive society is for a man who owns a thing is to share with others, to distribute it, to be its trustee. He says that the greater that ability to distribute, the more power he enjoys and the more wealth he possesses. Those high in rank are expected to be generous and the higher the rank, the greater is obligation.

Malinowski study of the Trobriand Island clearly shows that prestige and power are related to the redistribution of wealth, it may also be said that production depends on the way in which resources are redistributed. The more there is for redistribution, i.e., the more surplus the more chance there is for separation between those who produce and those who distribute. Since surplus depends upon the technical efficiency of production. It may be said that with advances in technology a social organization emerges where there are status differences between producers and distributors. In other words, the redistributors of surplus also acquire property rights and the right to employ those who produce for them.

### iii. Stratification in Agrarian Society

Agrarian societies are different from the simple or primitive societies mainly because of the use of more efficient technology in agriculture which leads to a surplus. This surplus is appropriated by those who acquire property rights and land and also the right to employ others.

Andre Beteille in his book "Agrarian Social Relations" says that the agrarian economy cannot be understood without understanding its social framework because the economy is not independent of society but is part of it. Agricultural activities involve a social organization of rights and obligations, e.g., those of landlord and tenants or landlord and labourers. These are class relationships which Beteille defines as being concerned with the ownership, use and control of land. In addition to these class relations Beteille says that in India there are also caste relationships in agriculture based on style of life. Caste relations are more visible, clearly defined and sharp as compared to class relations which are often overlapping and less visible than caste. Both are equally important in agriculture but caste has been studied more than class for this reason. Thus castes have got name and are fixed by individual can belong to several such categories.

Beteille says that agrarian society in India can be understood both in terms of class as well as caste and there is twofold link between caste and class. Firstly, class relations are legitimized and sanctioned by the caste system. The life style of upper castes requires them to desist (not to work) from working with their hands and this is a powerful sanction for their upper class ranking.

Secondly there is a direct link between caste and class as the upper castes such as Brahmins and Rajputs were traditionally land owners, the middle castes were traditionally tenants and the lower castes or untouchables are labourers. This link between caste and class has been called Cumulative inequality by Andre-Beteille, which he distinguishes from dispersed inequality where the link between caste and class is broken so that the upper castes are no longer the upper classes.

Classes in traditional Indian society have differed from region to region according to differences in ecological conditions and the land revenue system. Beteille says that the ecological conditions are those of the wheat growing areas as distinguished from the rice growing areas. Rice growing areas have had a more elaborate class structure consisting of many levels of class starting from the actual tiller of the soil. This is because the growing of rice is a much more difficult task than the growing of wheat and so there are a large number of non-cultivating classes depending on the

actual tiller. The variations in classes are according to land revenue system. There is a difference between the British system of collection of land revenue and the traditional Indian method. Traditionally revenue was collected as a fixed part of the produce of the land either directly by officials of the state or indirectly through tax farmers who kept part of the produce for themselves and deposited the rest with the state, earlier, the officials and the tax farmers did not have any proprietary rights on land i.e., they were not hereditary land owners. Land was owned by the community and was tilled by the cultivators who could not be driven away from the land if they paid land revenue regularly. The land revenue was paid in kind and not in cash and it varied according to the produce since it was always a fixed part of it. The British land revenue system introduced the notion of property for the first time as it made the tax farmers the land owners or zamindars and the revenue had to be paid in cash which was a fixed amount for all times. This was the zamindari system introduced by the permanent settlement of 1793 by Lord Cornwallis. Now land was declared transferable from the cultivator if he failed to pay a fixed amount of revenue and so land could be bought, sold or mortgaged.

This meant that the land owner could lease land to tenant or could supervise the tilling of land by hired labourers. In this way the British introduced the classes of Land owners, Tenants and Agricultural labourers by their land revenue system.

There were two types of land revenue systems introduced by the British. The first was the zamindari system introduced by the Permanent Settlement of 1793 by Lord Cornwallis mainly in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Later on a second system of land revenue called Ryotwari was introduced primarily in North and South India. In the Zamindari System, there was an elaborate hierarchy of rights in land consisting of many levels which served as intermediaries between the actual cultivator and the British state. There was considerable sub-infeudation in this system but the ultimate purpose was for the intermediaries to collect land revenue on behalf of the British from the cultivator and to deposit a fixed amount in the treasury keeping the rest for himself. The Ryotwari system on the other hand did away with the intermediaries and instead brought the cultivator directly into contact with the state for the collection of land revenue. In this way, the Zamindari System brought into existence the absentee land owner who owned large tracts of land without cultivating it himself and the Ryotwari System brought in to existence proprietary holders with vast

tract of lands cultivated by themselves or hired labourers. In both systems, there was a concentration of land in the hands of a few to be cultivated by either tenants or labourers. The following classes existed in the agrarian structure prior to the introduction of land reform in 1950.

1. Absentee land owners
2. Proprietary holders who also cultivated the lands
3. Non cultivating tenants
4. Cultivating tenants with occupancy rights
5. Share-croppers leasing land without permanent rights

#### iv. Capitalist Society and Socialist Society

##### Capitalist

1. Private ownership of means of production
2. The economy is based on the maximization of profits.
3. There is a free market so that both production and wages depend upon the laws of demand and supply.

##### Socialist

1. Means of Production is socially owned.
2. The economy is based on the principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need."
3. There is a Centralized Planning for both production and wages
4. It is a classless society

#### v. Marxist theory not applicable to Capitalist Society at present because of the following

1. The economy may not necessarily lead to stratification and class conflict because other forms of conflict such as those between nationalities or parties may replace it, there is growing political conflict in a society where Laissez Faire Capitalism is replaced by Welfare State Capitalism in which political power is as important as the economy.
2. The two-class division of Marx is based upon a prediction of Polarization of classes along with Pauperization (poverty) of the worker and concentration of capital in the hands of a few, but this does not happen since a large middle class emerges.



3. The worker does not become a class-conscious revolutionary, ready to overthrow the capitalistic system but merely a reformist trying to get higher wages, better housing, fewer hours of work, retirement benefits, etc. within this system.

4. The capital is not concentrated in the hands of a few Capitalists, but is widely defused among a large number of share holders who are incapable of controlling the industry.

5. There is considerable social mobility particularly in the working class so that education and skills are widely defused among them and a new class of skilled workers comes in to existence which has better pay, better conditions of work, more opportunities of promotion and a higher standard of living than the unskilled workers.

Weberian model can be applied to the study of capitalist society in the following three ways:

1. Weber proposes a multiclass model for capitalism in contrast to Marxist two Class Model and the Weber's model is based upon differences of life chances in terms of both value and goods or rewards available to a group in the market.

2. Weber says that the working class may not be the revolutionary class trying to overthrow the capitalistic system and it may only be interested in adjusting and adopting the system to look after the welfare of workers by strikes and agitation, etc.

3. Weber gives great importance to the power dimension as being an independent determinant of the economic system and consequently of stratification. He considers the mutual relationship of economic power and status dimensions.

#### vi. Socialist Society (characteristics)

1. According to Marx it is a Classless Society in which the means of production are socially owned but research has shown that certain strata are present in these societies based on differences of rewards according to occupation. These strata are those of the Professionals, Lower white-collar workers, skilled workers and unskilled workers.

2. These strata are different from classes in three ways.

(a) There is no private property and so property cannot be inherited by next generation.

(b) The income differences between strata are less than that of capitalist society.

(c) Since there is no private property there is no class conflict and the strata are non-antagonistic.

This makes the system more open than capitalist society.

3. To say that different occupations are rewarded according to their skills is to fall into the trap of the functional approach which ranks occupation according to the level of training. In fact differential rewards are the result of differences in power and there are power elite in socialist society which gets all the privileges and develops a vested interest in the system. This elite is constituted by the party bureaucracy and it has a monopoly of power as it does not have to share only power with the capitalist class. It is the unified and cohesive elite which controls the production and distribution of socialist property and becomes "a new class" in the words of Yugoslav sociologist Djilas - thus elite gets a lion's share of the privileges such as good housing, better education. Best medical care and other perquisites are denied to others.

4. Thus rewards and power are connected to each other in a Society and they are also connected to occupational prestige. It will be found that the occupational stratification of rewards, power and prestige of socialist society is quite similar to that of a capitalist society. This fact is summarised by convergence theory of Socialist and Capitalist Society according to which the same stratification results from the use of the same technology.

### 3. THEORIES OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

**Social Class Consciousness:** If people think of themselves as belonging to a certain class and if other people agree in placing them in that class, these facts are fairly good evidence that they do belong to distinct class. Yet we noted that in India caste consciousness, as indicated by the rather unusual development of formal names, formal councils, and other formal marks of group identity, to some extent blur or blot from awareness important differences within a particular caste, differences based perhaps on wealth. In general, however, we should attach much more weight to social-class consciousness than to the absence of it.

**Ignorance on Class System:** Simple ignorance on the nature of the existing class system is not at all uncommon: a person can belong to a class in our sense without being aware of it. This spring in part from the tendency to associate with class equals, which may lead to the idea that we are all equals. More important, however, is the reluctance of some people to accept the fact of social inequality, due partly to ideological distortion.

**Cultural Differences:** Greater weight should be given to cultural differences and to relative breaks in the web of social interaction. Seldom, however, do we find cleavages so clear-cut as the cleavage in Latin American countries between people who work with their hands and people who do not. This difference in style of life is accompanied by a social gulf. The following quotations refers to Argentina and Chile, where the development of a middle class similar to that in the United States has gone further than it has in most of South America.

**According to Beals:** "There is still no real break in the fundamental distinction between those who work with their hands and those who do not. It is difficult for either North Americans or Latin Americans to realize the depth of the cleavage involved. The middle-class family with two cars and no servants, the banker who washes windows in preparation for his wife's tea party, the professor in overalls wielding a shovel in his garden — all are incomprehensible in Latin America.

It has been analysed that in India one's caste is determined by birth and in principle is fixed for life. Since caste is an important part of one's total social status, India comes close to exemplifying the theoretical polar type of "closed" class system. At the opposite pole ideologically is the "open" society, exemplified imperfectly by the United States. Whereas in a society fixed status is regarded as just and attempts to change class status are regarded as wrong or unthinkable, in an open society the fixation of status by law or by informal barriers is ideologically regarded as immoral, and personal ambition to rise is encouraged. We are speaking now of ideal types: actual societies are never perfectly open or perfectly closed in either their ideals or their practices. Every society allows some scope for personal ambitions, and every society cherishes some institutions that inevitably prevent equality of opportunity. We have seen, for example, that the institution of the family, with its fostering of family solidarity, inevitably gives certain advantages to children whose families of orientation happen to be favourably placed.

Again, according to an American Sociologist, 'In the broadest sense, as we have seen, a caste is a many large hereditary group of families that is strictly endogamous, one or two or more such groups posing a hierarchy within the society. In this sense, Negroes in the United States come close to being a caste, as do the whites as a whole. In a narrower sense such a group is not a caste unless the chief ideology of the society supports an idea of fixed class status. In this sense, the Negroes and the whites in the United States are not castes, for discrimination against Negroes is widely

regarded as a deplorable practice. There is enough moral opposition to it to warrant our saying that the inferior social position of Negroes as such is not institutionalized. On the other hand, there is also a secondary ideology supporting discrimination. Although it not intellectually respectable and is on the defensive, it nevertheless has enough believers and practitioners to preclude our calling the United States a full open society even ideologically?'

**According to Spiro**, a Sociologist, 'Regardless of ideological differences, in all societies there are factors hindering social mobility and other factors facilitating it. Most of the factors hindering mobility are connected with the existence of the family. In some of the socialist collective farms of Israel, children do not live with their parents, but they do have affectionate relations with them; presumably the better educated or more intelligent parents are able to communicate some advantages to their children. In other words, wherever the family is a recognized group there will be inequality of opportunity at least to the extent that some children will be more favourably socialized than others.' It has been correctly pointed out that some families are able to give their children the further advantage of wealth. The extent of inequality caused by differences in wealth and income obviously depends in the first place upon how great these differences are. It also depends upon the degree to which a society provides public services to all. Tax-supported education and medical services, for example, help to ensure that gifted children from the poorer classes will be better able to compete and thus reduce somewhat the advantage of wealth. Even then, however, private wealth will enable some families to give advantages to their less gifted children. This fact remains.

### **Some other theories of Stratification**

These theories concern the inequalities of wealth, status, profession, and caste in the society. The conditions of life are unequal. In the views of a scholar, "The economic heritage, social environment and the 'life chances' in which men are brought up are dissimilar and not equally viable to all. This makes the difference; and particularly, economic factor in social life determines in many ways the development of individual. There are no dearth of argument to justify this pre-existing inequality as primordial, yet there are others resentful of it on the grounds of positivism. That is the guideline."

There is another theory which we may call a no change theory. It is conservative. The conservative view, which is essentially conventional and popular, is best expressed in the words: think not the change, it may be worse still. Obviously, the power that is, the establishment never wants change. It holds the status quo. Aristotle strongly defended both private property and the institution of slavery. He defended slavery on the ground that some men are naturally free and others are not. It suggests that the defense of social inequality is rooted in the conceptions of natural human differences. This has been always the justification of the establishment.

**Conservative Indian View:** The ancient Indian view is just the reverse: Karma does not justify existing order. It is simply an effort to strike reconciliation. Varna dharma too has similar object. It does not plead for status quo, as one could change one's varna. Bhagwad Gita justifies revolution to eliminate the evil and to establish dharma. Conservatism has not been a characteristic of India though. It is progressive.

**Inequality and Darwin:** Some sociologies accepted this view. It is said, "That accepted inequality as natural, and held that the evolutionary selection enables more talented to far better than the less talented. They constructed an argument that inequality in social positions reflects the natural differences among men. The Darwinians got full support from William Graham Sumner, an American sociologist. They held their ground in nineteenth century, when Darwinism was a strong force. By the beginning of 20th century they had lost their intellectual appeal. The rise of working class, the emergence of mass based political parties and the popularity of the socialist ideas initial a new social order. The Italian social thinker Gaetano Mosca, taking note of the changed situation, argued that the necessary political organization of society to have a varied set of rewards in relations to varied levels of sacrifices required by some jobs, Davis and Moore acknowledge that one way of rewarding people is to contribute more to their sustenance and comfort levels.

**According to Davis and Moore** it was necessary to explain variations in social stratification among societies. They believed that variation in stratification system ultimately developed because of differences in what they called "functional importance" of positions and in "scarcity of personnel". In other words, a position of great functional importance to one type of society may not be important to



a different type of society. For this reason, there may be few individuals to fill a position of great importance to one society, while there may be no scarcity in another society because there is not even a requirement for that position.

As David and Moore saw it, societies are divided into various types "depending on the two sets of features: internal organizations and external conditions. The important aspect of internal organization are, whether they have a specialized division of labour, whether they are organized around family as their most important connections, sacred authority (in which there is little social mobility for people who are not religious leaders), and capitalism.

The external conditions that influence the form of social stratification are the level of development, foreign relations such as state of war with other nations, and the size of the society, because smaller societies are assumed to have lower degree of functional specialization. Thus, Davis and Moore present a view of structured inequality as being necessary to maintain social order and therefore society's survival, and as being based on general agreement among members of society.

**View of Gerhard Lenski:** He begins with the assumption that there is no perfect society, and the things material and non-material are in short supply; and men are unequally endowed by nature for this struggle. On the basis of this assumption he speaks of two laws of distribution: first that men shall share the product of their labours, and co-operate for their survival; and second that after the technological capacity and division of labour will have produced surplus, their power will determine the distribution of the surpluses.

**Another View:** Social stratification in our society, commenced with the chatur-varna system. Its origin remains unknown. It, however, gained prominence towards the end of the Rigvedic age. A person could be a Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, or Sudra. To be of one or the other order depended on one's choosing the Varna. Apparently, Varna divided the society; but it did not block the chance of social mobility and progress. There is another radical view, which believes, in divine right of kings. We discard it.



**The Jati System:** M.N. Srivastava has pointed out that the Jati system has also ceased to be the sole factor to determine the vocations of the group. It is however, a force by itself. The social stratification because of it has a peculiarity of its own in our society.

The essence of caste is the arrangement of hereditary groups in a hierarchy. The popular impression of the hierarchy is a clear-cut one, derived from the idea of varna, with Brahmins at the top and Harijans at the bottom. But, as a matter of fact, only the two opposite ends of the hierarchy are relatively fixed, in between, and especially in the middle regions, there is considerable room for debate regarding mutual position. In a dispute over rank each caste would cite as evidence of its superiority the items of its dietary the other caste groups from which it accepted or refused to accept cooked food and water, the rituals it performed and the customs it observed, traditional privileges and disabilities, and the myth of its origin.

**Property Factor:** It has been pointed out that 'The Estate system has basis of social stratifications in all the countries of Europe. It was based on inequality of all sorts; Economic—there are few landlords and the multitudes of serfs and slaves, Social—estate determined the social status and role, and the landless worked just for their protection. They were a mere service class; Political—the estate having been given for military service, made the holder the prop and pillar of the state and allowed him full authority over men and goods within his estate. The nobility and their important vassals enjoyed the privileges and the rest lived in misery. Nobility paid no taxes; neglected the feudal duties but secured all the dues for themselves. They had juristic immunities and political privileges; they made law their handmaid and held men under bondage.'

Position in the administration, also effect the social stratification.

**According to Spratt,** "Civil service personnel command a status higher than the members of the provincial service. Within the service too, members of higher rank command greater respect. The stratification is more distinctly clear in police and military service, where the uniform, badges and ribbons distinguish the officers." Spratt has indicated that "in the civil services grades are distinguished by the shape of chair upon which the official sits and the size of the desk at which the writes".

**Race and Ethnicity:** These factors too have largely effected stratification in a few societies. The authors of *Introducing Sociology* have explained the powerful groups for Stratification. “Entrenched and powerful groups justified their exploitation of minorities by branding the newcomers as inferior. The latter soon reacted to being labeled as members of a disvalued group: as ‘Wops’, ‘Wogs’, ‘Dagos’, ‘Pakis’, etc. Some of them were much surprised to find that this was the identity they now possessed (Pakistanis, for example, had never conceived of themselves as a ‘coloured people’ like West Indians): previously they may have thought of themselves as members of such-and-such a village, family or region. On arrival in the new land, or a reaching the city from countryside they had no ready-made ethnic consciousness at all relevant to city life, and in consequence, little solidarity or organization. Some of them formed quite novel voluntary associations to defend their interests, to assist each other through the tribulations of new life and to afford some expression of their religious, cultural and other values in their leisure time. Those who came from superior strata within their village or homeland were particularly shattered to find themselves looked down as inferiors.

The ethnic identity of ‘Negro’, then was the product of a relationship with a dominant other — the ‘White man’ — as owner and employer and authority-figure-in-general. The syndrome of defense to Whites, and passivity — even the attempt of many Negroes to ‘pass’ and become Whites — and the compensatory culture of mutual aid and religion typical of the plantation era gave way, under more autonomous conditions of life, wider educational horizons, and awareness of the possibility of change, to a new-found ‘Black pride’ — even ‘Black rage’ — that turned its back on the ‘Uncle Tom’ Negro of the past. The ‘Negro’ now became transformed into the ‘Black’, as the demand for ‘Black Power’ replaced humility and acquiescence. Similarly, under persecution, submissive Jews became transformed firstly, into Zionists, and then into militant Israelis.”

**Lord and Servants:** It is pointed out that the ruling class always holds itself superior to those over whom it rules. This explains the psychology behind the ‘lord’ and ‘servant’ relationship. Democracy did not demolish the distinctions. The political parties and pressure groups are the instruments in the hands of the ruling class to influence the communality and to keep themselves in power. In newly independent countries such as ours, political power rests with a ‘political class of new men’ of

no great substance who, by founding and dominating the party and the government, become new ruling elite. They have acquired such areas of influence, that a new entrant can hardly proceed on his own. He needs their support: the 'blessing's of the establishment.

**Class and Family:** According to Inkeles, finally, the existence of social classes as we have defined them depends of course on the existence of the family and one aspect of social class is the tendency towards class endogamy. This means in general a tendency to keep advantages in a relatively small group from generation to generation. In some societies legal arrangements reinforce some of the advantages due to family and add others. For example, in the United States children without scholarship have to pay fees even in the state colleges and universities. In civil service examinations, veterans are given an advantage.

Presumably the system of differential rewards for achievement has much the same effect in Russia that it has in the more old-fashioned capitalist countries; namely, to stimulate achievement in certain fields. The Soviet government has simply seized upon the powerful motive of concern for the future welfare of one's family. The chief difference from the capitalist system is in the kinds of achievement that are most rewarded; and this fact is not without ironic interest either.

**Stratification and Mobility:** It is pointed out that despite inequality of opportunity, a great deal of mobility occurs in every society. Even India is no exception. Downward mobility occurs whenever a family fails conspicuously to live up to the requirements of its caste. We noted that one of the chief activities of a caste council (panchayat) is to chastise and, if necessary, expel delinquent members; Expulsion means that a man's family must accept lower status with him unless they are willing to ostracize him. But, more important, upward mobility also occurs in India, although it probably is rarer than in Western countries. (In speaking of India, we shall confine our attention to the modern period, in which the caste system has been more rigid than in ancient times, although it is becoming looser again.