

# SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

MA FINAL



## INTRODUCTION

- Titanic – the iconic ship that came to a very tragic end. It collided with an iceberg and sank on April 15, 1912. The tragic incidence of Titanic reminds us a huge loss of more than 1,600 lives when it sank. Looking back at this terrible accident with a sociological eye, we note that some categories of passengers had much better chances of survival than others.
- Keeping in view that era's traditional ideas about gender, women and children were allowed to board the lifeboats first, with the result that 80 % of the people who died were men.
- Class, too, was at work. More than 60 % of people holding first-class tickets were saved because they were on the upper decks, where warnings were sounded first and lifeboats were accessible. Only 36 % of the second-class passengers survived, and of the third-class passengers on the lower decks, only 24% escaped drowning. The fate of the passengers on the Titanic dramatically illustrates how social inequality affects the way people live (Macionis, 2012)

## THE MEANING OF STRATIFICATION

- Strata; the plural of stratum means layers of rock, or sometimes soil.
- In geology the different layers found in rock, called stratification. The rocks with different layers of color that look like someone poured slightly different-colored layers on top of one another. Each layer is different from the other one.

## THE MEANING OF STRATIFICATION

- **Society's layers are made of people**, and society's resources are distributed unevenly throughout the layers.
- The people who have more resources represent the top layer of the social structure of stratification.
- Other groups of people, with progressively fewer and fewer resources, represent the lower layers of our society.
- Social stratification is the division of society into categories, ranks, or classes.
- These divisions lead to social inequality—the unequal sharing of resources and social rewards.
- Throughout history societies have used some system of classification such as kings and slaves, lords and serfs, rich and poor, landlords and labourers, upper and lower castes etc.

## DEFINING SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

- Social stratification is the hierarchical arrangement of large social groups based on their control over basic resources (Feagin and Feagin, 2008).
- Social Stratification is a system by which a society ranks categories of people in a hierarchy (John J. Macionis, 2012)

## DEFINING SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

- Social stratification refers to persistent patterns of social inequality in a society
- Social stratification is defined as a system by which society ranks categories of people in a hierarchy.
- Social stratification refers to arrangements of any social group or society into a hierarchy of positions that are unequal with regard to power, property, social evaluation, and/or social gratification(Malvin M. Tumin)

People are divided into ranked categories

There is an unequal distribution of desired resources, property, well-paying jobs

## DETERMINANTS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

- Stratification is usually based on;
- Power: the ability to impose one's will on others
- Prestige: the respect given by others
- Property: forms of wealth (economic resources)
- Wealth: the value of economic assets
- Occupation: High and low class professions
- Education: level and standard of education attained.
- Caste: Positions are ascribed, not achieved
- Class: Positions based on individual achievement

## FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

- According to the sociologists Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore (1945), inequality is not only unavoidable but also necessary for the smooth functioning of society.
1. All societies have important tasks that must be accomplished and certain positions that must be filled.
  2. Some positions are more important for the survival of society than others.
  3. The most important positions must be filled by the most qualified people.
  4. The positions that are the most important for society and that require talent, extensive training, or both must be the most highly rewarded.

The Davis–Moore thesis assumes that social stratification results in **meritocracy**—a hierarchy in which all positions are rewarded based on people’s ability and credentials.



## FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

- **Division of people is beneficial for society.** Some jobs are easy and everyone can do it (changing oil); some jobs are difficult and demand talents and extensive training (doctor).
- So the persons who are engaged in such type of jobs get more benefits and rewards for their contributions.
- **Stratification leads to more productive society.** Social Stratification provides motivation for different positions, particularly those which carry higher statuses and rewards. By distributing resources unequally, society motivates people to work harder and better in order to achieve a higher status.

people will be motivated to fill functionally important positions ( doctor, engineer)

## CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

- The rankings apply to social categories of people who share a common characteristic without necessarily interacting or identifying with one another. For example, wealthy people spend their lives differently from the underprivileged. Not all the wealthy are known to each other even living in the same society.
- Individuals from a particular category can change their rank (lower to middle);
- The category continues to exist even if individuals move out of it and enter into another category.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

- People's life experiences and (life chances) opportunities depend heavily on how their social category is ranked. There is a very clear difference between those who belong to upper-middle class and those from lower class who often work in factories or manual labor. It is difficult or impossible from lower class to achieve/ get what they want?
- Social stratification is universal but variable. It exists everywhere but in different ways, e.g; caste system in India differs from the stratification

Opportunities to provide material goods, positive living conditions, and favorable life experience

## CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

- The ranks of different social categories tend to change very slowly over time. **In** the industrialized societies, for example, only recently have women as a whole begun to achieve equality with men.
- Social stratification is a trait of society, not simply a reflection of individual differences.

## CASTE SYSTEM

- A caste system is a system of social inequality in which people's status is permanently determined at birth based on their parents' ascribed characteristics.
- Permanent** and **ascribed status** determined at birth.
- Close system** where individuals live out their lives in the rigid categories assigned to them, without the possibility of change for the better or worse.

## CASTE SYSTEM

- **Endogamy**, people are allowed to marry only within their own group.
- Limited Choice of Occupation
- Cultural beliefs and values sustain caste systems. Hinduism reinforced the caste system by teaching that people should accept their fate in life and work hard as a moral duty.

## Indian Caste System:

- Philip Oldenburg
  - A caste (*jati* in Sanskrit) is a social class to which a person belongs at birth and which is ranked against other castes, typically on a continuum of perceived purity and pollution.
- Divided into four (4) Castes (*Varna*)
  1. **BRAHMAN**: Priests / earthly gods (Head)
  2. **KASHATRIYA**: Warriors (Arms)
  3. **VAISHYA**: Farmers and Merchants (Belly)
  4. **SHUDRA**: Labourers/ servants of other castes (Foot)

Caste guides everyday life by keeping people in the company of “their own kind”. Norms reinforce this practice by teaching, for example, that a “purer” person of a higher caste is “polluted” by contact with someone of lower standing.

## Class System

- Class is a group of people with similar level of wealth, influence and status.
- The class system is a type of stratification based on the ownership and control of resources and on the type of work people do.
- The status is **achieved** than ascribed. Though individuals born in wealthy families and influential families have better access to resources, and opportunities.
- It is an **open system** with increased social mobility. may The individuals become members of a class other than that of their parents



## CLASS SYSTEM

- Class is **Economic Group**. A class is group of people who have similar level of wealth and income
- Feelings: Equality, Inferiority, Superiority
- **Exogamy**- the custom of marrying outside a community, clan, or tribe . compatibility is more important ( Neo-local marriages)

## COMPARISON

### **Class**

1. Social ranking based primarily on economic position. Class is not inherited, but acquired through ability.
2. Open System; It is possible for individual to change his class
3. Marriage outside class is allowed without being thrown out of the society
4. There is no restriction on members in a class

### **CASTE**

1. Caste is acquired by birth that determine their way of life, opportunities, and social customs.
2. Closed System; It is not possible to leave the caste
3. Impossible for a person to marry out of caste without social annoyance
4. Caste imposes many restrictions on its members.

## UPPER CLASS

- These are elite families with great wealth who dominate the economic system of every society.
- There is a concept of 'old money' those with vast inherited wealth and 'new money' a group of people who recently have achieved success and wealth.
- They are few and far between in any society, and makes about 1% of the whole population.
- They have their own norms which are distinct from the other groups.
- They enjoy all luxuries of life.
- The upper class of Pakistan has landlords, politicians, and business tycoons.

## MIDDLE CLASS

- The members of the middle class earn their money by working (small business owners) or doing professional jobs( as managers, doctors, lawyers, professors, and teachers).
- Some of the individuals are highly educated professional people with high incomes, such as doctors, lawyers, while some may be less educated people with lower incomes, such as small business owners, and clerks.

## MIDDLE CLASS

- They earn enough to live well than lower class, but are financially weaker than upper class.
- Holding a relatively secure job is the single most important characteristic of the M-class.
- Social mobility is found highest in this class.
- This class is the best example of DEFERRED GRATIFICATION PATTERN , which means, postponing immediate enjoyment in order to gain a big goal!

Most parents ignore their needs and spend their saved money for their children's college fee.

## LOWER CLASS

- The members of lower class have a low educational level, are not skilled, and work at minimum-wage jobs.(factory workers, daily wagers, seasonal laborers, etc)
- They do not have enough earning to support themselves, some may depend on public assistance (social safety nets) or lend money from others for their survival.

## LOWER CLASS

- Social mobility is the lowest in them as they are engaged in manual labor that is underpaid so they have no opportunity for career advancement.
- Rate of deviance is high in them.
- Most of the Members of this class are living below poverty line. They lack the means to meet their basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter

The term social mobility refers to the movement of individuals and groups between different socio-economic positions.

Vertical mobility means movement up or down.