

**Indira Gandhi National Open University  
Elective Course in Sociology-14  
Society and Stratification  
Tutor Marked Assignment (TMA)**

**Maximum Marks: 100**

**Weightage: 30%**

**Programme Code: BDP**

**Course Code: ESO-14**

**Assignment Code: ESO-14/AST/TMA/2017-2018**

**Answer all the questions.**

**SECTION – I**

**Answer the following in about 500 words each.**

**Marks**

- |    |                                                                |    |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. | Critically examine the functionalist theory of stratification. | 20 |
| 2. | Discuss religious ethnicity as a basis of stratification.      | 20 |

**SECTION – II**

**Answer the following in about 250 words each.**

- |    |                                                                         |    |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 3. | Discuss the stratification system among the tribes of North East India. | 12 |
| 4. | Examine the role of social institutions in gender stereotyping.         | 12 |
| 5. | Discuss the nature of middle class in Post- independent India.          | 12 |
| 6. | What is social mobility? Discuss its various dimensions.                | 12 |

**SECTION – III**

**Answer the following in about 100 words each.**

- |    |                                       |    |
|----|---------------------------------------|----|
| 7. | What is westernisation?               | 06 |
| 8. | Differentiate between sex and gender. | 06 |

## IGNOU ASSIGNMENT GURU (2017-2018)

# E.S.O.-14

## Society and Stratification

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**Answer all the questions.**

### SECTION – I

**Answer the following question.**

**Q. 1. Critically examine the functionalist theory of stratification.**

**Ans. The Functional Approach:** The functionalist approach is primarily concerned with the function of social stratification; with its contribution to the maintenance and well-being of society. They believed stratification is inevitable. An individual can't fulfil all his needs by him self so different individual with different abilities are needed to meet the different needs of society. Different abilities are not important equally so different persons are rewarded differently as per the importance given to the function by the society. So this gives rise to stratification and hierarchy.

**T. Parsons:** T. Parsons believed social stratification as both inevitable and functional for society. It is inevitable because it derives from shared values which are a necessary part of all social systems. It is functional because it serves to integrate various groups in society. Inequalities of power and prestige benefit all members of society since they serve to further collective goals which are based on shared values.

**Davis and Moore:** American sociologists Davis and Moore regard social stratification as a 'functional necessity' for all societies. They argued that all societies need some mechanism for insuring effective role allocation and performance. Social stratification is such mechanism which attaches unequal rewards and privileges to the different positions in society. A major function of stratification is to match the most able people with functionally most important positions. On the basis of two criteria, the importance of a function is decided. Firstly, by the 'degree to which a position is functionally unique' and secondly, by the 'degree to which other positions are dependent on the one in question'.

**Tumin's critique:** Tumin begins by questioning the adequacy of the measurement of the functional importance of positions as given by Davis and Moore. He questions the view that social stratification functions to integrate the social system. He argues that differential rewards can encourage hostility, suspicion and distrust among the various segments of a society. Stratification can also weaken social integration. He suggests that relatively open system of stratification erect barriers to the motivation and recruitment of talent. To him division of labour is a necessity, but not social stratification as emphasized by Davis and Moore. The functional approach doesn't explain the range of inequality and ignored the aspect of power and conflict in the society.

Tumin started his theory by questioning the adequacy of Davis and Moore's measurement of the functional importance of position. He believed there are many occupations which accord little prestige or economic reward can be seen as vital to society. Tumin argued that functionalist ignored the influence of power on the unequal distribution

of reward. Tumin rejected the idea of unequal reward as a motivating factor because he found that social stratification can often act as barrier to motivation and recruitment of talent. He also pointed the fact that there is possibility that those who occupy highly rewarded position will erect barrier to recruitment. He argued that stratification, by its very nature, can never adequately perform the functions which functionalists assign to it. He rejected the view that social stratification functions to integrate the social system and said that reward can encourage hostility, suspicion and distrust among various segments of a society so stratification is a divisive rather than integrating force. In conclusion, Tumin said that in their enthusiastic search for the positive functions of stratification, the functionalists have tended to ignore its many dysfunctions.

**Q. 2. Discuss religious ethnicity as a basis of stratification.**

**Ans. Ethnicity and Stratification:** Ethnicity is a feeling among a collectivity with a larger society characterized by elements. Like real or imaginary common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past as, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements such as kinship patterns, religious affiliations, language or dialectical forms, etc. Also implied is some consciousness of kind among the group members. Ethnic groups are different from nationality.

Anthony Smith defines ethnic or ethnic community as a social group those whose members share a sense of common origin, claim a common and distinctive history and destiny, possess one or more distinctive characteristics and feel a sense of collective uniqueness and solidarity. He also stated that modern ethnic revivals are taking the form of nationalism.

**Nationalism and ethnicity:** Nationalism refers to the expressed desire of people to establish and maintain a self governing political unity. Ethnicity may become nationalism and nationalism is always based on real or assumed ethnic ties. An ethnic group becomes a nation when ethnic identity is crystallized and institutionalized by acquiring a political agenda.

According to Worsley, feeling of deprivation is the result of inequality, material deprivation and denial of cultural identity. When the deprived or subjugated group fail to achieve success according to the norms established by the dominant group, the nature of their response tends to be ethnic antagonism.

Thus the groups are disadvantaged not just because of class or caste but also because of ethnicity. India witnessed number of ethnic movements in last few decades.

- The demand for a separate nation based on religion or language (demand for Khalistan and separate Tamil Nadu state).
- The demand for more political - administrative autonomy within the Indian state (demand of Gorkhaland).
- The demand of indigenous people to control entry of migrants (activities of ULFA in Assam).
- The demand for the expulsion of people from other regions within a state (tribals demand in Jharkhand to expel Biharies, Marwaries and Bengalis).
- Competition by ethnic groups for obtaining scarce resources (demand for Telengana and Vidarba).
- The demand to expel migrants from other linguistic states who come to work and reside in metropolitan centres (mobilization against Biharis in Mumbai).

**The Nature of Ethnic Groups:** Ethnic groups are those groups in a society which are located at disadvantage either to the state or the dominant group of society or more often to both. In a plural country like ours we have to take ethnicity as principle of stratification. Some people may belong to an economically affluent class and yet be culturally disadvantaged for not belonging to the dominate group which is often perceived as the norm.

The Japanese American of three generations may be still asked if he is an American. An English American of one year migration will be accepted as, American because he is white, Christian and English speaking. Studies on ethnic groups together in a developed society like U.S.A or in India raise issues linked to the basic questions of relations with the majority culture, of assimilation versus accommodation of poverty, inequality, isolation and discrimination.

**SECTION – II**

**Answer the following question.**

**Q. 3. Discuss the stratification system among the tribes of North East India.**

**Ans. Social Stratification of Tribals in the North-East:** Traditionally the system of stratification in the North-east region used to be based on age, sex, kinship etc. Under the process of modernization, industrialization and

democratization the system of social stratification underwent drastic change. Now the system of stratification is based on achievement. Earlier the stratification system was based on relationship to land, lineage, ritual status, economic, social and political dominance. As per the Garo tradition, the land meant for shifting cultivation and homestead plots belonged to the maharis king and the right of management of a king is vested in the hand of a particular family.

### **Mizo Administration**

Mizo administration had the institution of chieftainship. Each village and all its activities are governed by the chief. The youngest or the eldest son of the chief depending on the rule of clans would succeed him and his property after his death. Other sons were given certain number of households in marriage by the chief to enable him start his own household independently. The chief was assisted by council of elders known as Upa and Zawlbuk. The village black smith (Thirdending) the village priest (Puithiam) etc. they received their salary in kind for their service to the village. The Mizo chief used to get paddy tax (Fathang), meat tax (Schhiah), fines (Salam), and building and repairing of chief's house was the duty of villagers. In post independence period this system of stratification got replaced by class basis of stratification.

### **Power and Prestige among Nagas:**

Unequal power and prestige also existed among the Nagas. Sema Nagas were stratified into different groups Kekami (chiefs), chockomi (chief's associates) mughamis (commoners), Akahemi (Chiefs dependents) and Ankeshimi (chief's field cultivator). A Patanis tribe of Arunachal Pradesh is an agriculturalist tribe they live in a rigidly stratified society. This society is stratified into two classes as with different statuses Upper class which is consisted of members who owned a large part of the land and enjoyed political power and another class is the lower class whose members have their own land and some members are domestic slaves.

### **The Jayantiyas and Khasis**

The Jayantias were differentiated into different groups like king, governor (Dolois), village headman (wahren ch Nog), commoners and all categories of officials (myntries, pat as, Laskars, Sangat, Mayi) Jayantiyas and khasis are matrilineal tribes but gender discrimination are clearly visible in their inheritance laws, ownership and control pattern. Ownership is passed on from mother to daughter but the right to control lies with men. Women face discrimination in allocation and management of common property resources, in matters of marriage and divorce, Restricting marriage of women outside the group was another example of such discrimination.

### **Traditional Ranking System**

The traditional ranking system got transformed to class based achieved system of stratification. British rule broke the isolation of the North - Eastern tribal regions. Entry of Christian missionaries linked those tribals with rest of the society. In post independence period as a result of introduction of market economy, extension of protective discrimination and new schemes and policies of the government for the up liftment of tribals, and the process of democratization, many changes came at various levels. A new middle class emerged who brought change in the existing structure replacing the traditional relation of exploitation based on ascribed status by class system based on achieved status. All these factors also created the need for protection and preservation of their distinct identity.

#### **Q. 4. Examine the role of social institutions in gender stereotyping.**

**Ans. Role of Social Institution:** In our society, all economic, political, religious, social, and cultural institutions are by and large controlled by men. The family 'religion, caste' marriage, law are the pillars of our social structure. The system makes patriarchy seem invisible it also makes it seem natural.

- 1. Gender and religion:** Most modern religions are defining male authority as supreme. Goddesses have been replaced by Gods. All major religions have been created, interpreted and controlled by upper class and upper caste men, they have defined the great philosophical teaching ethics and behaviour about the duties and rights of men and women and their relations. In India, inspite of the fact that it is a secular country, a persons legal identity with regard to marriage, divorce and inheritance is determined by his on her religion.
- 2. Gender, Family and Marriage:** The instution of family and marriage enforce the domination of man over women. The family is most important for socializing the next generation in patriarchal value. According to Gerda Learner, the family plays an important role. In creating a hierarchical system and keeping order in society.

Jessie Bernard presents a devastating portrait of the institution of marriage she said institutionally marriage empowers the role of husband and expects the wives to be dependent.

She said experientially there are two marriages in any institutional marriage the marriage of man in which he holds the belief of being constrained and burdened while experiencing authority, independence and emotional services— Another is wife's marriage, in which she affirms the cultural belief of fulfilment, while experiencing powerlessness, dependence, stress and exploitation. So she believe that marriage is good for men but not for women.

**Gender and caste:** The purity and pollution concept is cardinal to caste system and to the value system which governs women's decorum. To maintain the purity of the caste, women's sexuality has to be controlled, it is claimed that contact with low caste men contaminates the blood of high caste women. So it emphasized endogamy. It can be observed that the higher one goes in the caste hierarchy, the stronger the control over the women. Pre puberty marriage, prohibition of widow remarriage, seclusion etc are high caste practices with prestigious value attached to them. By caste law, women of some law castes such as Tiyan and Parayar were not allowed to wear clothes above their loins.

**Q. 5. Discuss the nature of middle class in Post-independent India.**

**Ans. Growth of Middle Classes After Independence:** After independence, it was the middle class who became the political elite and captured power. The process of nation building was started. It was a state led exercise. For this, we embarked upon the planned development. The government of India made several plans and programmes for different sector of our economy. For the execution of these plans, the services of huge trained people were required. So there was massive expansion of government services.

To meet the demand of trained personal, higher and technical educational institutions and universities were started in different regions of our country. It created more professional middle class.

Because of emphasis on industrialization industrial sector grew. With establishment of various industries there occurred rapid urbanization. With growth in urbanization the demand of various services increased that includes banking insurance, hospital, hotel, press recreation centre, teaching etc. So service sector also expanded.

After independence, the new political elite initiated the capitalist transformation of agriculture through land reform and green revolution. Land reform conferred ownership right to twenty million family in country side. Green revolution technology increased the productivity of land. Such economic development in rural area motivated people to have higher aspirations. Thus it created rural middle class. They are being mobilized by the politicians for the regional interests. As a result of policy of protective discrimination and abolition of untouchability, people from the Dalit caste groups could get education and employment in govt. jobs. Now these people are forming a Dalit middle class.

The growing IT sector today is contributing in the expansion of service sector. People from different socioeconomic background are joining this, thus they are also today constituting the major portion of middle class.

**Q. 6. What is social mobility? Discuss its various dimensions.**

**Ans.** Mobility means movement. The term social mobility refers to any movement of individuals, families or groups between different sectors of society. The sociological meaning of the term social mobility is the movement of individuals or groups within different levels of social stratification. According to P. A. Sorokin social mobility is the shift of position may be undertaken by an individual or social object or value across the social structure.

Any shift of position in society experienced by an individual or a group has its impact not only on the individual or group, but also on the whole society. So the concept of social mobility is very crucial in sociology to understand these changes and the hierarchical structure that operates in society.

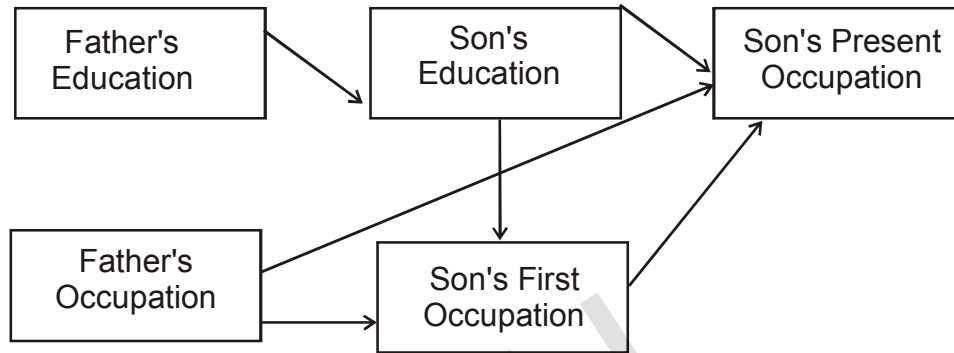
**Dimensions And Implications of Mobility**

Following are the several dimensions to understand social mobility.

- 1. Pace of Mobility:** On the basis of pace of mobility, there are two ways of studying social mobility. When the pace of mobility is rapid, mobility of an individual within his own adult lifetime is possible and that is called intra-generational mobility. When the pace of mobility is slow and gradual, it takes more time and spreads over generations. It includes at least two generations. Mobility across the generations is called inter-generation mobility. It popularly known as 'career mobility'.

Peter Blau and Duncan in their study of American occupational structure found different factors influencing a person’s change of moving upward. They are amount of education, the nature of persons first job and father’s occupation .

Below is a figurative illustration of these factors.



- 2. **Range of Mobility:** The social distance covered by the individual in his mobility is denoted by the term ‘range’ so the mobility can be short-ranged shift or long range mobility. Frank Parkin stressed on the instances of long range’ mobility. But Duncan and Blau concluded that long range mobility is rare.
- 3. **Possibilities of Mobility:** Possibilities of mobility largely depends on the type of society. A society may be open or closed. Mobility is not possible if a society is closed and rigid .Very little vertical mobility is possible there. Caste based society in India is an example of closed society. But it is not closed in strict sense . Pre-modern Colombia and India more or less approximate such type.

Mobility is facilitated if a society is flexible and open. Modern Industrial societies are the open society. Here vertical mobility is possible, though few barrier does exist. Industrialization is followed by urbanization. It contributes to vertical social mobility because achievement criteria becomes more important in determining status of individual.

Government also intervenes in the stratification system in industrial societies as welfare nation by taking welfare measures for the upliftment of poor and down trodden.

- 4. **Comparative social mobility:** P.A.Sorokin claimed through his empirical finding that the change to be mobile is greater in the United States than in any European society. Seymour Lipset and Reinhard Bendix studied the industrial societies of European continent and divided the occupational structure into manual and normal and showed that there is little difference from one industrial country to another . Gerhard Lenski observed that the mobility rate is fairly similar in individual societies. On the basis of his finding US shows highest mobility rate(34%) followed by Sweden (32%) , Great Britain (31%), Denmark (30%) , Norway (30%) and France (29%).

Frank Parkin studied that communist countries of eastern Europe, and found that dominant class people are able to transmit competitive advantage to their own children like the capitalist countries. Privileged class are in a position to preserve higher position for their children. But there is little chance for the social mobility of peasants and manual worker.

The pace of mobility accelerated with industrialization. Today we have arrived at advanced industrial societies. It is dominated by service sector. This increased the white-collar and middle class occupation. This development accounted for social mobility along with individual effort. But many scholar argued that capitalist path of industrialization has resulted in widespread downward mobility. Marxist scholars showed that there is continuous and systematic degradation in labourers’ social position in industrial society. Thus the cosequence has been large-scale downward mobility.

### SECTION – III

**Answer the following question.**

**Q. 7. What is westernisation?**

**Ans. Westernization:** Westernization is a process which refers to adoption of western way of life, modern education, modern occupations etc. In India westernization began only after the establishment of British rule. Westernization has a significant bearing on caste mobility. A number of inter-related factor are responsible for this.

British rule, introduction of new means of transportation and communication had far reaching consequences for mobility westernization accelerated the mobility process.

**Q. 8. Differentiate between sex and gender.**

**Ans.** Gender difference is the most ancient and most universal form of Social differentiation between types of human being. Sex refers to biological differences and gender to socially influenced characteristics. In our society men and women play different roles. Sex role is the role played by an individual due to his or her sex. With passage of time this role got stereotyped. Gender role serotype is a set of biased generalization about the roles of men and women in the society. In male dominated society women's role are given a very inferior status. The main cause for this is patriarchy. Patriarchy means a system, where women are kept subordinate to men According to Sylvia wallaby "patriarchy is a system of S. structure and practices in which men dominates, oppress and exploit women." It is linked to the ideology that men are superior of women that women are and should be controlled by men and that women are part of main's property. It believes that the sex role is such that men are for production and women for reproduction. ■■

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