



FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES

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Lecture-7



Social Stratification: Definition, Theories, Types, and Examples

Social Stratification: Definition

A society where stratification does not exist is a sentence which will always be illogical and untrue. Now the question is what stratification is. A system which has been followed by society from a generation in which there is some kind of classification between people in the name of race, caste, creed etc.

There will be some basis depending on which there can be differences between rights and power between subgroups. You can see from the early times wherein foreign lands, power was in hand of upper-class people and churches. It was the time when discrimination between people can be seen openly adding to Social Stratification.

In India also, from early times there was a subdivision of society in four groups namely Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras. Social Stratification is something which has been visible and emphasized its effects on society.

It is not necessary that a society sees stratification on the basis of caste or race. Sometimes this difference of power and rights exist on the basis of sex also. Males and females are given rights differently in a society, which has been discouraged strongly by some of the sociologists like Karl Marx and Lalacau. Ogburn and Nimkoff were some of the sociologists who defined Stratification as the process in which people are assigned rights or power in an order from high to low order. Melvin Tumin also agreed to their point of classification done on the basis of power, economic condition, position in society etc.

Another sociologist Lundberg gave a basic definition in which he said Stratification is distinguishing people in the name of power and termed them as two categories via lower and higher.

DETAILS OF THE WAY IN WHICH SOCIETY IS CLASSIFIED OR STRATIFIED

1. **Economic condition-** There has always been a barrier between rich and poor people. The amount a man earns tells his power in society.
2. **Social Class-** It is a classification which is done both on the basis of economy and caste. It is popularly followed in India.
3. **Gender-** It is a basis of classification from the ancient times were for a long time male society dominated by women.
4. **Religion-** Every man his/her own religion, but this is also a basis of stratification from a long time. In India, although it is said that it is a unity in diversity kind of country but on several occasion, people can be seen differentiation other religion openly. For example, the beef ban has become a hot topic because of the religion issue involved.
5. **Social Network-** It is a phenomenon which is generally observed in elite people. They have connections with other high-class people making them the most powerful.

Stratification majorly involves two kind of system in which they take place:-

1. **Open System**

It is a system in which stratification is done on the basis of merit. Achieved status can be linked to this system.

2. **Closed System**

It is a system in which stratification is done on the basis of parental influence, or say the position of parents in the society. This system can be linked with Ascribed status. It is a system which has given power to an individual on the basis of his/her birth.