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**QUESTION**

1. Discuss the consequence of social stratification in the society.

2. What is social mobility citing relevant examples, discuss how social stratification system can impact social mobility in not positively and negatively.

**Answer**

**What is social stratification**

1)Social stratification refers to a system by which a society ranks categories of people in a hierarchy. In the United States, it is perfectly clear that some groups have greater status, power, and wealth than other groups. These differences are what led to social stratification. Social stratification refers to society's categorization of its people into groups based on [socioeconomic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socioeconomic_status" \o "Socioeconomic status) factors like [wealth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wealth" \o "Wealth), [income](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Income" \o "Income), race, education, gender, [occupation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job" \o "Job), and [social status](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_status" \o "Social status), or derived [power](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power_%28social_and_political%29" \o "Power (social and political)) (social and political). As such, stratification is the relative social position of persons within a social group, category, geographic region, or [social unit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_unit" \o "Social unit). SOCIAL stratification is the main reason for relational set of inequalities in economic, social, political and ideological dimensions. It is a system whereby people rank and evaluate each other. On the basis of such evaluation, one is rewarded with more wealth, authority, power and prestige. Social stratification causes social disparity and many problems as it is an unjust system with monopoly of power and wealth in a particular group. It affects life chances, lifestyles and prestige. It creates emotional stress and depression for the people belonging to lower social stratum as they have unequal access to wealth, power and prestige.

**Types of social stratification**

· Class: A person's economic position in a society, based on birth and individual achievement. Weber differs from Marx in that he does not see this as the supreme factor in stratification. Weber notes how corporate executives control firms they typically do not own; Marx would have placed these people in the [proletariat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proletariat" \o "Proletariat) despite their high incomes by virtue of the fact they sell their labor instead of owning capital.

· Status: A person's prestige, social honor, or popularity in a society. Weber notes that political power is not rooted in capital value solely, but also in one's individual status. Poets or saints, for example, can have extensive influence on society despite few material resources.

· Power: A person's ability to get their way despite the resistance of others, particularly in their ability to engage [social change](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_change" \o "Social change). For example, individuals in government jobs, such as an employee of the [Federal Bureau of Investigation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Bureau_of_Investigation" \o "Federal Bureau of Investigation), or a member of the [United States Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Congress" \o "United States Congress), may hold little property or status but still wield considerable [social power](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power_%28social_and_political%29" \o "Power (social and political)).

**Consequence of social stratification in the society**

1. [Economic inequality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_inequality" \o "Economic inequality)

Strictly [quantitative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quantitative_research" \o "Quantitative research) economic variables are more useful to [describing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Descriptive_statistics" \o "Descriptive statistics) social stratification than [explaining](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Explanatory_power" \o "Explanatory power) how social stratification is constituted or maintained. [Income](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Income" \o "Income) is the most common variable used to describe stratification and associated [economic inequality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_inequality" \o "Economic inequality) in a society. However, the distribution of individual or [household](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Household" \o "Household) accumulation of [surplus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Excess_supply" \o "Excess supply) and [wealth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wealth" \o "Wealth) tells us more about variation in individual [well-being](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Well-being" \o "Well-being) than does income, alone. Wealth variables can also more vividly illustrate salient variations in the well-being of groups in stratified societies. [Gross Domestic Product](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gross_Domestic_Product" \o "Gross Domestic Product) (GDP), especially per capita GDP, is sometimes used to describe economic inequality and stratification at the [international](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_inequality" \o "International inequality) or global level.

2. [Social status](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_status" \o "Social status)

Social variables, both quantitative and [qualitative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qualitative_research" \o "Qualitative research), typically provide the most explanatory power in [causal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Causality" \o "Causality) research regarding social stratification, either as [independent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independent_variable" \l "Independent_variable" \o "Independent variable) variables or as [intervening variables](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intervening_variable" \o "Intervening variable). Three important social variables include [gender](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_roles" \o "Gender roles), [race](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_%28human_classification%29" \o "Race (human classification)), and [ethnicity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnicity" \o "Ethnicity), which, at the least, have an intervening effect on social status and stratification in most places throughout the world.[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_stratification" \l "cite_note-Hill1998-26) Additional variables include those that describe other ascribed and achieved characteristics such as [occupation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_%28role%29" \o "Job (role)) and [skill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skill" \o "Skill) levels, [age](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ageing" \o "Ageing), [education](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education" \o "Education) level, education level of parents, and [geographic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography" \o "Geography) area. Some of these variables may have both causal and intervening effects on social status and stratification. For example, absolute age may cause a low income if one is too young or too old to perform productive work. The social perception of age and its role in the workplace, which may lead to [ageism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ageism" \o "Ageism), typically has an intervening effect on [employment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employment" \o "Employment) and income.

Social scientists are sometimes interested in quantifying the degree of economic stratification between different social categories, such as men and women, or workers with different levels of education. An index of stratification has been recently proposed by Zhou for this purpose.

3. [Gender inequality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_inequality" \o "Gender inequality)

Gender is one of the most pervasive and prevalent social characteristics which people use to make social distinctions between individuals. Gender distinctions are found in economic-, kinship- and caste-based stratification systems.[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_stratification" \l "cite_note-28) [Social role](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_role" \o "Social role) expectations often form along sex and gender lines. Entire societies may be classified by social scientists according to the [rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rights" \o "Rights) and [privileges](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Privilege_%28social_inequality%29" \o "Privilege (social inequality)) afforded to men or women, especially those associated with ownership and inheritance of [property](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Property" \o "Property). In [patriarchal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarchal" \o "Patriarchal) societies, such rights and privileges are [normatively](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norm_%28social%29" \o "Norm (social)) granted to men over women; in [matriarchal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matriarchal" \o "Matriarchal) societies, the opposite holds true. Sex- and gender-based [division of labor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Division_of_labor" \o "Division of labor) is historically found in the annals of most societies and such divisions increased with the advent of [industrialization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industrialization" \o "Industrialization). Sex-based [wage discrimination](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wage_discrimination" \o "Wage discrimination) exists in some societies such that men, typically, receive higher wages than women for the same type of work. Other differences in employment between men and women lead to an overall gender-based pay-gap in many societies, where women as a category earn less than men due to the types of jobs which women are offered and take, as well as to differences in the number of hours worked by women. These and other gender-related values affect the distribution of income, wealth, and property in a given social order.

4. [Racism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racism" \o "Racism)

Racism consists of both [prejudice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prejudice" \o "Prejudice) and [discrimination](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discrimination" \o "Discrimination) based in social perceptions of observable biological differences between peoples. It often takes the form of [social actions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_actions" \o "Social actions), practices or beliefs, or [political systems](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_system" \o "Political system) in which different races are perceived to be ranked as inherently superior or inferior to each other, based on presumed shared inheritable traits, abilities, or qualities. In a given society, those who share racial characteristics socially perceived as undesirable are typically under-represented in positions of social power, i.e., they become a [minority category](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minority_group" \o "Minority group) in that society. Minority members in such a society are often subjected to discriminatory actions resulting from majority policies, including [assimilation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_assimilation" \o "Cultural assimilation), [exclusion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_exclusion" \o "Social exclusion), [oppression](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oppression" \o "Oppression), [expulsion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exile" \o "Exile), and [extermination](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genocide" \o "Genocide). Overt racism usually feeds directly into a stratification system through its effect on social status. For example, members associated with a particular race may be assigned a [slave status](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery" \o "Slavery), a form of oppression in which the majority refuses to grant basic [rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rights" \o "Rights) to a minority that are granted to other members of the society. More [covert racism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covert_racism" \o "Covert racism), such as that which many scholars posit is practiced in more contemporary societies, is socially hidden and less easily detectable. Covert racism often feeds into stratification systems as an intervening variable affecting income, educational opportunities, and housing. Both overt and covert racism can take the form of [structural inequality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Structural_inequality" \o "Structural inequality) in a society in which [racism has become institutionalized](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institutional_racism" \o "Institutional racism).

5. [Ethnocentricity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnocentricity" \o "Ethnocentricity)

Ethnic prejudice and discrimination operate much the same as do racial prejudice and discrimination in society. In fact, only recently have scholars begun to differentiate race and ethnicity; historically, the two were considered to be identical or closely related. With the scientific development of [genetics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genetics" \o "Genetics) and the [human genome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_genome" \o "Human genome) as fields of study, most scholars now recognize that [race](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_%28human_classification%29" \o "Race (human classification)) is socially defined on the basis of biologically determined characteristics that can be observed within a society while ethnicity is defined on the basis of [culturally](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture" \o "Culture) learned behavior. Ethnic identification can include shared cultural heritage such as [language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language" \o "Language) and [dialect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialect" \o "Dialect), [symbolic systems](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbolic_system" \o "Symbolic system), [religion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion" \o "Religion), [mythology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mythology" \o "Mythology) and [cuisine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuisine" \o "Cuisine). As with race, ethnic categories of persons may be socially defined as minority [categories](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_groups" \o "Ethnic groups) whose members are under-represented in positions of social power. As such, ethnic categories of persons can be subject to the same types of majority policies. Whether ethnicity feeds into a stratification system as a direct, causal factor or as an intervening variable may depend on the level of ethnographic entrism within each of the various ethnic populations in a society, the amount of conflict over scarce resources, and the relative social power held within each ethnic category.

2.) **What is social mobility and social stratification?**

Social mobility is the movement of individuals, families, households, or other categories of people within or between [social strata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_stratification" \o "Social stratification) in a society. It is a change in [social status](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_status" \o "Social status) relative to one's current social location within a given society. It is movement within between layers or tiers in an [open system](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_system_%28systems_theory%29" \l "Social_sciences" \o "Open system (systems theory)) of [social stratification](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_stratification" \o "Social stratification). Open stratification systems are those in which at least some value is given to [achieved status characteristics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achieved_status" \o "Achieved status) in a society. The movement can be in a downward or upward direction. " Social mobility is any change in social position." It can be vertical and horizontal in nature. Any change in the physical position of a person or a group is horizontal mobility. If a bank manager is transferred from one branch to another, it is horizontal mobility as the social status of the person is not changing. Markers for social mobility, such as education and class, are used to predict, discuss, and learn more about an individual or a group's mobility in society. In all societies people differ from each other on the basis of their age, sex and personal characteristics. Human society is not homogeneous but heterogeneous. Apart from the natural differences, human beings

are also differentiated according to socially approved criteria. So socially differentiated men are treated as socially unequal from the point of view of enjoyment of social rewards like status, power, income etc. That may be called social inequality. The term social inequality simply refers to the existence of socially created inequalities. Social stratification is a particular form of social inequality. All societies arrange their members in terms of superiority, inferiority and equality. Stratification is a process of interaction or differentiation whereby some people come to rank higher than others.

Social stratification involves two phenomena

1. differentiation of individuals or groups on the basis of possession of certain characteristics whereby some individuals or groups come to rank higher than others.
2. the ranking of individuals according to some basis of evaluation.

### Social Stratification and Social Mobility:

Social mobility refers to the movement within the social structure, from one social position to another. It means a change in social status. All societies provide some opportunity for social mobility. But the societies differ from each other to extent in which individuals can move from one class or status level to another.

It is said that the greater the amount of social mobility, the more open the class structure. The concept of social mobility has fundamental importance in ascertaining the relative “openness” of a social structure. The nature, forms, direction and magnitude of social mobility depends on the nature and types of social stratification. Sociologists study social mobility in order to find out the relative ‘openness’ of a social structure.

Any group that improves its standard will also improve its social status. But the rate of social mobility is not uniform in all the countries. It differs from society to society from time to time. In India the rate of mobility is naturally low because of agriculture being the predominant occupation and the continuity of caste system as compared to the other countries of the world.

**Social mobility is of two types:**

(i) Vertical mobility

(ii) Horizontal mobility

**(i) Vertical mobility:**

It refers to the movement of people from one stratum to another or from one status to another. It brings changes in class, occupation and power. It involves movement fromlower to higher or higher to lower. There are two types of vertical mobility. One is upward and other is downward mobility. When an individual moves from lower status to higher status, it is called upward mobility. For example, if the son of a peon joins a bank as an officer, it is said to be upward social mobility but if he loses the job due to any other reason or inefficiency, he is downwardly mobile from his previous job. So downward mobility takes place when a person moves down from one position to another and change his status.

**(ii) Horizontal Mobility:**

It refers to the movement of people from one social group to another situated on the same level. It means that the ranks of these two groups are not different. It indicates change in position without the change in status. For example, if a teacher leaves one school and joins another school or a bank officer leaves one branch to work in another or change of residence are the horizontal mobility.

Apart from the above two broad types of social stratification, there are two other types of social stratification in terms of dimension of time. They are:

**(i) Inter-generational mobility:**

When changes in status occur from one generation to another, it is called intergenerational mobility. For example, if the son changes his status either by taking upon occupation of higher or lower rank with that of his father, there inter-generational mobility takes place.

**(ii) Intra-generational mobility:**

When changes in status occur within one generation, it is called intra-generational mobility. For example, the rise and fall in the occupational structure of a family which leads to change in its social status within one generation is called intra-generational mobility.

**Impact of social stratification in social mobility**

**Stratification and Caste:**

Under the caste system status is hereditary. It is based on birth, it is purely an ascribed status. Once such positions are assigned, they can not advance and improve their social status in any way. Hence, caste as a major type of social stratification does not facilitate vertical social mobility.

**Social Stratification and Class:**

Class is an “open” system. Under this system vertical mobility is absolutely free. Movement from one status to another has no barrier. Status is based on achievement. It is determined by the talents, wealth, money, intelligence, power, education, income, etc. of a person. There is no inheritance of parental status.

**Gender:**

Like caste and class gender is another kind of social stratification system. Gender, perhaps is the oldest and permanent source of social differentiation. But within the broad hierarchy of caste and class, gender cuts across caste and class. In present day Indian society caste, class and gender are dynamic phenomena which vary between groups, communities and regions. Recent years have witnessed a thorough and widespread discussion on gender. It has claimed critical address within ender as a concept and as a set of practices has occurred during the last three decades.

The origin of the concept gender can be traced to the 19th century women’s movement and in Marxism. But it seems to have first appeared among American Feminists who wanted to reject biological determinism. Feminists prefer the term gender than sex.

But the term gender means much more than sex and more inclusive than sex. It is a socially constructed category rather than biologically determined. The gender of a man is masculine and a woman is feminine. Neither a man nor a woman is sex alone. Gender refers to the socially constructed and culturally determined role that men and women play in their day-to-day lives. Gender is the most potent significant and enormously useful analytical concept used by the feminists.

It is a matter of social ascription, a socio-cultural construction and provided a deeper analysis of inequalities existing between male and female. It refers to the social institutionalization of sexual difference. In feminist literature gender is not a value free concept rather a value loaded term and has acquired new dimensions. It is a conceptual tool for analysis and is used to highlight different structural relationships of inequality between men and women. As a socially constructed differences and relations between males and females it very from time to time and from place to place.

Gender is defined as the social construction of relations between women and men and among various groups of women and men. Feminist consider gender as the socio-cultural manifestation of being a man or a woman.

**Gender and Sex:**

The term gender does not replace the term sex. It is necessary to distinguish between sex and gender. The distinction between sex and gender is fundamental, since many differences between males and females are not biological in origin. Sex refers to the physical differences of body where as gender refers to social, cultural and psychological differences between males and females.

Sex refers to biological differences between male and female which are much more the same over time and space where as gender refers to socially and culturally constructed differences and relations between males and females which vary from place to place and from time to time. Sex refers to male and female where as gender refers to masculinity and feminity. Gender is a structural feature of a society.