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**What is social stratification?**

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 is based on four major principles:

* Social stratification is a trait of society, not simply a reflection of individual differences.
* Social stratification persists over generations.
* Social stratification is universal (it happens everywhere) but variable (it takes different forms across different societies).
* Social stratification involves not just inequality but beliefs as well (inequality is rooted in a society's philosophy).

Why does social stratification exist, and why are some countries more stratified than others? To analyze this question, we can look at social stratification through three major perspectives: structural functionalism, social conflict, and symbolic interaction.

1. Discuss the consequences of social stratification in the society

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.

It is broadly organized into three parts: upper class, middle class and lower class on the basis of power and wealth. This has resulted in the creation of a number of levels within our society.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.It creates a huge gulf between the people in terms of their incomes and a range of measures associated with social position, education, health, and psychological well-being. It is distinctly perceived that disparity causes chaos in society. These are the stumbling blocks in the way to progress and development of the country.

Social stratification is described as the hierarchy order of people within a society. Every society has a system in which it functions. Society is usually classified in two forms of systems, the closed system known as castle system or open systems known as class systems. In a castle system individuals are classified from birth and there is limited social mobility to move up or down social categories. In the class system, individuals have social status from birth and personal achievements. Davis and Moore argued the positive effects of social stratification in our society. Davis and Moore advocate greater rewards for more prestigious positions as a way to motivate individuals to work well thus enhancing society. Davis and Moore contend that some positions are more important than others because they provide a greater contribution to society and require more expertise Conferring with Moore and Davis these rewards would create stratification which causes inequality in our society. Some criticism came from Melvin Tumin about how society assess what is an important occupations and how does society determine the level of rewards for certain occupation. These claims have brought about many issues to consider relating to social stratification.

1. **What is social mobility? Citing relevant examples, discuss how social stratification system can impact social mobility both positively and negatively**

Firstly what is social mobility ?

Social mobility, movement of individuals, families, or groups through a system of social hierarchy or stratification. If such mobility involves a change in position, especially in occupation, but no change in social class, it is called “horizontal mobility.” An example would be a person who moves from a managerial position in one company to a similar position in another. If, however, the move involves a change in social class, it is called “vertical mobility” and involves either “upward mobility” or “downward mobility.” An industrial worker who becomes a wealthy businessman moves upward in the class system; a landed aristocrat who loses everything in a revolution moves downward in the system.

**The positive aspects of social mobility are:**

One of the major benefits of social mobility is thought to be improved productivity in the workplace, unlocked in part by the latent potential of high-aptitude individuals that gain access to quality education, which in turn create greater economic, cultural and social value, than they would otherwise.

To better understand the relationship between productivity, understood in terms of gross domestic product per capita, and social mobility, the firm mapped them against each other for various countries in Western Europe. Mobility was understood by the firm in terms of “... the gap between the wage of an individual whose father achieved tertiary educational and the wage of an individual whose father achieved below upper secondary education. In a country with high social mobility, we would expect this difference to be small.”

When researchers considered an alternative model for social mobility, which was based on the relationship between an individual’s wage and that of their parents, the result showed similar trends. This would not only benefit individuals with greater financial security through a more equitable distribution of wealth though, it would also benefit the broader economy by granting a larger number of people greater spending power – an issue which looks set to hit post-Brexit Britain without action. Analysts meanwhile factored in whether aspirations for higher and better positions have changed between generations since the 1980s, as a means of identifying changes in social mobility over the past 30 years. The research took into consideration the social position of the father, as well as the social aspiration of their children at the age of 16. The results highlighted that, while there was a considerable boost in aspirations between the first and second study, while the intervening studies highlighted a decrease and then a relative stagnation.

Improved social mobility would therefore bring considerable benefits to the UK economy, as well as wider fabric of society. However, doing so is a protracted exercise that, without state intervention, requires multiple stakeholders to be engaged. This includes primary, secondary and tertiary education improvement, as well as wider improvements to selection for employment.

**Negative aspects of social mobility is:**

Moving from one social group or class to another – known as social mobility – seems to have potentially negative effects whether one moves up or down. Professor John Jacobs (Southern Connecticut State University) has studied men in their fifties to better understand the effects of switching classes.

While sliding down the social strata is quite well established to have negative effects on people, it seems that even those who move up may have a lower quality of life. This is certainly true in the UK compared with the USA – Jacobs suggested those who move up have to make more sacrifices to do so. Many who come from a working-class background need to work longer hours to get where they are, potentially leaving their home communities and social support. They also live with more uncertainty, Jacobs said, while people born into higher social classes don’t necessarily experience the same uncertainty.Jacobs looked at data from 110 male participants of the 1958 National Child Development Study, which has been following the lives of more 17,000 people born in England, Scotland and Wales in a single week of 1958. As well as cohort interviews the study also included interviews with participants’ fathers – as social mobility is often defined in relation to one’s father’s profession.

The men were interviewed at the age of 46 – social mobility has usually happened by this age. Jacobs used a discriminant analysis to uncover what lifestyle, career and social variables predicted upward and downward mobility.Downward mobility was associated with a person having depression, less identification with their job, and a lower quality of life. However, the upwardly mobile group also showed costs. While they had a stronger identification with their job and lower levels of smoking, they also had less emotional support, more alcohol dependence and more divorce and separation. The men who had moved up through the social classes spoke favorably about their jobs and having more money, but many said they were dependent on alcohol and had fewer friends. Jacobs said this highlights a dilemma – what is meaningful to us, work in this example, may be achieved at the cost of happiness.