

CHAPTER 2

TERMS, CONCEPTS AND THEIR USE IN SOCIOLOGY

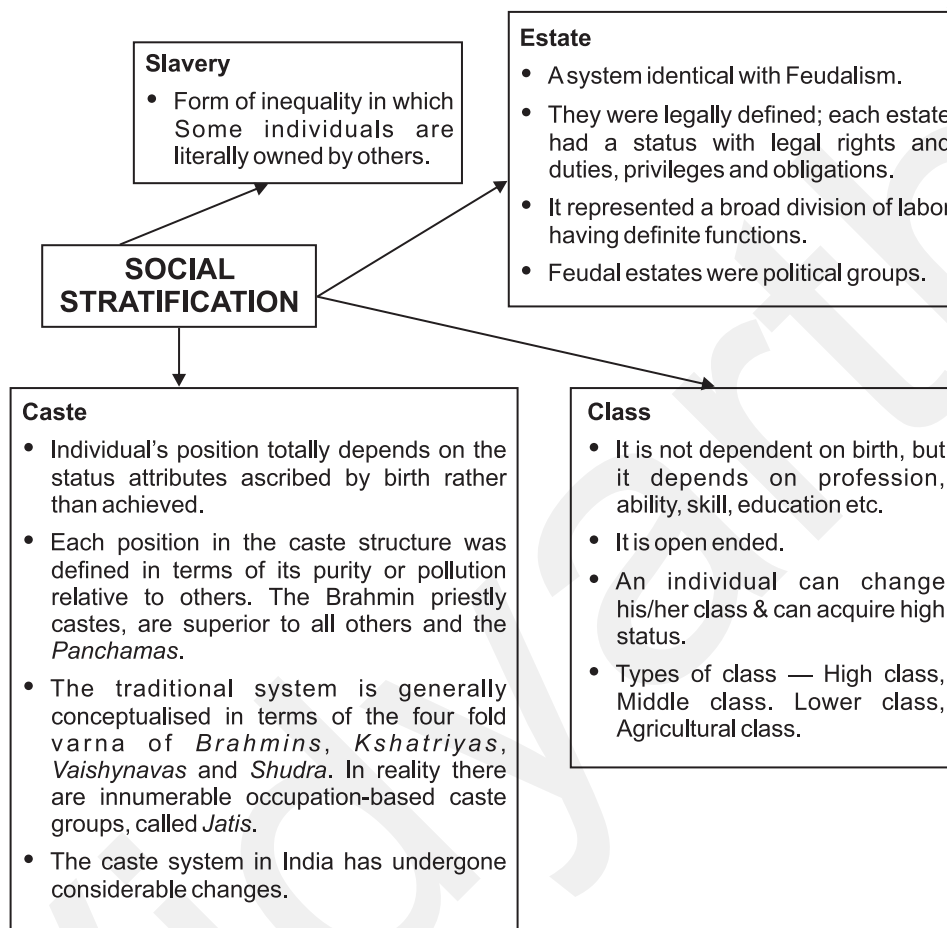
Points To Remember

1. Social group refers to a collection of continuously interacting persons who share common interest; culture, values and norms within a given society.
2. Characteristics of social group
 - (a) Persistent interaction to provide continuity
 - (b) A stable pattern of these interactions
 - (c) A sense of belonging
 - (d) Shared interest
 - (e) Acceptance of common norms and values
 - (f) A definable structure
3. Individuals are a part of collective bodies like the family, tribe, caste, class, clan, and nation.

Features of Social Group:

- Requirement of two or more individuals;
- Persistent interaction to provide continuity is essential;
- A stable pattern of these interactions;
- A sense of belonging to identify with other members, shared interest;
- Acceptance of common norms and values;
- A definable structure;
- Groups are dynamic in nature and not static. Some internal changes keep occurring whether they are family groups, friendship groups or caste groups etc.

Four basic systems of stratification have existed in human societies: slavery, caste, estate and class.



CASTE	CLASS
1. It depends on birth.	It depends on social circumstances.
2. It is closed group.	It is open group.
3. There is rigid rules in marriage, eating — habits etc	There is no rigidity.
4. It is a permanent/stable organisation.	It is less stable than the caste system.
5. It acts as an obstacle to Democracy and Nationalism.	It does not create any obstacle to Democracy and Nationalism.

Social Group v/s Quasi Group

SOCIAL GROUP	QUASI GROUP
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social group is a collection of continuously interacting persons who share common interest, culture, values and norms within a given society.• Social groups have sense of belongingness.• E.g.: family, peers etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quasi group/aggregates is a group of people who are at the same place at the same time but share no connection with each other and have no structure.• Quasi groups lack sense of belongingness.• E.g.: Passengers standing on railway station

- **Types of social group:**
 - (a) Primary and secondary group
 - (2) In group and society or association
 - (3) Community and society or association
 - (4) Reference group
 - (5) Peer group
- Primary group refers to small group of people connected by intimate and face-to-face association and co-operation. for e.g. family, village and groups.
- Secondary group is the group in which there is lack of intimacy, e.g., different political group, economic association etc.
- **Characteristic of primary group:**
 - (1) Small size of group
 - (2) Physical proximity
 - (3) Continuity and stability of relationship
 - (4) General responsibility
 - (5) Common-aim
- **Characteristic of secondary group:**
 - (1) Large size
 - (2) Indirect relationship
 - (3) Fulfilment of special interest
 - (4) Limited responsibility
 - (5) Impersonal relationship

- **Difference between In Group and Out Group:**

In Group	Out Group
(1) "We feeling" exists.	(1) Lack of "We feeling".
(2) Face to face relationship.	(2) No face to face relationship
(3) Feeling of sacrifice and cooperation among members.	(3) Lack of feeling of sacrifice and cooperation among members.
(4) Domestic and perfect relationship.	(4) Working relationship and imperfect relationship.

- **Difference between Community and Society:**

Community	Society
(1) It refers to human relationships that are highly personal, intimate, enduring.	(1) It refers to human relationships that are impersonal, superficial and transitory.
(2) It is a group of people who live together in a particular locality and share the basic conditions of a common life. To constitute a community the presence of sentiment among the members is necessary.	(2) Society includes every relation which is established among the people. There is an element of likeness in society. But, it is not necessary that likeness should include the people in oneness, enemies can also be included in a society.
(3) It is a group of people living together in a particular locality.	(3) Society has no definite boundary. It is universal and pervasive.
(4) Community is concrete.	(4) Society is abstract.
(5) It is group of people living in a particular locality and having a feeling of oneness.	(5) Society is a network of relationships which cannot be seen or touched.
(6) We can see the group and locate its existence.	(6) We cannot see the group and locate its existence.
(7) E.g.: Hindu Community, Parsi Community etc.	(7) E.g.: Arya Samaj Society, Harijan Society.

- **Difference between Community and Association:**

Community	Association
(1) Community is a whole.	(1) Association is partial
(2) It is a natural growth.	(2) It is an artificial creation.
(3) It does not exist for the pursuit of specific interest.	(3) It is formed by individuals for the pursuit of their individual interest.
(4) Community embraces all purposes; it does not exist for a specific purpose.	(4) Significance of association for a person is so long as it serves their purpose.
(5) Membership of community is compulsory. We are born into it.	(5) Membership of association is voluntary. We choose our associations.
(6) Community sentiment is an essential feature.	(6) Community sentiment is not an essential feature.
(7) It is not a necessity to have office bearers who manage the affairs.	(7) It has got its office bearer to manage the affairs
(8) It works through customs & traditions.	(8) It works mostly through written laws and rules.

- **Community and Association:**

Community	Society / Association
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It refers to human relationship that are personal, intimate and enduring. • Person's involvement is total and relations are close knit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It refers to human relationship that are impersonal, superficial and transitory. • Person's involvement is rational, calculating & purpose oriented.

- **Reference Groups:**

- A person or any group of people, who look up to and aspire to be like someone.
- Person or groups whose lifestyles are emulated.
- We do not belong to a reference group, but we do identify ourselves with that group.
- Reference groups are important sources of information about culture, life style, aspiration and goal attainments.

- **Reference Groups in Colonial Period**

- Many middle-class Indians aspired to behave like proper Englishman, especially the aspiring.

- This process was gendered, i.e. it had different implications for men and women.
- Often Indian men wanted to dress and dine like the British men.
- The Indian women remained 'Indian' in their ways. Or sometimes aspired to be a bit like the proper English woman but also not quite like her.
- **Reference Groups in Contemporary Period**
- From a market perspective, reference groups are groups that serve as frames of reference for individuals in their purchase or consumption decisions.
- In choosing what clothing to buy and wear, for example, we typically refer to those around us, like friend or peer groups, colleagues, or to stylistic reference groups.
- Celebrities of a diverse range, in different areas including sports, music, acting, and even comedy among others.
- **Peer Groups:**
- A kind of primary group usually formed between individuals who are either of similar age or who are in a common professional group.
- Peer pressure refers to the social pressure exerted by one's peers on what one ought to do or not.
- **Social Stratification**
- Social stratification refers to the existence of structured inequalities between groups in society, in terms of their access to material or symbolic rewards.
- Four basic systems of stratification have existed in human societies slavery, caste, class and estate.
- **Stratification on the basis of slavery**
- (1) It is an extreme form of inequality in which individuals are literally owned by others.
- (2) As a formal institutions, slavery has been eradicated but we do continue to have bonded labour, often even children as bonded Labourers.
- **Stratification on the basis of Estate System**
- (1) Estates characterized feudal Europe. The estates comprised of three strata's, i.e. Clergy, Nobility and Common man.
- **Stratification on the basis of Caste**
- (1) In a caste stratification system, an individual's position totally depends on the status attributes ascribed by birth rather than achieved.

- (2) Each position in the caste structure is defined in terms of its purity or pollution relative to others. The Brahmin priestly castes, are superior to all others and the *Panchamas*.
 - (3) The traditional system is generally conceptualised in terms of the four fold Varna of *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Shudras*. There are innumerable occupation based caste groups, called Jatis. The castes system in India has undergone considerable changes.
- **Stratification on the basis of class:**
 - (1) Stratification on the basis of class is not dependent on birth, but it depends on profession, ability, skill, education, science etc.
 - (2) Class is an open institution.
 - (3) An individual can change his/her class and can acquire high status in social stratification.
 - (4) Kinds of class : Higher class, Middle class, Lower class, Agricultural class.
 - **Difference between Caste and Class :-**

Caste	Class
(1) It depends on birth.	(1) It depends on social circumstances.
(2) It is closed group.	(2) It is an open system.
(3) There are rigid rules regarding marriage, eating-habits, etc.	(3) Class has no rigidity.
(4) Caste system is a permanent/ stable	(4) It is less stable than caste system.
(5) It is not prodemocracy democracy	(5) It is not an obstacle for and nationalism.

Who are “Panchamas”?

- They are also called the “Outcastes”.
- They are inferior to all other castes.

STATUS AND ROLE

STATUS :

- Status thus refers to the social position with defined rights and duties assigned to these positions.
- Status is occupied.

- Status is an institutionalised role that has become regularised, standardised and formalised in the society.
- Eg: mother occupies a status which has many norms of conduct as well as certain responsibilities.

(1) Ascribed Status

This depends on birth and it is granted without any struggle.

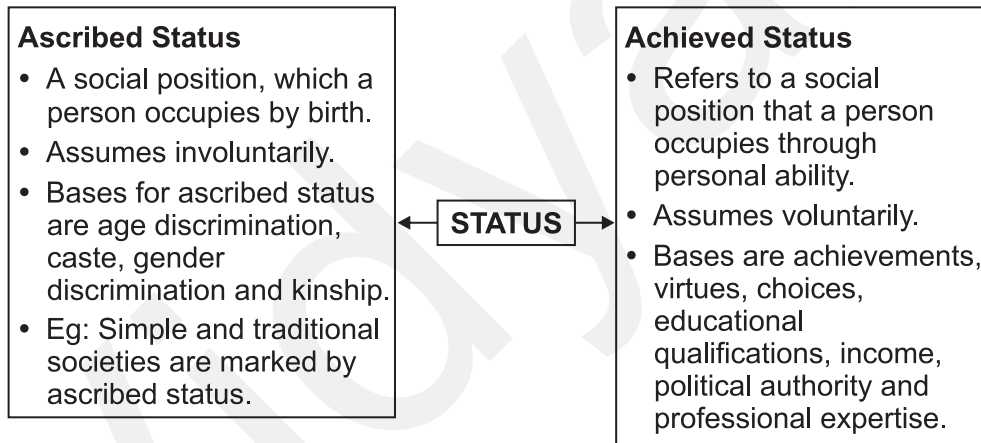
Following are the bases of ascribed status:-

- (a) Caste
- (b) Kinship
- (c) Birth
- (d) Race
- (e) Age.

(2) Achieved Status

The posts or levels/places achieved by the person on the basis of personal merits or qualifications is called achieved status:-

- (a) Education
- (b) Training
- (c) Wealth
- (d) Occupation
- (e) Political authority.



- Status and prestige are interconnected terms
- Every status is accorded certain rights and values
- Values are attached to the social position
- Example: The prestige of a doctor may be high in comparison to a shopkeeper even if the doctor may earn less.

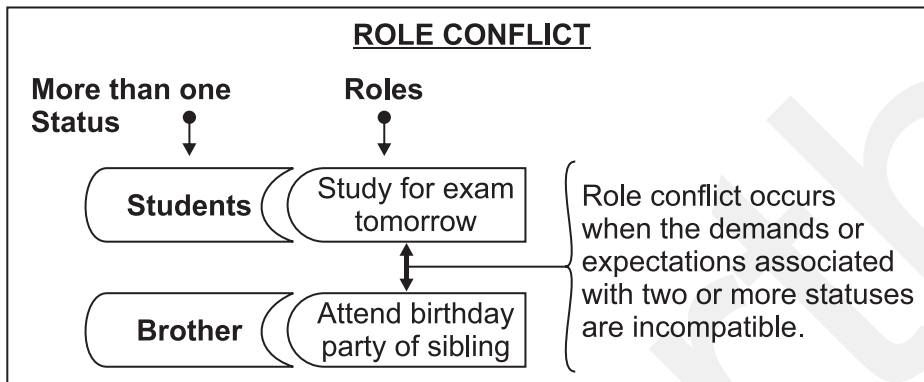
Role:

- This is performed according to status.
- A role is the dynamic or the behavioural aspect of status
- Roles are played.

Role Conflict:

- When a person has many role-sets, performance of one role may be in conflict with another role. This situation is called as role conflict.

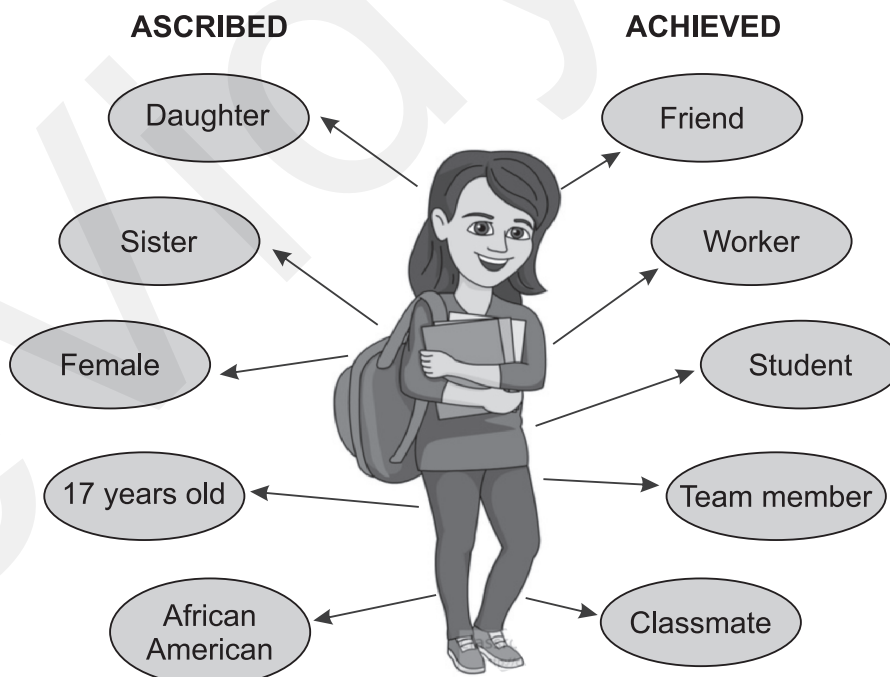
- When a person has many role-sets performance of one role may be in conflict with another role.
- It occurs when different expectations arise from two or more roles.



- Example 1. A teacher on invigilation duty might find the son/daughter of a friend cheating OR a middle class working woman who has to manage her role as mother and wife at home and that of a professional.

Social Status:

- Status describes an individual's position in a group or society. Since individuals belong to more than one group, they have many different statuses. Statuses can be ascribed — given to an individual regardless of his or her abilities — or achieved — gained through the individual's talent, effort, or accomplishments.



- Status and prestige are interconnected. Every status is accorded certain rights and values. Values are attached to the social position e.g., the prestige of a doctor may be higher in comparison to a shopkeeper.
- **Role stereotyping** is a process of reinforcing. Some specific role for some members of the society. For e.g. men and women are often socialised in stereotypical roles as a bread winner and home maker respectively.

Social Control:

- It refers to the various means used by a society to bring its unruly members back into line.
- Social control is considered essential because its main objective is to maintain balance in social system and to develop cooperative attitude in the individuals.
- **Need of Social Control :**
 - (1) To establish social order.
 - (2) To control human behaviour.
 - (3) To protect original elements of culture.
 - (4) Social security.
 - (5) Unity in the group.
- **Perspectives of Social Control :-**

FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE (Durkheim)

This refers to:-

- The use of force to regulate the behaviour of individuals and groups.
- Enforcing of values and patterns for maintaining order in society.
- Social control here is directed to restrain deviant behaviour of individuals or groups as well as to mitigate tensions and conflicts.

CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE (Karl Marx)

This refers to:-

- Conflict theorists see social control more as a mechanism to impose control of dominant social classes on the rest of society.
- Stability would be seen as the formal writ of one section over the other.
- Likewise law would be seen as the formal writ of the powerful and their interest on society.

- **Types of Social Control:**

- (1) **Formal Social Control:**

It includes control by state, law, police, bureaucracy, army, Political power, education etc. The state exercises legal power to control the individual and group behaviour. It should be codified and systematic.

(2) **Informal Social Control:**

It includes control by religion, custom, tradition, mores, convention etc.

- **Sanction**

A sanction is a mode of reward or punishment that reinforces socially expected forms of behavior. Social control can be positive or negative.

- **Deviance**

It refers to modes of action which do not conform to the norms and values held by most of the members of a group or society.

TERMS AND CONCEPTS

1. **Conflict Theories:**

- A sociological perspective that focuses on the tensions, divisions and competing interests present in human societies.
- Conflict theorists believe that the scarcity and value of resources in society produces conflict when groups struggle to gain access to and control those resources.
- Marxian writings have strongly influenced many conflict theorists.

2. **Functionalism:**

- That social events can best be explained in terms of the function they perform — that is the contribution they make to the continuity of a society.
- That social events can best be explained in terms of the function they perform — that is the contribution they make to the continuity of a society.

3. **Identity:**

- The distinctive characteristic of a person's character or the character of a group which relate to who they are and what is meaningful to them.

4. **Means of Production:**

- The production of material goods carried on in a society, including not just technology but the social relations between producers.

5. **Natal**

- It refers/relates to the place or time of one's birth.

6. **Values:**

- Rules of behaviour which reflect or embody a culture's values.
- It may be prescribed, or a given type of behaviour, or forbidding it.
- Norms are always backed by sanctions of one kind or another, varying from informal disapproval to physical punishment or execution.

7. **Sanctions:**

- A mode of reward or punishment that reinforces socially expected forms of behaviour.

8. Conflict:

- It refers to some form of friction, or disagreement arising within a group when the beliefs or actions of one or more members of the group are either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more members of another group.

9. Aggregates:

- They are simply collections of people who are in the same place at the same time, but share no definite connection with one another.

10. Khasi:

- They are a native/original ethnic group of Meghalaya in north-eastern India.

11. Social Control:

- Social control is the basic means of social solidarity and conformity rather than deviance. It controls the behavior, attitudes and actions of individuals to balance their social situation.

2 MARKS QUESTIONS

1. What is a group?
2. What is reference group?
3. What do you understand by 'role'?
4. Express two differences between 'ascribed' and 'achieved' status
5. Define primary group.
6. Describe/Write any two differences between ingroup and outgroup.
7. What do you understand by community?
8. What is peer group?
9. What do you mean by social stratification?
10. Define social control.
11. What do you understand by caste based stratification?
12. Describe two bases of changing norms of caste system.
13. Write down the two bases of class stratification.
14. What do you understand by role-conflict?

4 MARKS QUESTIONS

1. Explain the meaning social status and write its two forms.
2. What is secondary group? Give its any two characteristics.

3. Describe the characteristics of social group.
4. Discuss the characteristics of social stratification.
5. Distinguish between caste and class.
6. Write down the importance of social control.
7. Discuss the types of social control with examples.
8. Explain the role stereotyping with examples.
9. What is achieved status? State its two bases with examples.

6 MARKS QUESTIONS

1. "Caste is a closed stratification while class is an open stratification". Explain the statement.
2. "Status and prestige are interconnected terms". Explain the statement.
3. What do you mean by role taking and role expectation with references to roles?
4. What do you understand by ascribed status? Describe any four bases of ascribed status.

HOTS

- **Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)**
Do you think that honour killings should be a way of social control in modern India — Justify your answer.