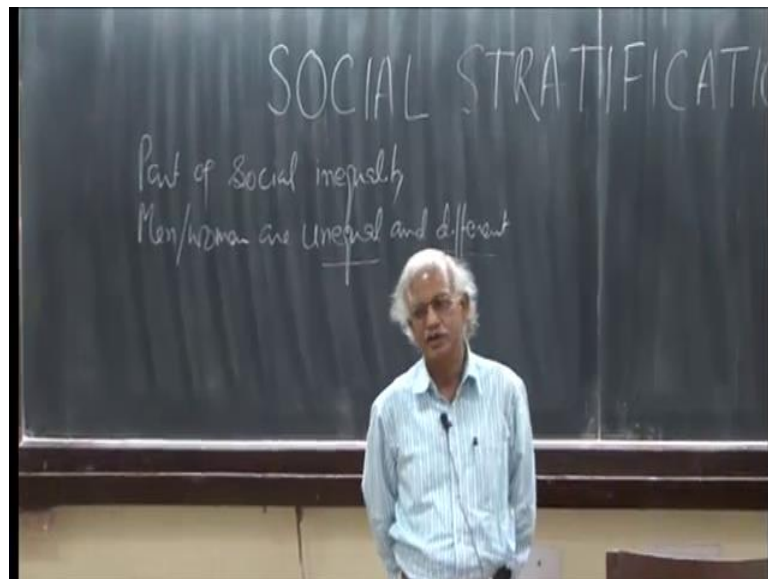


Introductory Sociology
Prof. A. K. Sharma
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur

Lecture - 23
Social Stratification - I
Social Inequality and Stratification

Friends, today we are going to start a new and very interesting topic of social stratification. I would say that this is a center topic of sociology, soul of sociology and perhaps, if there were no social stratification there would not be no sociology. All sociologies are about social stratification. So, first we will see what social stratification is then we will go into two or three major queries of social stratification. We can also spend some time on the nature of stratification in Indian society and exploring the question whether it is possible to have a society of equal, and how do sociologist or theoreticians or politicians and visa's to create a society of equals.

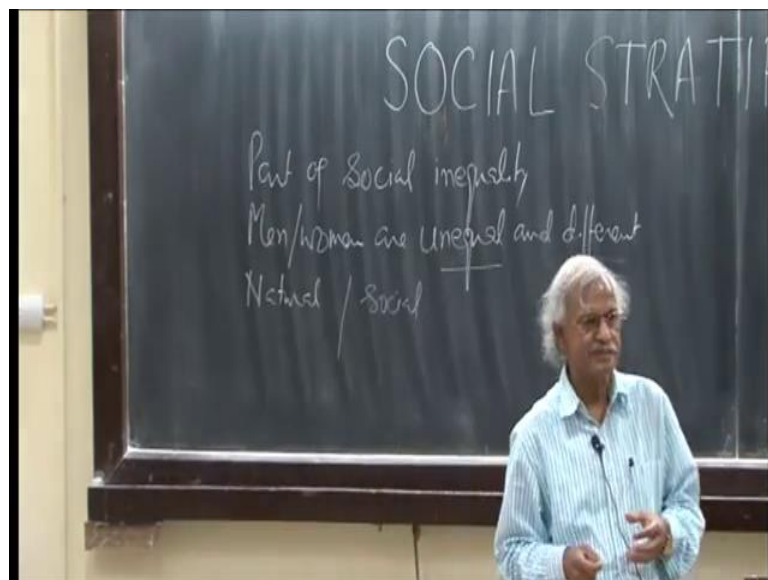
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Social stratification is part of the general problem of inequality, but is not the inequality as a whole. Our everyday experience shows that men are unequal, unequal and different men. That means, women also men, women are unequal and different, there are so many basis of defining differences and inequality. Some are short, some are tall, some are white, some are black, different colors, different racist, different features in the same country.

In India almost all features of humans are found, we have trace of African race, Aryan race and in the north east our people look more like Chinese, Mangolian. There are differences in color features, so many differences, differences in nose, eyes, complexion, ears, hair. There are differences in hair, there are differences in muscular strength between men and women, and between different men. There are age differences children, adults, old some are educated some are uneducated some are rich, some are poor some are more influential, some are less influential. And people differ in terms of political ideology, religion, beliefs, so many things, but all differences there are natural differences.

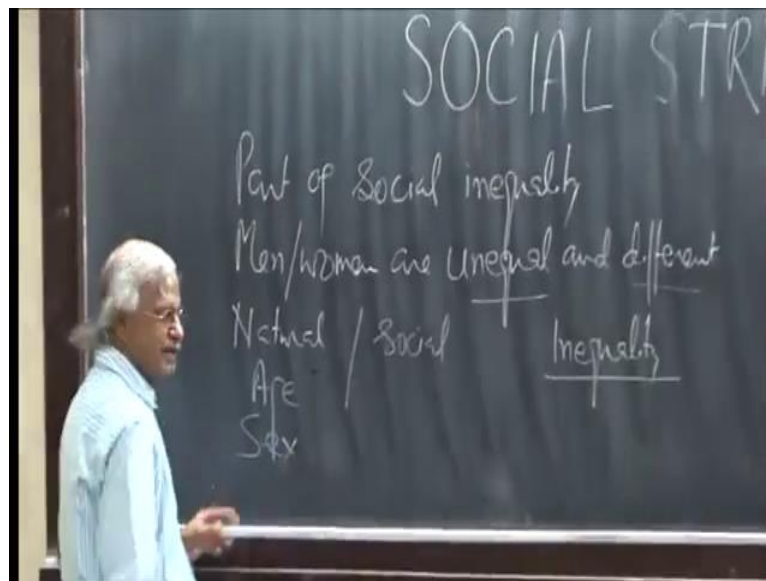
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Broadly some differences can be called natural, and some can be called social. Although in the final analysis you will see that there is no natural factor, which is un influenced by social factors. So, what we have in reality is the outcome of hereditary or biological factors and environmental factors, yet for the purpose of communication, simplicity for age and conceptualizing various types of differences and inequalities. It is common to divide all kinds of inequalities and differences into natural and social. Somebody can say that sex differences are natural, differences in height weight color complexion are natural. And differences in education income, social status, religious beliefs and political commitments are social, natural and social.

Now, in society another thing that we see is that these natural and social differences are not seen merely as differences, they are also arranged in terms of high and low. Ultimately, all differences lead to some kind of hierarchy, some people are seen to be in position of desired trades, good things in terms of beauty, wealth, power, prestige and others are seen to be low on indicators of these types. So, high end though that means, there is inequality among people in all society, there is inequality.

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Inequality is a more general term and there is natural inequality, there is social inequality. One of our leading sociologists from India Andre Bete says that even natural inequalities are ultimately social, how the differences in age are natural, but if a society accounts more importance to older generation to parents, grandparents. And if according to norms of society, younger people must necessarily obey show elegance, respect, regard towards the older generation, this is a social fact. So, although the difference in age is natural, the inequality rooted in age is social. Nobody says that younger generation should pay respect to you know there is no natural reason, it will be difficult for us to argue that there is a natural reason for younger generation to pay elegance to older generation.

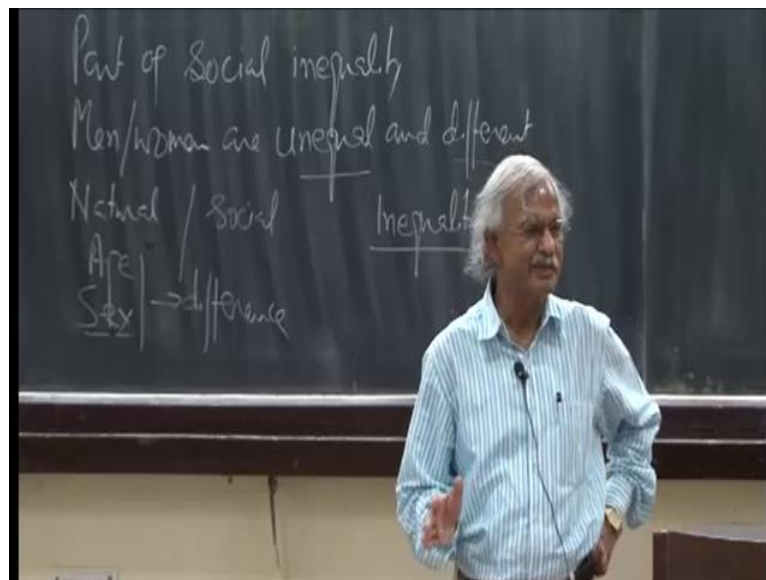
We can have society in which all are equal or middle, middle classes in terms of a middle age group, middle age groups, adults have more prestige. If you look at societies around you and compare what has happened to status of old people, in different societies. You find that there are tremendous variations one day I was telling you that anthropologist

have found that in some tribal societies in the past, if there was a shortage of food during famines doubts or when the nomad, the group decided to move to some other place in search of food, they often left their old people behind.

And in several cases old people were expected to commit suicide because old people were seen as burden. In Indian society for much of that historical period we know of, old people have always been given more respect. The term (()) or old person is not to be despised, old people have respect if your are (()) other factors remaining same, our traditional religious and mythological literature shows that (()) people, old people invites some respect.

And in case of controversies younger people and adults must respect and follow, what the old people say. Similarly, the difference of age it is natural some are men some are women, it is not by (()) we did not will when we were in mother's womb, we did not will whether we would like to be male or female its natural, but this natural thing sex although it should lead to difference.

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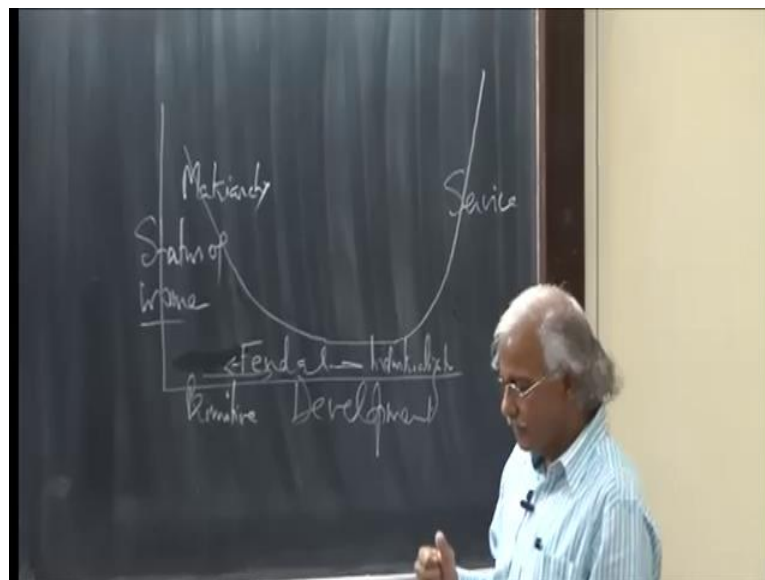
Age and sex should lead to difference, but there is no reason they should also lead to inequality. The empirical fact show that they also lead to inequality. So, there is sex inequality, in all society there is sex inequality and in all these lectures in sociology, there has not been any lecture any day, when we did not talk about some kind of sex inequality

all societies have inequality with respect to sex. So, you have matriarchal society, women more powerful than man, you have patriarchal society, men more powerful than women.

If you look at data on work participation rate, participation of men in economic activity is much higher than participation of women in economic activity, then that also creates inequality in power prestige. In family also there are differences of entitlements, if there is limited amount of food that will first be given to adult male these days, and in the last to younger females that has been the case. Now, to some extent situation in urban middle class is changing, but the wastages of pass remain for long period and this was the case that there was inequality with respect to sex.

Nobody can claim that today there is any society anywhere in any part of in any continent in Latin America, in North America, Western Europe, in Southern Europe, in Asia, Africa anywhere where men and women are equal. Everywhere men and women are equal I remember somewhere, I read a theory that there is a relationship between development and inequality.

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Initially as development takes place, the status of women this is just one theory and I am not saying that all sociologist will agree with this theory. Initially, with socio economic development status of women falls. And with more and more development of society in post developed or post modern or post industrial society, the status of women will rise clear. In primitive matriarch though this is controversial many people believe that a in

primitive society also there was patriarchal, there were traces of nuclear family, but the general understanding is that for a long time in the past, women were more powerful status of women was good.

And with emergence of feudal society, feudal in feudal society there is a down fall of status of women. In agricultural societies there is a at least in the context of Europe, in Medual Europe in estate in feudal society, status of the women declined may be status was declined status of women declined further little bit, in early phases of industrialization.

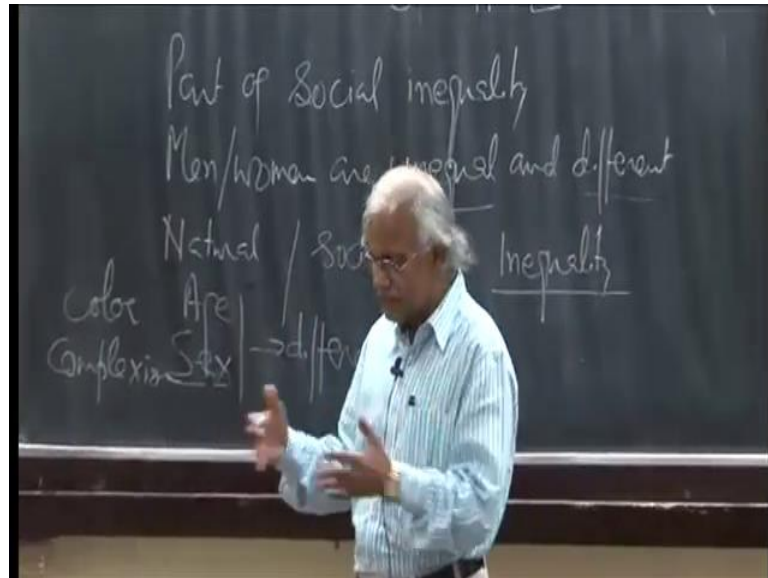
Emergence of private property according to mass were the major reason behind fall of status of women in feudal society, and this also aggravated inequalities, in the early phases of industrialization, which presented a man centric model of economic development. In agriculture at least there was some space for women, in agriculture itself and in allied activities and in processing of agricultural things, within households there was some place for women, but in early industrial society, when women become housewife and are separated from the labor market.

There is a further reduction in status of women, but as time passes with more industrialization, more economic development for several reasons one that now the nature of work is such that anybody can do it. Work in post industrial society, in the service sector increasingly, industry means manufacturing, manufacturing plants. Service sector in post industrial society, the work is such that anybody can do in the service sector you do not require muscular strength in particularly, there is not much importance of muscular strength. There is more importance of brain power and since, there is no difference in brain of men and women again the position of women improves.

So, in education, in the insurance sector, in the banking sector, in computed aged engineering's of various types certainly in software's, but not a software alone in any kind of engineering, computer aided mechanical engineering, computer aided chemical engineering. Wherever computers have come in culture, in politics women can participate equally and therefore, the status of women improves, but today I do not want to talk much about status of women. I am, I was only trying to show the position of an eminent Indian sociologist Andre Bethe that there are inequalities in society, the basis of inequality are several, some of them are considered to be natural and some are

considered to be social, but in the final analysis even social sorry in the final analysis even natural inequalities, or inequalities based on natural factors such as age, sex, color.

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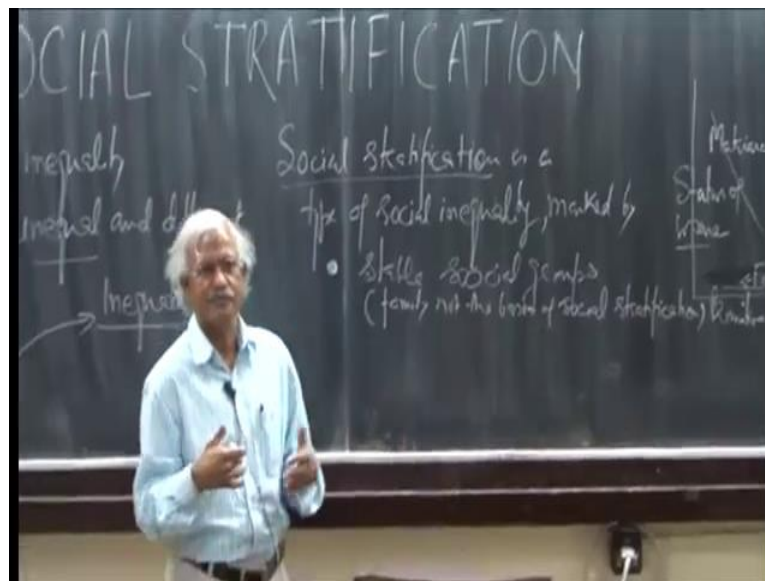
Complexion racial characteristic are social because society selects, which natural factor, which category of natural factors color or sex or age should be accorded a higher status, and which other category should be accorded a lower status. When we find that in American society, whites are seen to be high and black or American Africans are seen to be low. There is no biological reason to say that whites are superior to blacks, it is social, there is a no biological reason to treat blacks to be inferior to white, but whites are supposed to be high on intelligence, on aesthetics, on various types of abilities and in education achieved. Education is the key to inequality in our times.

Similarly, whether taller people should be given more importance than shorter people, depends it is social whether, tallness is superior to shortness that is social. There are many things which tall people can do better there are many things, which short people can do better. And there may be no differences in brain power, in physical strength when it comes to performance of concrete activities. Even in games and sports many times shorter people have done wonders, but in society, society may give more importance to some people and less to others.

So, there are inequalities there are differences and society makes differences unequal. Inequality is so universal that at least not today, you can identify any society, in which

everybody is equal. And interestingly people not only differ in terms of certain biological and social traits they are seen to be unequal, high and low, superior inferior, superordinates subordinates, dominant dominated, exploiters exploited. Those who discriminate against others and those who were discriminated against there are differences. However, in the study of social stratification, we are more concerned more worried about one particular type of social inequality.

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Social stratification is that social stratification is a type of social inequality, marked by those social inequality, which satisfy these criteria are seen as representing social stratification. It does not mean that other elements of differences or inequality are not invidious or unfair or unjust, but there are certain things one that in society exist at in stable social groups, there must be some social groups. That means, family not the basis of social stratification within family, there are differences of age gender education wealth, income political power, but in study of social stratification we will ignore differences within family.

We are more concerned with differences between social groups, and social groups are social groups which become the basis of social stratification are such that they are relatively stable. When I discuss group using disburshed definition, I explained that you can think of groups according to degree of organization or interaction, first degree to forth degree. Social groups, some social groups are very temporary phenomena, cultural

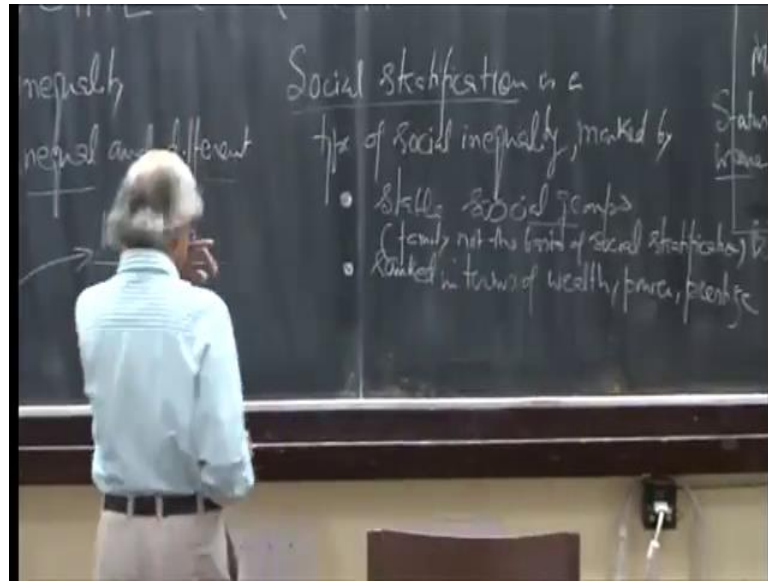
associations, photographic loves, even political parties they are not, so stable groups. We can join one political party today and leave it tomorrow, they are not so stable, but there are some stable social groups. For example, cast, cast as a social group has been present in society for thousands of years, it is a stable group.

Similarly, economic class, economic class is also more stable not as stable as cast, but this is also quite stable. In societies where race is a basis of social stratification racial groups are the groups, which survive for indefinitely long time. Now, there is a mixture of race and there is also a debate on in United States, there has to be an interesting debate on. If you have some policies for the benefit of blacks then defining black becomes a problem. In our country there are many rural development programs meant only for those living below the poverty line, and defining poverty line becomes a problem in India. Last year there was lot of controversy regarding how should poverty line be defined.

Now, in united states if there are some programs and policies, for the up liftment of blacks, you have to define what is black because there are lot of people in United States today, who are neither pure black or pure white, pure black will mean for hundreds of generations they have been black, or pure white will mean that for hundreds of generations they have been pure white.

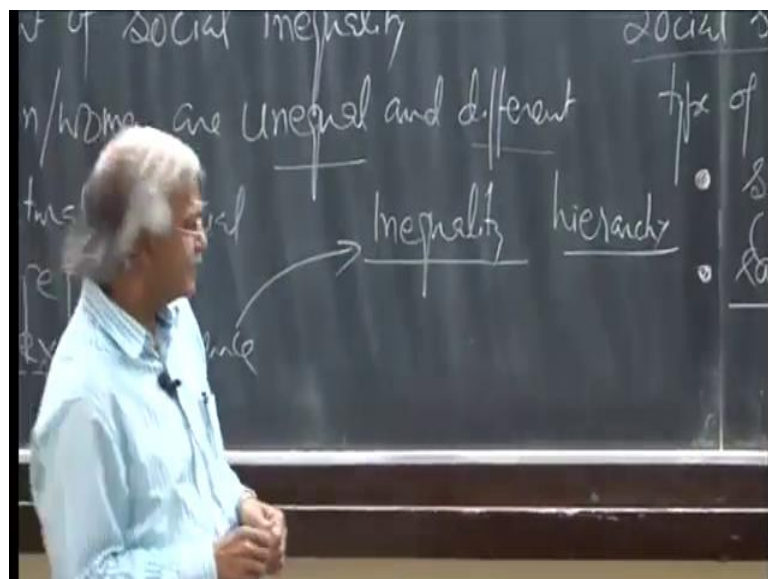
Now, there is a mixture so they have to define that to be part of the category of blacks, for how many generations from father side and mothers side were has to be black or white. It is a difficult technical issue and a debatable issue, this will always be debative, because there will be for every definition there will be some beneficiaries and some deprived of the benefit, it is a definitional issue, but as compared to many other groups which are of transient nature. Racial groups are more stable. So, there are stable groups.

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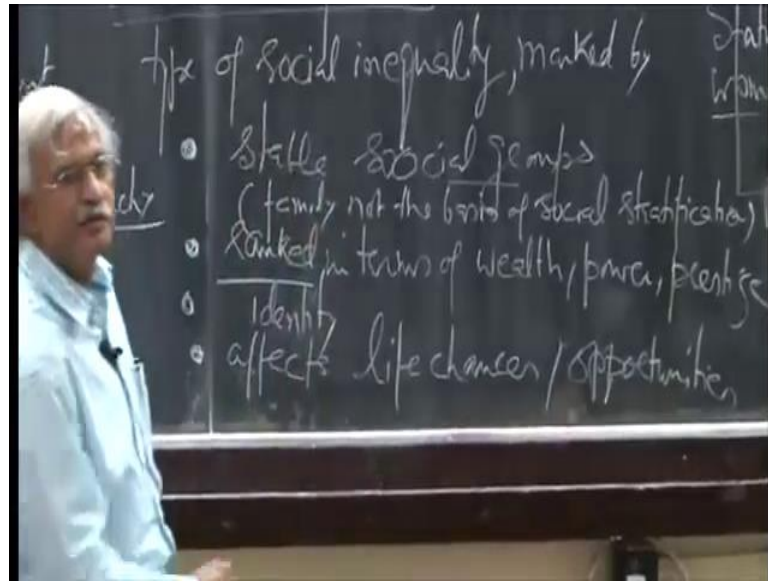
Second they can be ranked these stable groups can be ranked high, low in terms of wealth, power and prestige. If there are stable groups, which are not ranked in terms of wealth, power and prestige then they do not constitute social stratification. Though the stable social groups will provide a frame work of social stratification, which can be ranked in terms of wealth, power and prestige.

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Hierarchy rank or hierarchy is central to the definition of social stratification, another property that.

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The members of these groups must identify with these groups, with one of these groups. If the groups are such that they are only nominal, statistical, empirical and the members of the group do not identify closely with these groups, then also there is no social stratification. If whites do not consider themselves to be white, and black do not consider them to be black and their identity of white, and black does not affect their behavior then there is no social stratification on the basis of race, but when the people belonging to these stable groups which can be ranked in terms of wealth, power and prestige. And they also have identity, then you have social stratification.

Then another though a smaller condition would be that affects, this stratification or division of people into a stable groups, this can be ranked hierarchically as high or low in terms of wealth, power and prestige affects their life chances for opportunities. Life chances for opportunities, if you belong to a high class your opportunity to get education higher education, primary, secondary higher all education will be higher if you belong to a low socio economic group or class your opportunities less.

If you come from the highest wealth quintile your life expectancy is going to be higher, if you come from the lowest quintile your life expectancy is lower. If you come from politically powerful class your chance of becoming unemployed for certain duration in your life is less, if you come from vulnerable sections of society the down tradal, the lower classes, illiterate, uneducated, poor, rural, low cast your chance of remaining

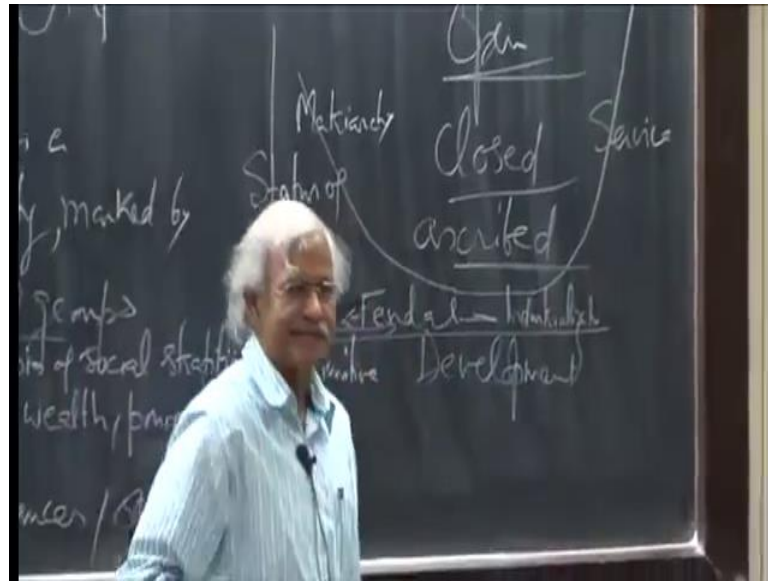
unemployed for a certain period of time in your youth is higher. So, the stratification affects life chance, this is what social stratification is.

Basically, these two bullets all types of inequalities do not constitute social stratification, I have made 2, 3 points today one that all societies have inequality, there is no society in which there is no difference between man and man or one member of society and another member, there is no society. Now, some of these differences are natural, some are social, but ultimately if there is social inequality, then even natural are defined in social only those natural characteristics lead to social stratification, which have been selected by society for this purpose.

And which become a social basis of inequality, all types of inequalities do not lead to social stratification, you can have a society where you have inequality, but no social stratification that will be a kind of society in which some people are rich. Some are poor no problem some are white, some are black, some are high cast some are low cast, but the system is so open that life chances of all members of society are very similar same, it does not matter whether you are white or black.

For children it does not matter whether they come from educated parents or uneducated parents, if it does not matter for children whether they come from urban areas or rural areas, then there may be urban rural differences, there may be rich and poor, and there may be high cast and low cast, but there is no social stratification. Social stratification arises when there are stable social groups in society.

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And their stable social groups means, that there is some kind of closeness close certain social groups are closed, you cannot acquire membership of these groups. And in sociology we use a term ascribed at the time of birth certain characteristic, certain of your subsequent social status is are determined by the fact that you are born in a particular family. In a particular socio-economic condition, they are ascribed cast is ascribed you are born in a particular cast, and you remain in that cast lifelong. You can change your religion, you can move from rural to urban areas, you acquire education, you can become prime minister and president of India, but your cast will not change that shows the closed nature of certain groups.

So, there may be social inequality, actually on one United States of today a market economy is often mentioned as an example of an open class system. United States is open, open means that the degree of mobility between different social groups is very high, a child of a carpenter can become a professor and a child of a professor can become a carpenter.

If there are equal chances of both then you have an open system, but if you have a society in which children of social group s 1, will become s 1 only. And children of social group s 2 will become s 2, if you may move to other groups, but most of them will remain in the same group then you have a closed system. In practice no society can have

hundred percent closed group or 100 percent open group, but the degree of openness, varies from one type of social stratification to another.

Social stratification may take different forms in different societies in terms of how many groups are there, there are stable social groups, but how many 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10 if you say capitalists proletariats it is a two class model that a society, capital society consists of basically two classes capitalist and proletariats. In a verna model of India there are 5 stable social groups (()) and (()). An uncase outside the verna system, 5 groups in the theory of capitalism, you have 2 groups. In the theory of verna's you have 5 groups in the racial theory you have 2 groups basically, whites and blacks.

And in sociological theory of industrial society and post industrial society, you can make several groups. You can say 3 groups upper class, middle class, lower class on the basis of credential occupation, management position or you can say 6 classes, upper, upper, lower upper, upper middle, lower middle, upper low or upper lower and lower, lower, 6 classes then it becomes an empirical. In those African countries where 3 or 4 major tribes live, and the society is seen to be stratified according to tribal status, there are these 3 or 4 groups. In several parts of say north east where you do not have cast, you do not have racial differences, you do not have color differences all are black or in a given reason overall all are mangolite type or yellowish

If there are two tribes the (()) and (()) and (()) and (()) from two stable groups, in social stratification of that region, then there are two classes. So, depends number of groups may be different, degree of openness and closeness may be different. The basis of formation of stable social groups may be different, in some cases it may be physical strength, some cases honesty like in traditional Indian society.

The basis of prestige or stratification could be your ability to make sphere judgment, in say context of gram panchayat or cast gram panchayat, how fear and honest you are. Your ability to express your ideas clearly can be a basis of stratification high end low end, or it may be income, it may be size of land, it may be closeness to seat a power, it may be education, it may be skill, it may be some charisma of your own, it may be legal.

So, the basis stratification or the formation of the stable groups which are ranked hierarchically, can be any physical, religious, spiritual, economic, educational or credential or legal by law what does the law suggests. Feudal power was sanctioned by

law and pre feudal power was quite often sanctioned by religious. And today we have a class system, on the basis of ownership of means a production. You can still have a social stratification, where social all reasons behind social stratification, religious as a primitive society or relatively more advanced society. Legal as a agricultural and feudal society, ownership of means a production as in capital society have been removed.

So, China, in China you do not have social stratification on the basis of religion or law or economic class, means of production has been collectivized. So, the issue of economic class does not arise, but still there is a stratification there is patriarchy, there are differences in wealth, education, political power. Some people can more easily get certificate to my or permission, or approval to migrate from their village to the capital city as compared to others.

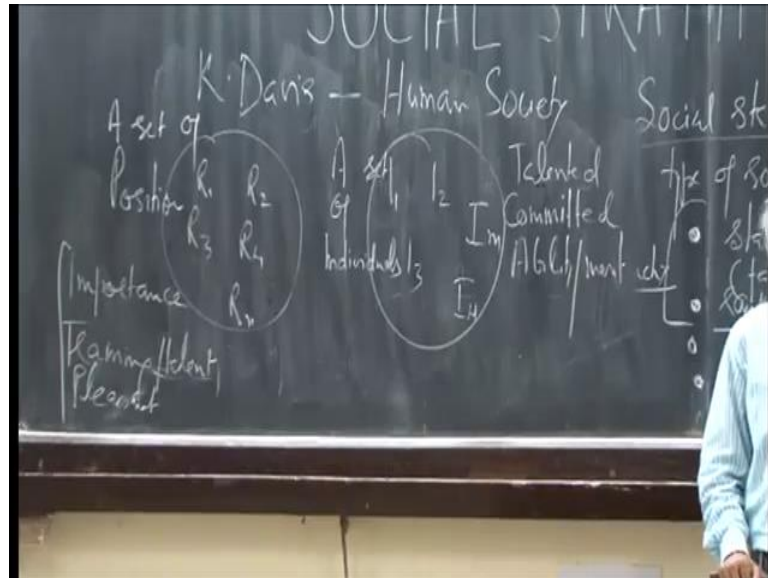
And your position to manipulate situation in society also differs, and there are so many basis of forming stable social grades. So, that nature of stratification may be different number of groups may be different, relationship between the groups may be different, the degree to which members of groups identify with these groups may be different. And to what extent these stable groups affect the life chances that may also differ. Sometimes this may have no effect on many aspects of this, when fertility was high in everyone whether, coming from landed aristocracy or from a poor family, everyone had high fertility everybody had 10 or 11 children.

And when fertility has declined to blow replacement level then again there are no differences novelty or feudal lords or landed aristocracy, has two children and poor people also have two children. An a society in which infant mortality has declined, there may be no differences in infant mortality according to class. If life expectancy has gone above say 70 or 70 it has reached a level of 75 or 80, the differences in life expectancy according to social groups have declined.

So, to what extent a stable groups arranged hierarchically and producing some kind of consciousness of being part of those groups, affects life chance may differ from society to society, and from one stage of development to another, but stratification is a fact of all societies. So, sociologists have tried to explain this why stratification and in this respect, I will just indicate we will discuss this more in the next lecture. I will just indicate the

basic of one of the theories of social stratification, which knowingly or unknowingly all of us employ in reflecting on and in justifying social stratification.

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And this theory is given by Kingsley Davis in his book human society, and in a few papers published in some leading sociological journals, in forties in collaboration with one more sociologist Wilbert Moore, Kingsley Davis has given this theory. Kingsley Davis says that in a society there are so many rules R 1, R 2, R 3, R 4, R N or you call them status position Kingsley Davis says there are position p 1, p 2, p n so many positions and there are also individuals I 1, I 2, I 3, I 4, I m.

Now, you see ideally if these positions or these roles or statuses, this is a set of positions a set of individuals. If these rules could be allotted completely randomly, I think you understand the term random, completely randomly by ensuring that probability of role R 3 going to I 1, I 2, I 3, I 4, I n is same, same chance of allotment of rule R 1, R 2, R 3, R n to all these individuals, then there will be no stratification.

And when will this happen then the importance of all the roles for society is same, if all the roles are of same importance to society and all roles require same degree of training and talent, and all roles are equally pleasant to perform. If all individuals are equally talented, if all people will show the same degree of commitment to performing any role.

If all of them have the same training or ability and merit, a more general term would be ability. If there are no differences between roles and if there are no differences between individuals then any role can be assigned to anyone, and then there will be no social stratification. If it does not matter if all 125 crores of Indians, 1.25 billion are equally talented, equally trained, equally committed, equally capable of doing everything role of a rickshaw puller and role of president of India, role of a teacher, role of a chemistry teacher, role of a mathematics teacher, role of E N T expert, radiologist.

Then there will be absolutely no problem in allotment of roles and society will be free from stratification, but we know that roles differ in importance to society, the role of president of India is much more important for Indian society, than the role of class four in a bank. And because different roles required different amount of training and talent, and because all roles are not equally pleasant to perform, and individuals also differ in talent, commitment, ability, merit, attitudes, you can make a more general matrix of abilities.

So, what should happen then at an abstract level forget about cast, forget about class, forget about race, forget about gender, forget about wealth or political power or manipulation of odd or corruption at an abstract level. All societies will then will have to find a way of allocating roles to different individuals, in such a way that the most important role functionally, most important role in society reaches the most talented person. The most more talented persons in society, should occupy functionally more important roles and not only occupy, they must have desire to play those roles more contentiously, more with greater degree of commitments, dedication, more contentiously.

And to ensure that then society has to give different rewards for different roles, not individuals ultimately these rewards, if there are unequal rewards with roles then it leads to inequality of class position of individuals, but that is not the goal of role allocation. That is not the goal of social stratification, the role of social stratification. Social stratification according to Kingsley Davis at an abstract level, which applies to all societies is the problem of allocation of roles in such a manner, that the functionally most important roles are allotted to most capable persons.

And therefore, most capable persons or in relative sense more capable person, should be motivated to take up more difficult role, functionally more important roles, roles which

are not so pleasant to perform which required dedication sacrifice, sometimes sacrifices required there may be no such sacrifice in case of doctors and professors, but there may be sacrifice involved in roles of army commanders. Not everyone is willing to sacrifice his life for the nation. So, functionally more important roles must be assigned better rewards, and what can society do we will discuss this in the next lecture.

Society can give more economic reward, society can give more aesthetic incentives, humor diversion, adventure, opportunity to innovate to be more creative and self respect and ego. And the moment society does so the moment society allocates sustenance means, salary, parks, facilities, comfort, housing medical, L T C and society gives more humor and diversion, initiate more initiative, more scope for decision creativity, and more prestige and self respect to some then to others you have social stratification.

Kingsley Davis claims that all societies are stratified because of this basic reason, and we will discuss in more detail. This theory of social stratification it is criticism and Mars theory of stratification, in the next class you will agree with me that such a theory of social stratification can only be a functional theory of stratification. Why is it functional?

Because it looks at social stratification from the perspective of larger society, what will help the large society, it is not concerned about what happens to individuals who are placed in situations or in roles with which very low rewards, or negative rewards are associated. This theory is concerned about society that for society to be more effective, rewards must be given on the basis of merit. And the moment society gives rewards on the basis of merit knowingly or unknowingly, it produces a stratified society.

So, thank you we stop here.