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# Sociology

Q: Why social stratification is an inevitable for a society? Explain its determinants in the context of Pakistani society.

## Introduction:

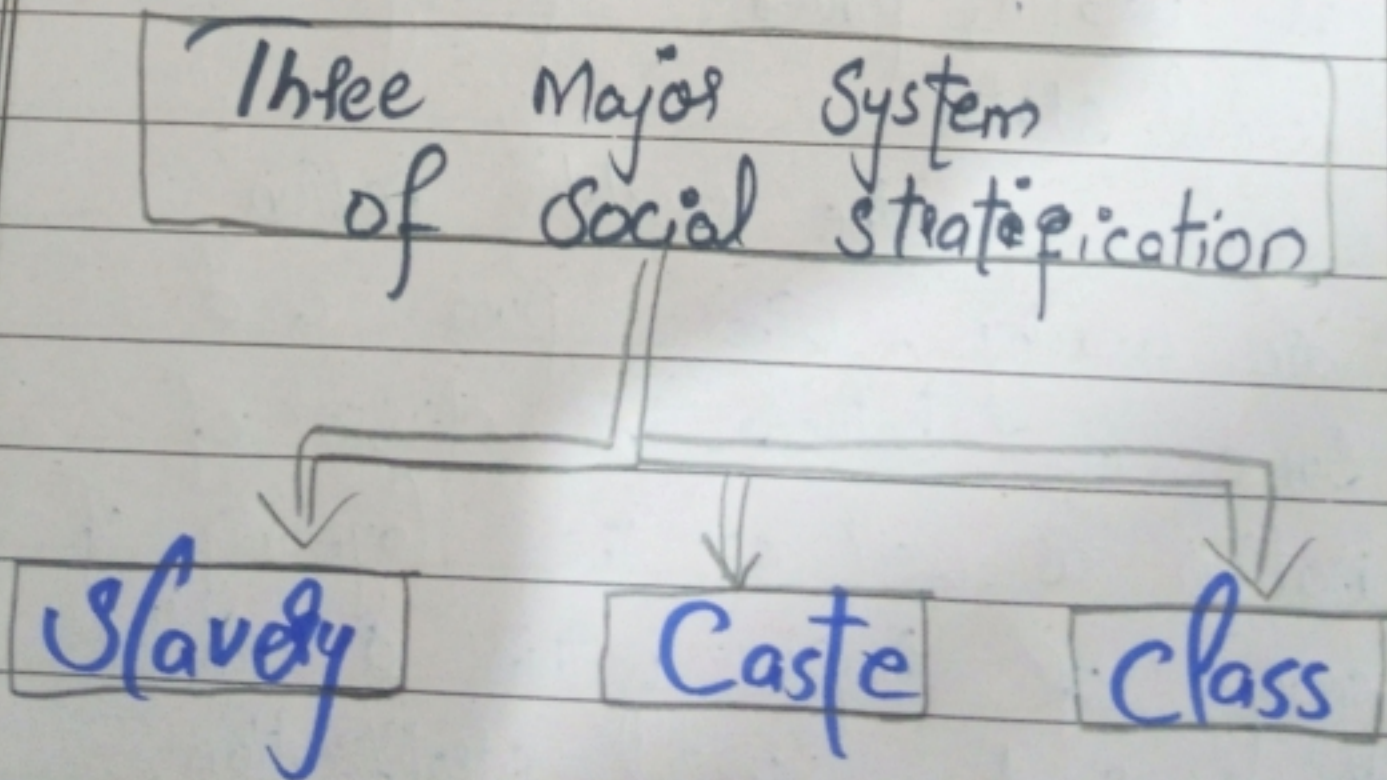
Social stratification refers to the hierarchical arrangement of individual or groups in a society based on various factors such as wealth, power, prestige and social status.

Some of the world's nation are wealthy, other poor and some in between. This division of nation as well as the layering of group of people within a nation is called social stratification.

“The way society is organized and the way social layers are set up are not random; they come from how modern institutions are arranged and work.”

(C-weight Mills)

Social stratification plays a crucial role in shaping the interactions and opportunities available to individuals. It determines access to resources, educational facilities, healthcare and employment opportunities. The rigid social structure in Pakistan often limits social mobility, making it challenging for individuals to move beyond the constraints of their birth circumstances.



## II. Three major System of Social Stratification

### 1. Slavery :

In a slavery system, individuals are owned by others as property. Slaves have no personal freedom or rights and are forced to work for their owners. This system

creates extreme social inequalities, as slaves are at the bottom of the social hierarchy with no chance for upward mobility.

#### Example :

Historical slavery in the United States before the Cold War, where enslaved people had no legal rights and were considered property of their owners.

### 2. Caste System :

The caste system divides society into rigid, hereditary groups called castes. Social status is

determined by one's caste, and movement between castes is generally restricted.

### Example of Caste System:

The traditional Caste System in India, which divides society into categories such as (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras) with limited mobility between these groups.

### 3. Class System:

The Class System is based on Socioeconomic Status, including, wealth, income, education and occupation. Unlike caste systems, class systems allow for some degree of social mobility, meaning individuals can potentially move up or down the social ladder based on their achievements and economic success.

### Example:

Modern Capitalist Societies where people are categorized into different social classes such as upper, middle and lower class, with opportunities for upward or downward movement based on personal and economic factors.

III Inevitable of Social Stratification :

(A) Human Diversity and Differentiation :

Social Stratification arises from the natural diversity among individuals in terms of abilities, interests and aspirations. This differentiation lead to varied roles and status in society. Some people accumulate more resources or achieve higher status due to their unique skills or talents, which contributes to the hierarchical structure.

"UNESCO recognizes over 1,000 cultural sites around the world"

(B) Economic System :

The economic system of societies, whether Capitalist or feudal, inherently produce stratification. In a capitalist system, for instance, wealth accumulation and property ownership lead to distinct social classes. The accumulation of capital in fewer hands perpetuates social inequality, which becomes institutionalized with the passage of time.

(6)

(C)

Role of Education, Religion and Government in Reinforcing Stratification :

Institutions like education, religion and government contributes to social stratification by influencing individuals access to resources and opportunities. These structures often maintain and reinforce existing social hierarchies.

Education serves to legitmate and reproduce social inequalities by valuing the cultural capital of the dominant class.

Pierre Bourdieu

"The Forms of Capital"

## IV Determinants of Social Stratification in Pakistani Society:

### 1. Economic Inequality:

Pakistan exhibits significant economic disparities, which contribute to its social stratification. Wealth and resources are concentrated in the hands of a few, while the majority of the population remains economically disadvantaged. This economic divide creates distinct social classes, with the affluent enjoying greater privileges and opportunities compared to the poor.

"The World Inequality Report 2024, the global top 10% of earners capture around 52% of total income, while the bottom 50% of earners receive only 8.5% of global income".

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## 2. Caste and Ethnicity:

In Pakistan, traditional caste and ethnic hierarchies also play a crucial role in social stratification. Certain ethnic groups and castes have historically been privileged over others. This historical context influences social stratification of intercaste and opportunities, reinforcing existing social hierarchies.

"Caste is a division of labor,  
not a division of men"

(Mahatma Gandhi)

## 3. Educational Disparities:

The quality and accessibility of education vary significantly across different regions of Pakistan.

Those with access to better education are more likely to attain higher social status and economic success.

Conversely, individuals from less privileged backgrounds often face barriers to quality of education, limiting their social mobility.



4. Political Influence and Corruption:

Political dynamics in Pakistan, including nepotism and corruption, contributing to social stratification. Political connections often leads to unequal distribution of resources and opportunities. Those with political influence can secure better economic and social positions, exacerbating social inequalities.

"The power elite are those who hold the reins of power and make the decisions that shape society, often beyond the reach of ordinary citizens"

(C. Wright Mills)  
"The Power Elite"

5. Gender Inequality:

Gender discrimination is another determinant of social stratification in Pakistan. Women and girls often face significant barriers to accessing education and employment opportunities.

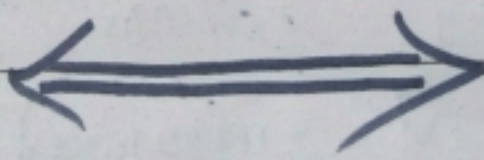
Conclusion :

Social Stratification, though often seen as inevitable is shaped by a complex interplay of economic, social and institutional factors. In Pakistan, determinants such as economic inequality, caste and ethnicity, educational disparities, political influence and gender inequality all contribute to the persistent hierarchical structure of society.

"Schools are not only sites of learning but also of social reproduction, where the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities reinforces existing class structures."

(Jean Anyon)

"Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work"



THE END