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EVALUATION OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN KASHMIR VALLEY, IN THE LIGHT OF CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THOUGHT.

Irshad Ahmad Wani,

PhD scholar, Department of sociology in the University of Kashmir, Hazratbal Srinagar, 190006

Mukhtar Ahmad Bhat

Presently working as a lecturer on academic arrangement basis in the Degree College Shopian, 192303

Prof. Tariq Ahmad,

Govt. Degree College Shopian, 192303

Ahsan Ahrar

Presently working as a lecturer on academic arrangement basis in the Degree College Shopian, 192303

ABSTRACT: The study of social Stratification is and has been one of the central pre-occupations of social scientists. Research in Social Stratification is dedicated to publishing the highest, most innovative research on issues of social Stratification from a broad diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives. This Paper is also dedicated to cutting edge summaries of prior research and fruitful exchanges that will stimulate future research on issues of social Stratification in India as well as on Kashmiri society.

KEYWORDS: Social Stratification, Slavery, Estate, Class, Caste, Darwin, K. Marx, M. Weber, E. Durkheim, Davis-Moore, T. Parson, Tumin

1.1 INTRODUCTION;

If we Endeavour to transgress the ambits of time and look retrospectively back on the history of human civilization, our sight will never miss the fragrant truth that the history of social stratification is of the same age as human civilization. The history of social stratification can be traced back to the times when human switched their interest from fishing or hunting to sedentary agricultural societies with a surplus economy, a variety of occupations developed that were essential to the proper functioning of that society (Frank .N. Magill, (Ed) 1995: Vol. 2, P. 1262). Inevitably, these functions began to be ranked hierarchically, usually based on the amount of preparation and training needed or the importance of that occupation to a particular society.

A harvest of factors/variables responsible for social stratification has been upheld by sociologist, and social Anthropologists. The views vary according to the prevailing social conditions and general outlook and observation of the sociologists of different times. One of the views which explain the cause of social stratification is that at times humans themselves are responsible for their fate. Rousseau says, all men may born equal but some are born more equal but some are born more equal than others, because they are born into families whose members think, speak, and act differently and these thoughts, words, and deeds are more important to the society (C. Owen, 1968: 2). Most people of course, are aware of the fact that some are rich while some others are poor. But people in general are usually less aware of the systematic social forces to think that people themselves are responsible for their lot in life. Sociologists have argued that there are varying factors for determining the nature of stratification in the human society.

In actuality, the basis of deprivation varies from society to society and from place to place.

Again this fact is endorsed by Christian and Hindu scriptures as well.

In Christianity, the social problems of inequality, poverty, and other miseries are attributed to the original sin of disobedience of man to God (Victor, D' Souza, 1981: 2) The doctrine of Karma and Dharma in Hinduism refers to the cycle of rebirths a person has to undergo. A person's situation in the present life is regarded as the one determined by his action in the past life. The remedy to a person's low situation in the present life in doing his duty well so that he will born to a higher position in the next life (A.F.I, Ali, 1992: 3).These views were upheld by social thinkers when the human society was in the theological/ metaphysical stage.

Social inequality can be attributed to relative possession or non-possession of some characteristics such as wealth income or status, which becomes the distributing principle for individuals within the system of unequal rewards. Different societies use various organized principles for slotting individuals into the hierarchy. Traditional societies have often hereditary characteristics as the basis for distribution, while more modern societies often use wealth or income. The importance of stratification is that those at the top of the system have greater access to scarce resources than those at the bottom (J. Anther, 2007 IST(Ed): 463). However, more complicated the society, and more differentiated the individuals become. It was believed by some that once the industrial revolution will occur, it will eliminate social inequality or at least minimize it. Now, when societies got industrialized, the differentiation could not be avoided. In feudal societies, ownership of land was considered as the basis of deprivation. Again in capitalist society, it is the relation of human beings with the mode of production that differentiated them (Raymond, Aron, 1987: 4).

Thus, summing up the whole it can be stated that social stratification is a universal-societal phenomenon. What are particular about it are its specific manifestations and ramifications depending on the particular type of combination of factors such as the nature of the political system, historical development, advancement, economic development, value system, and the demographic composition (S.K. Chauhan, 1980: 4). All these factors severally and collectively undergo, bringing about changes in the stratification system. Thus, the systems of stratification vary in their forms and types, not only stratification varies from one period to another period in the same society, but at the same time may be space bound and time bound.

1.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Most people would agree that few societies are really equal. Ideally we want to believe as Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.....” .But in the real world that is not always the case because some individuals have greater access to the scarce resources of society. Society is this built upon the relationships between the various unequal parts (G.S Ramon_ and M.L, Robert Ed. 2000: 137). So, we know that societies have the internal inequality which may be termed as social stratification.

The study of social stratification is of central concern to sociologists because modern societies display such a wide range of inequalities.

These include inequalities between rich and poor, between social classes, between men and women, and between black and white. Inequalities in wide range in almost every area of social life, such as in job security, leisure opportunities, health, housing, income and the power to influence events in society (Ken, Browne, 3rd Ed. 2005: 11).

The word stratification is basically a Geological word, which means different layers which some rocks are having (David Sills, (Ed. 65). Borrowed by analogy from the Earths Sciences, the term social stratification has come into general sociological use only since about 1940 to denote exactly the same type of layers of the society (David Sills, (ed. 1998: 289). Thus, the term social stratification refers to the existence of different layers, which are created on the basis of unequal positions occupied by the members in a society, the unequal distribution of wealth, power and prestige provides the basis for the creation of different layers or strata in a society. The members of stratum generally have a common awareness, identity, life styles and chances (A.K. Sahoo, et.al, 2006: 40).

Social stratification deals with the ways in which human population is socially differentiated i.e.’ differentiated publicly and demonstrably. The criteria for differentiation may be one but the social display of differentiation usually include a host of factors, including, Race, religion, family, lineage, kind and amount of property or income, occupation, or some other characteristics. Thus, the process by which individuals and groups are ranked in a more or less enduring hierarchy of status is known as social stratification (Ogburn and Nimkoff. 1940: 157).

From the very beginning, sociologists have tried to seek the roots, origin and rationales of the phenomenon. In fact, controversies are the natural outcome of the search for the higher orders of explanations and inclusive system of classification of this phenomenon. The differencing value systems, perception of social orders equality and justice have led them, to provide different explanation. The distinction made between social inequality and natural inequality puzzled the analyses. Rousseau made first distinctions between the two and argued that the first one is established by nature and consists of difference in ate, health, bodily strength, and the qualities of mind or the soul. Similarly, social based inequality according to him consists of the different privileges which some men enjoy, to the prejudice of others such as , that of being more rich, more honored, more powerful, or even in a position to concrete ob obedience (S.K Sahoo, et-al, P. 39.).

1.3. SYSTEM S OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Social stratification / social inequalities exist in all types of human societies. Even the simplest cultures, were variations in wealth or property are virtually non-existent, there are inequalities between individuals, men and women, the young and old. A person may have a higher status than others, because of, particulars prowess at hunting, or because he /she have special access to the ancestral spirits. To describe inequalities, sociologists speak social stratification .stratification can be defined as structured in equalities between different groupings of people (S.K Sahoo, et-al, P. 39.).

The systems of stratification exhibit wide variance in different societies of the world. This variation may be in the criteria, utilized for placing individual and groups in various social strata of the system, or in the number of strata in the system, and with some having two broad strata such as, feudal lords and serfs, or nobility and commoners and other's having more. They may flexibility and the sharpness with which each stratum are demarcated. In some systems different strata are easily identifiable, while in others the boundaries are hard to locate. Considering the various societies that have existed and do exist in the world, certain recurrent forms of social stratification generally can be identified. Sociologists have identified four major types or stratification system, which have different differences between them, the slavery the feudal estates, the caste and the class system these types or forms are briefly described below;

1.3.1 SLAVERY;

Slavery is one of the oldest and most resilient systems of stratification. It was strongly associated within early Agrarian civilization, including Greece and Rome for centuries it flourished to the other parts of the world (W.F. Thompson & J.V. Hicky, 2nd Ed.1996: 187).

Slavery has been found in societies as diverse as classic Athens and eighteenth –century America. Slavery is a classic form of inequalities in which some individual are owned by their masters. Such ownership might arise by purchasing or by capture in war (N. Abercrombie, 2005: 79). Although, slavers are working at the most menial and exhausting occupation, as with plantations of the Caribbean or what is now the United States of America or the mines of South America. Slaves in ancient societies could occupy quite senior positions as administrations. However, the lives of slaves were clearly limited by the fact that they were owned. Some were freed by their masters or escaped, but generally slave societies were very rigid.

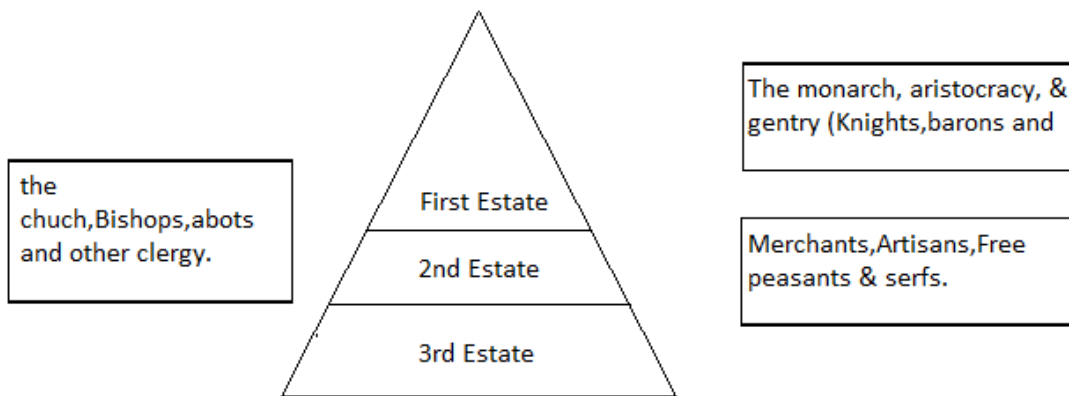
Slavery has frequently provoked resistance and struggle for those subject to it. History is punctuated with slave rebellions; so that, they can free themselves from their master's system of forced labour. Since freedom was granted to slaves in the developed countries over a century ago, slavery as a feudal institution has been gradually eradicated, and today has almost completely disappeared from the world (A. Giddens, 1997:241). But it is possible to argue that the modern world has the remnants of slavery in the use of forced labour in some societies.

1.3.2. ESTATE

The estate system was social hierarchy on the monopoly of power and ownership of land by a group of victorious warriors (lords), who were entitled to labour goods and military service from peasants – the vast majority of the Agrarian population

“Estate” (German –Stande) is social strata whose position is defined by law or custom (Ginsberg, 1979: 165). Estates occurred in federal Europe and in China and Japan. Feudalism of the Estate system or the war, born of the violent dissolution of the Roman Empire initially (W.F. Thompson & J.V. Hicky, 187).

In Estate system, the person's social position depends upon his relationship to an agricultural economy. There were no legal equality between estates, and people in higher estates had more legal rights and privileges than those in lower ones. The lower-strata had duties and obligations to those higher in the hierarchy. Membership of any estate was determine largely by birth, with social position, power and status all ascribed at birth (Ken, Browne, 14).



Estate system of stratification looks like the above diagram.

From the above diagram, the aristocracy comprised the first estate and was headed by the king or emperor. The second Estate was made up of the clergy in Europe and the samurai in Japan, commoners constituted the third Estate and in Japan, there was a fourth Estate of out castes (Nicholas Abercrombie: 80). The system worked as a series of rights and duties owned by Estates to each. In feudal Europe, it was to some extent supported by religious belief which asserted the divine right of kings. Remnants of Estate system persists in Britain in the prestige that continues to be given to the monarchy and the Aristocracy and the defense that is shown to titles of all kinds.

1.3.3. CASTE SYSTEM

Systems of stratification based on caste are typically found in modern Indian, sub-continent. Position in the caste system is based on birth and it is therefore, not possible to change one's caste. The relationships between castes are expressed in terms of honour and prestige there are strong taboos that prevent mixing between the castes (Nicholas Abercrombie: 79). Castes- like systems have been found elsewhere in the world. This is particular true where racial ethnic distinctions are involved e. g., in the southern states of U.S.A, or in South Africa, until recently Blacks and whites were segregated from each by legal measures by customs or, by taboos such as disgust at intermarriage.

In caste system, people believed the social position they are born into (their caste) is good given. They generally accept the ascribed caste- position. The purity of each caste is maintained by endogamy.

In the India caste system, the Hindu religion divides the population into five major castes:-

1. Brahman:-The highest caste of priests and religions people
2. Kshatriyas:-Rulers and administrators
- 3 vaishas: -Merchants and farmers
4. Shudras: - Manual labours.
5. The untouchables: - literally, a group without a caste, social outcastes (Ken Browne: 13).

Traces of slavery and of the estates characteristics of Aristocratic societies persist in modern times. Caste continues to inform daily life in India, but its significance is waning under the impact of economic changes and attempts to legislate against it. The contemporary world is however dominated by a fourth kind of stratification system i.e. social class (Nicholas Abercrombie: 80).

All systems of stratification are founded in the interrelationships between money, power and prestige. High strata have more of all those attributes, although in different systems, different elements have relatively more importance. Prestige and honour are particularly significant in caste system, power in slavery (Nicholas Abercrombie: 80). In addition all systems of stratification have in effect; to regulate inter-relationships between strata. Caste, Slavery and Estate system are underpinned by law, force and religion. Social Contact especially, marriage is prevented by custom and taboo and position of an individual is determined by birth. The result is that these systems are fairly rigid and do not allow any mobility, from one stratum to another. Systems based on social class on the other hand, do not erect such firm barriers between strata. They depend furthermore, on economic differences between groups of individuals. The class stratification has been explained in the second chapter.

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social stratification is one of the oldest and most researched areas of sociology. The social stratification, antedates the Christian calendar by more than a millennium certainly, probably by much more. The idea of social stratification is found in the Judeo-Christian Bible, the social thought of the Greeks, and the basic social and religious texts of the Indians and the Chinese. The idea has persisted in relatively crude form, right up to the present day (David Sills: 289).

The social stratification was prevalent in all societies that over the centuries its existence was seldom questioned. It was accepted as part of the natural order. Religion was used to support stratification e.g., with the head of state often being considered divinely. In the eighteenth century, however, the America and the French revolution, with their emphasis on human rights and their call for equality, changed the accepted way of thinking (Frank M. Magill: 1262). Efforts were made both to understand the reasons for social inequality and to seek means of lessen its negative effects.

Since the second half of the 19th century, four broad sociological theories have been used to explain and interpret social stratification, the natural superiority theory, The Marxist conflict theory, The Weberian Multiple- hierarchies 'theory and the functionalist theory.

Social stratification is probably as old as the human civilization. The systematic thought, regarding society and social stratification originated with two great masters of Greek society, *Plato* and *Aristotle*, who came from upper strata of the society. The society envisioned by Plato was to be ruled by philosophers king with the remaining citizens divided into three classes; Guardian, auxiliary and workers. Aristotle in his book *Politics* said that there were three classes in all state viz, very rich, very poor and the mean. St.Thomas and st. Augustine were concerned with understand why human society where seemed to be cauterized by such distinct and sharp gradations in power, property, and prestige, and attempted to set forth the proper mode of arranging, men in hierarchical order. Later, philosopher's including Locke, Burke, and Boudham in Germany, Rousseau in France and Hegel in Germany, were all aware of the phenomenon presented by social strata based on inherent and /or acquired differences, and each had his own notion of who should govern (M. M. Tumin, 2nd Ed.1991: 8-9).

Though, these philosophers's could not provide a scientific understanding of this phenomenon but their ideas prepared the background of the sociologists for further investigation. The main problem of the ancient theories of social stratification was that it has not been empirically verifiable and observable. As the time went on, new scientific ideas were developed in order to understand and interpret these phenomena (A.F.I Ali: 4).

By the turn of the 19th century, oligarchies and Aristocratic rules were challenged by popular revolution and it began to crumble. Industrialization and urbanization ushered in forces which gave rise to new classes based on power and wealth.

1.4.1 The natural superiority theory by Darwin

The natural superiority theory also known as social Darwinism was a popular and widely accepted theory of social stratification in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, promoted by Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) in England and William Graham Sumner in the United States. Social Darwinism saw social organization as an environment. Certain individuals or groups had the requisite skills or attributes to complete and to rise in that environment; they would become the leaders and the economically fortunate. Others, not so endowed, would fail. The not-so subtle implication of this idea was that the rich deserved to keep their great fortunes intact. The poor also deserved to keep their lot, because it was the result of sloth, ignorance, or some other flaw; they deserved no pity. The social Darwinists believed that their theory was part of the law of nature. Spencer coined the widely quoted survival of the fittest (David Sills: 289).

1.4.2 Karl Marx: (1818-1883)

If any individual could be called the founder of the study of social stratification it would be Karl Marx who saw the conflict between social classes as the driving force in history.

Karl Marx as an economic determinist looked at social stratification from a new dimension. He saw class as the key to history, to social organization and social change, and the individual behavior also. Marx was both a revolutionary and a social scientist. He was concerned with stratification in all types of human societies, beginning with primitive agricultural tribes and continuing into feudalism. But his main focus was on the effects of class on all aspects of 19th century Europe (Richard T. Shaffer, 6th Ed 2006: 207).

Karl Marx, the father of the study of: social class, defined classes by their relationship to the means of production. Thus, as per Marx class differences therefore, are determined by the mode of production. In Marx's view, social relations during any period of history depend on who controls the primary mode of economic production. His analysis centered on how the relationships between various groups were shaped by differential access to scarce resources. Thus, ancient society was based on slavery, feudal society (estate system) on serfdom, and capitalist's society on wage labour.

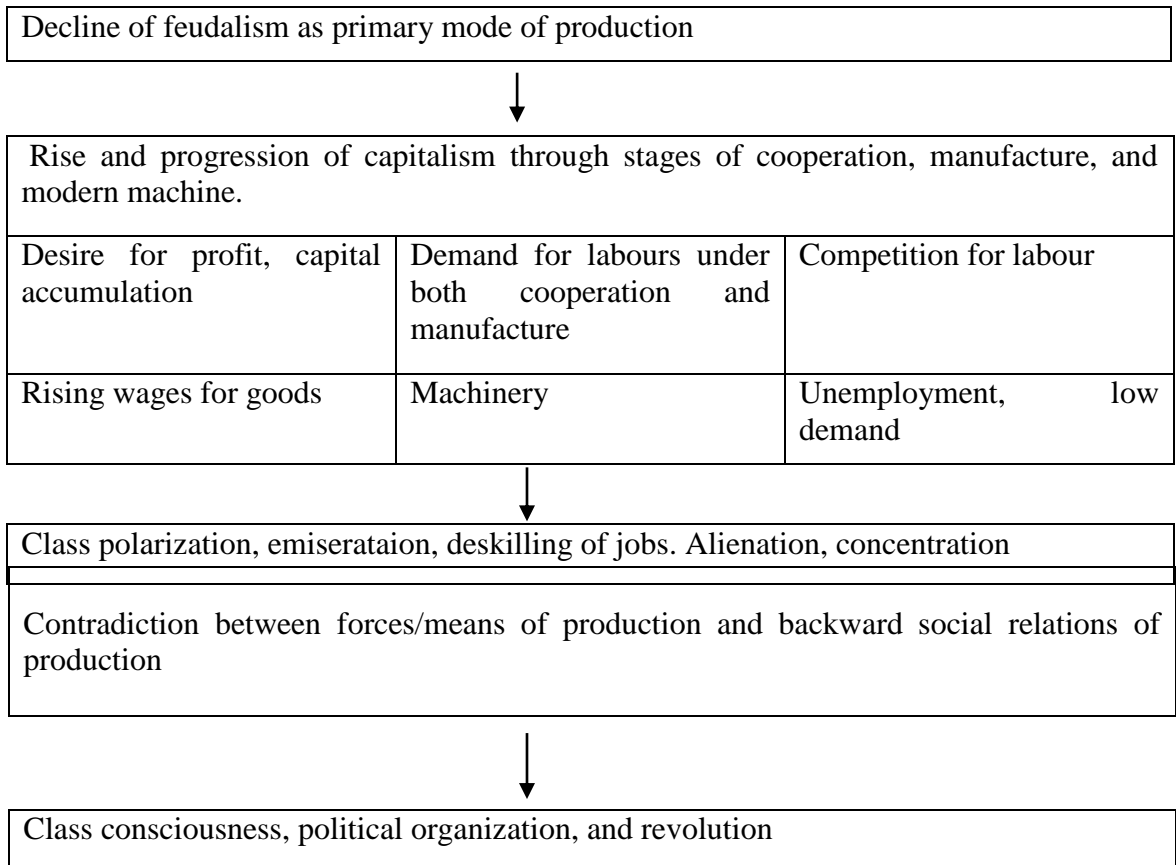
The relationship between what Marx labeled as the sub-structure, and the super-structure of society is a key in Marxian theory. According to him, all social life was shaped and determined by the relations, people establish between each other, in the process of economic production. He described economy as society's sub-structure, the institution, which shapes every other aspect of human life-government family, education, philosophy, religion, art, literature, and much more- as 'super-structure because they are all influenced by the economy (sub-structure) (Richard T. Shaffer, 6th Ed 2006: 207). Marx also distinguished between the means of production and the 'Relations of production'. Marx pointed out that classes are stratified according to their relations to the means of production. Classes are historical phenomena originated from the division of labour in society, and the institution of private property. To him, society is divided into two opposite classes- one constituted of those who own the means of production i.e. 'Bourgeoisie (have's) or capitalists (such as owners of Factories and machinery)' the other of those who do not own it i.e. proletariat- working class (L.L Lindsey and S. Beach, 2008: 237). In capitalist societies, the Bourgeoisie maximizes profit in competition with other firms. In the process, they exploit workers, who must exchange their labour for subsistence wages.

Private property to Marx is the root cause of the surplus value by the owners of the means of production and this creates class struggle. Marx maintained that the nature of class situation differs according to the forces of production, but the broader character of the classes remains the same, e.g., with the change in the forces of production. The composition of classes also undergoes a change. But with the change in the forces of production the class does not go away rather the exploiting class of the previous phase is replaced by another exploiting class. According to Karl Marx, the weapons with which the bourgeois felled feudalism to the ground

is now turned against the bourgeoisie itself (Guerra & Maril, Ed. 142).The capitalists mode of production is responsible for its own destruction. Because, the capitalist system reduces the majority members into proletariat and this proletariat class through a revolution overthrown the capitalist class. This class also abolishes private property in order to establish classless society.

With proletarian revolution, the bases for the class system are removed and the proletariat is emancipated. In the interim between the capitalist and the classless society, a dictatorship of the proletariat exist paving the way for a communistic society and the beginning of truly human rather than class society or class history (C.H. Hurst, 4th Ed 2001: 172).

Core elements in Marx’s theory of social stratification within capitalism.



Finally, the Marxists approach to the study of class is useful in stressing the importance of stratification as a determinant of social behavior and the fundamental separation in many societies between the two distinct groups, the rich and the poor.

1.4.3 Ralf Dahrendorf

Ralf Dahrendorf another sociologist has also given a conflict perspective of social stratification. In opposing Marx, Dahrendorf says that class and class- conflict would be present not only in the capitalist societies but also in the post- capitalist societies, i.e., class and class-conflict is an inseparable part of all societies-industrial and post-industrial. Dahrendorf tried to give a different explanation of the existing inequalities. He maintains the root cause of social inequality is more general factor than the private ownership of the means of production, namely the exercise of authority. The private ownership of the means of production is but one of the several modes of exercise of authority’ in fact, it is not so much the ownership of property or its control, which gives one effective authority over other, and in the modern industrial society, the control of property is often divorced from its ownership. As a result even when the private ownership is abolished, the

scope for the exercise of power does not disappear (Ralf Dahrendorf, 1970: 16). According to Dahrendorf, social organizations are imperatively co-ordinate associations rather than social systems. The authority structure is an integral part of every social organization and it leads inevitably to the crystallizations of interest groups and inherent possibilities of conflict.

Dahrendorf recognizes all kinds of individual or group interests. There are interests in obtaining more material rewards, freedom, and status reorganization, leisure, all kinds of services from others and so on. But the main point is that the means of attaining these interests are related to authority positions within imperatively co-ordinate associations. In other words, they have to get what they want because they are on top in the associations, while the have-nots, find it in their interests to challenge the status quo that assigns them low positions and low-rewards (Harold A. Kerbo, 2000: 137).

Criticism

No doubt Marx's theory provided a new scientific basis for understanding society, but his theory has been subjected to close scrutiny. His theory of classless society has been severely challenged by many scholars on the grounds that, Marx's theory of class, dealing with social stratification is only by product of his analysis of capitalist society, and formulation of the philosophy of history. Further the use of term 'class' by Marx has ambiguities.

Dahrendorf pointed out that whatever private property has been reduced to insignificance, one still finds social inequality. In the former communist nations, although there is little private property, a system of social stratification developed nonetheless e.g. there were five social classes in former Soviet Union; intelligentsia, white-collar worker; skilled workers, un-skilled rank, and peasants. Beisanz pointed out, everything happened differently in the U.S.S.R and other communist countries from what the leaders-even such prominent one as Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky-anticipated. They accepted that the state would rapidly wither away, the democracy would be strengthened. The reverse happened;

Webber strongly criticized Marxian perspective of social stratification Webber generally believed that Marx over emphasized the economic factor. The relation to the means of production may be a major factor of differentiating people, but it can never be the only factor. Webber maintained that there are always other factors responsible for Social stratification e.g. status and power. It is because people differentiate themselves by their way of life status, prestige and position and so on.

Many of Marx's prediction regarding the future of capitalism have not been borne out. Marx failed to anticipate the emergency of labour unions. Whose power in collective bargaining weakens the strangle hold that capitalists maintain over workers. Despite these limitations, the Marxist approach to the study of class is useful in stressing the importance of stratification as a determinant of Social behavior and institutions.

Dahrendorf's theory has also been subjected to critical scrutiny. For example, Dahrendorf depended mostly on the secondary literature and his theory is mainly a theory of group conflict. He himself has admitted, the theory is a tentative one and needs refinement. In order to evaluate Dahrendorf's theory, D' Souza rightly comments, as a theory of stratification, Dahrendorf's formulation leaves many questions unanswered- e.g., is it possible to divide people into dichotomous divisions of those who exercise authority and of those who are excluded from exercising it. It seems that the major limitation of Dahrendorf's formulation stems from his assumption that all other categories of sociological analysis may be derived from the unequal but closely related trinity of norms, sanction power.

However, the most prominent sociologist who has come out with the most influential theory till date has been Max Webber. Webber's view has been considered by most of the sociologists as comprehensive and relevant to every society.

The pioneering German sociologist Max Webber said how the many layers and rank in capitalistic western Societies are defined by people's skills, credentials, market relationship, and property relationship- and by other determiners of stratification such as status and (power, party). Webber rejected Marx's view that class conflicts inherent in capitalism were simplistic and could be resolved by socialism (Frank. N. Magill, vol.2 1995: 1282).

1.4.4 Max Webber; (1864-1920).

After Marx, the next great figure in the history of social stratification theory is Max Webber. He made progress in several ways, probably in part because of his desire to correct Marx, who was one of the dominant intellectual figures when Webber's thought was taking shape. Webber's Trinitarian model of social stratification – based on the concepts of class, status, and party- introduced a systematic, explicit, and necessary differentiation into stratification theory (David- Sills: 290).

In comparison with those of Marx, Max Webber's specific contributions to stratification theory were relatively brief-out, but no-less powerful. Two sets of ideas developed and expanded by Webber have had a particular impact in our understanding of advanced industrial societies. The first, his expansion of Marx's single class or economic dimension of social stratification into a multi-dimensional view (class, status and party) has provided us with a very useful tool in understanding the complex nature of social stratification. Perhaps most important, however, Webber's writings on the development and growth of large bureaucratic institutions has enabled us to understand the nature of power and dominance within advanced industrial societies of all types, better than any other single order by a social theorist (Harold. Kerbo: 95). We begin with his multi-dimensional view of social stratification. For Webber, property, prestige and power are three separate but interacting basis on which the hierarchies are created in any society. He further argues than it is because of property differences that classes are generated. Political parties are generated by power differences and status groups are generated by prestige differences (M.M. Tumin: 13).

Webber argued that power can take a variety of forms. "Power, in general refers to the chance of a man or of a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action. A person's power can be shown in the social order, through his or her status, in the economic order through his or her class, and in the political order through his or her party. Thus, according to Webber, class, status, and party are three components of social stratification in modern industrial world (Charles. E. Horton: 179).

Class:-Webber reversed the concept of class for economically determined stratification. For Webber, however, classes are not stable groups or, communities produced by existing property relations. Instead, they are people who share life chances or possibilities that are determined by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income" within the commodity & labor market (Scott Appelrouth & L.D. Edles, 2008: 166). According to Webber, that "property", and "lack of property" form the basic distinction between classes. But Webber was actually concerned with the conditions under which class consciousness arise. For him, however there was no single form of class consciousness. Rather, which groups develop a consciousness of common interests opposed to those of other group is a specific empirical question; different groups acquire historical significance at different times & in different places. The extent of the consciousness of kind depends to a considerable degree on the general culture of a society particularly the sets of intellectual ideas within it (David Sills: 301).

Status order

Status groups, on the other hand, are communities. The fate of such communities is determined not by their chances on the commodity or labor market, however, but by "a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of honour". Such "honour" is expressed through "style of life or" conventions that identify individuals with specific social circles. According to Webber, race, Ethnicity, Religion, taste in fashion & the Arts, & occupation have formed a basis for making status distinctions. More than anything, membership in

status groups serves to restrict an individual's chances for social interaction (Scott Appelrouth & L.D. Edles, 2008: 166). But status is not as economic class standing. In our culture, a successful pickpocket may be in the same income class as a college professor. Yet the thief is widely regarded as a member of a low- status group, where as the professor holds high status.

As a general rule, status is associated with a style of life. Those at the top of the status hierarchy have a different life style than do those at the bottom. In this case, life style or status is related to class situation. But class & status are not necessarily linked to one another (George, Ritzer: 231).

Power:-

In modern societies, Webber points out, party formation is an important aspect of power, and can influence stratification independently of class & status. "Party" defines a group of individuals who work together because they have common backgrounds, aims or interests (Antony Giddens: 247). To Webber "power" is always structures struggling for domination. Thus, parties are the most organized elements of Webber's stratification system. Webber thinks of parties very broadly as including not only those that exist in the "state" but also those that may exist in a "social club". Parties usually, but not always, represent class or status groups. Whatever they represent, parties are oriented to the attainment of power (George Ritzer: 231).

Webber then saw all three dimensions are important hierarchies leading to the ranking of individuals or groups in human societies. However, they were not all of equal importance throughout the history of human societies. In the early stages of capitalism the class dimension as more important. In caste societies, the status dimension remained supreme. And as we have said Webber saw that in modern societies the "party" or "power", dimension gained importance (George Ritzer, 231).

Criticism:-

This theory has also been subjected to critical scrutiny Webber's explanation regarding "status group" is not clear, scholars have revealed ambiguities in Webbers assertions, while evaluating the tenability of Webber's theory.

D' Souza rightly comments, although Webber's contribution adds to our knowledge on the subject, but it lacks the requirement of theory. He has mainly given a description, without attempting the formulations of a theoretical model with prepositions which are deductively related to one another. His variable, called status honour lacks empirical referents & his treatment of the dimension of power, called party, is too inadequate. It is clear whether Webber had an opportunity of dealing with the subject- matter, in a thoroughly manner as his manuscript which was post-humously published, was found incomplete. In any case it would appear that Webber was more concerned about presenting a critique on Marx's theory than with putting forward a theory of his own (A.F.I. Imam: 10).

In contrast to the theorists we have discussed, (Marx & Webber) Emile Durkheim, was not principally concerned with social stratification. Rather, his emphasis were established sociology as a scientific discipline, uncovering the sources and forms of integration & moral authority, & understanding the place of individualism in modern industrial society. Most of his works revolve around the issues of integration & cohesiveness – that is, the question of order, in society. Although liberal & reformist in outlook, *Durkheim was a central founder of the "functionalist school of thought in sociology*. Which views society as a social system tending towards equilibrium? The organic analogy of society is clear in his writing. Despite his preoccupations with questions of order & the evolutionary growth of societies, however, Durkheim had something to say about social inequality, and it is for that reason that this brief discussion is included here.

1.4.5 Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)

The key to understand Durkheim's sociological perspective, and thus his view of social stratification, is his "organic analogy". From this perspective, society is considered as similar to a biological organism, there are various parts or organs within this social system that serve different functions for the health and maintenance of the total society much like the functions served by organs within the human body (Harold. A. Kerbo: 105). It is

easy to see that this organic-analogy could lead a social theorist to focus on the social system as a whole & on the interrelation of its parts rather than on division opposed interests among groups within the society. Hence, this organic- analogy leads to a perspective on social stratification for different from that of Marx and Webber.

Within the social system, it must add, Durkheim considered morality to be the major factor to social order & integration. For Durkheim, it has been said, "*morality was the centre & the end of his work*". The importance of morality in maintaining social order is related to his view of human nature, as well as his view of the needs of the social system. Durkheim was distrustful of human nature Left to them. He thought people would be in continuous conflict, & selfishly dominating & exploiting fellow human beings for their own narrow interests. In order to save people from social chaos & individual destruction, a strong moral order is necessary (Harold. A. Kerbo: 105). In the "*Division of Labor*" Durkheim saw two types of inequality, what he called, "*interval*" or "*External inequality*".

In a fully developed organic society, characterized by individualism, equal opportunity, specialization, & interdependence, inequality is to be expected because it is based on differences in the internal abilities of individuals. A "normal" division of labour is based on these internal differences between individuals including differences between men & women. Differences in the division of labour between men & women should persist, but other differences, including classes, based on external qualities, (e.g., race, inheritance) should decline & eventually disappear. As society evolves, differential awards should, because of equal opportunity, directly reflect individual differences in abilities & differences in the social value of occupations. In short, Durkheim believed that as time moved on; modern society would be characterized by social inequalities between individuals based on their inner abilities rather than external characteristics (Charles- E. Hurst: 106).

Durkheim also dealt with the existence of "class and class conflict by dismissing them as unnatural, if the division of labour produces conflict, it is either because society is in a transitional state of development, or because of the existence of a pathological condition of social order. This pathological condition of conflict existed, in Durkheim's view, because the occupational guides were not performing their proper function of providing moral order and society was being threatened by selfish individual or group interests. But it never occurred to Durkheim that the whole system of a division of labour in industrial society could be a power structure for the domination of one class by another (H.A. Kerbo: 106). Finally with respect to dominance of norms & values, or the moral order Durkheim held to be so important, it did not occur to Durkheim. This moral order itself could be a mechanism of dominance by one class over other. For Durkheim, the moral integration of society served the interests of all in the society.

The functionalist perspective on social stratification proposes that social stratification is inevitable in society & is therefore universal. Generally, functionalist scholars (Parson & Davis- Moore) have argued that stratification is both necessary & desirable to ensure that difficult & important positions will be filled by individuals capable of filling the duties associated with such positions. The functionalist perspective on inequality is generally interpreted as being conservative when compared to those developed by conflict-oriented or radical theorists. The functionalist theory of inequality is presented in detail because it occupied an important place in discussions & controversies concerning the origins of inequality & because the general framework of functionalism dominated social thought throughout the world for several decades.

1.4.6 Talcott Parson; (1902 – 1979)

Talcott Parson's theory is mostly concerned with how societies maintain order. Generally, functionalist theorists have tended to stress stability, consensus, and integration in society. They view society as similar to the human body with its many organs. Like the body's organs, society's institutions must function properly to maintain the general stability of the entire social system. Parsons, more than other functionalist theorists, believed that this social order was based upon values shared by members of society (Frank. N. Magill, 1267). According to parson, in all human societies, social stratification is something which cannot be done away with as social stratification systems are right and proper for they express the shared values in a given society. It is

because of social stratification rank is given to a person according to the tasks or roles performed by that individual (M. Harolombus, 1997: 31).

The central element in parson's theory, maintained that there are four 'functional imperatives' or requirements encountered by all action systems that is, there are four basic problems that a society, group, or individual must confront in order to survive as a system of action (S. Appelrouth & L.D. Edles: 360). Parson called all these four problems or functions, adaptation, Goal attainment, integration, and latent pattern maintenance (AGIL). That is all societies must solve problems of AGIL. The importance of the preceding in understanding social stratification, parsons claimed, is twofold; (I). The differing tasks of these various institutions lead them to stress differing values (or pattern variables). (II), societies differ with respect to which of the four sets of institutions (AGIL) is primary (H.A. Kerbo: 120). Thus the individuals who best live up to the values shaped by the primary institution or institutions will receive more status, as well as the secondary rewards that are tied to high status, like wealth. Let us summarize these abstract lines extracted from parson's theory of social stratification.

1. A persons place in the status hierarchy is determined by the moral evaluation of others.
2. This moral evaluation is made in terms of a common value system.
3. The common value system is shaped by the institution that is given primary stress in the society.
4. Thus, people who best live up these values or ideas will receive, in addition to high status, other rewards, such as high income or wealth.

It is also important to note that authority or power is attained through an individual's functional position in the occupational structure which of course, is gained through status attainment (Harold. A. Kerbo: 120). Thus parson tried to explain how stratification developed & endures by specifying the "functions" that stratification or what he likes to call "patterned inequality", plays in any society, whether this is "feudal", capitalist" or "the communist society.

1.4.6 Kingsley Davis & Wilbert Moore;

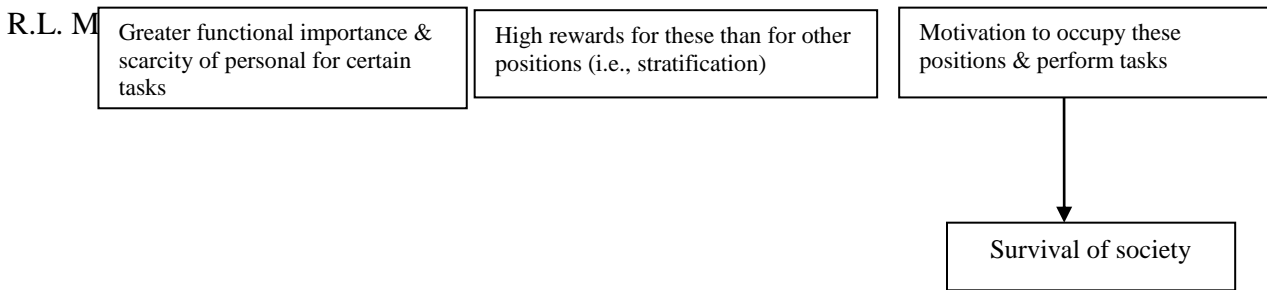
Parsons "articulation of a functionalist theory of social stratification was further developed by *Kingsley Davis & Wilbert Moore* in the 1945 landmark essay "*some principles of stratification*", published in "*American sociological review*". In this essay, they set forth a notion of social stratification that shared the basic premises elaborated by Talcott parsons. They said that social stratification was universal (in varied forms), functional and integral to fulfilling the division of labour.

According to Davis & Moore, inequality is not created by natural differences but by the needs of society. Adopting the functional perspective, they argued that some positions are more important to social well being & required longer training & greater skills (W.E. Thompson & J.V. Hicky: 236). The positive side of social stratification, are aimed at in the theory given by Davis & Moore, it shows that how in a given society the necessity of social stratification is inevitable. They emphasized on the universality of it & also highlighted its beneficial consequences. An individual gains a position in a society as per his deservation a well- talented & able person deserves & thus gains money & prestige when there is a relative scarcity of talented individuals. The higher positions are given to ones who make their efforts & ability count (R.T Schaefer: 210). Yet this assessment often devalues work performed by certain segments of society. The following points provide a basic summary of the theory.

1. Certain positions in society are functionally more important than others, and require more special skills for their performance.
2. Only a limited number of individuals in any society have the talents which can be trained into the skills appropriate to these positions.

3. The conversion of talents into the skills involves a period during which sacrifices of one kind or another are made by those undergoing the training.
4. In order to introduce the talented persons to undergo these sacrifices and acquire the training, their future positions must carry an inducement value in the form of differential access to the scarce & desired rewards which the society has to offer.
5. These scarce & desired goods consist of the rights & prerequisites attached to, or built into, the positions and can be classified into those things which contribute to (a) sustenance & comfort, (b) humor, & diversion, (c) self-respect, and ego expansion.
6. The differential access to the basic rewards of the society has as a consequence the differentiation of the prestige & esteem which various strata acquire. This may be said, along with the rights & prerequisites, to constitute institutionalized social inequality, i.e., stratification.

Therefore, social inequality among different strata in the amounts of scarce & desire goods, and the amounts of prestige & esteem which they receive, is both positively functional & inevitable in any society (S. Guerra &



The Davis- Moore theory of stratification

“Thus, social inequality is an unconsciously evolved

Device by which societies insure that the most important position are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons. Hence every society No matter how simple or complex, must differentiate persons in terms of Both prestige & esteem, & must therefore possess a certain amount of institutionalized inequality.

1.4.7 Tumin; Critical Response

Melvin Tumin was the first sociologists to point out the shortcomings in the functionalist perspective, in his essay “*some principles of stratification*”. A critical response (in 1953) who argued that it was impossible to calculate the “functional importance of any position in society objectively”. The following are Tumin’s critical arguments about the “Davis & Moore” theory.

The contribution of Davis & Moore especially has evoked critical response on the part of a number of scholars. The most bitterly criticized proposition in the theory which the authors have been persuaded to reject is their assumption that social stratification / inequality is beneficial only when it ensures that the most capable people occupy the most important positions. However, one of the rewards elites receive is the ability to help their offspring's attain the good life. The problem is that the children of highly capable people are not necessarily highly capable themselves. The result is a situation in which many people enjoy upper-class status, not because of their merit, but because of that of their ancestors. The second thing has also been pointed out that there is no way of knowing the functional importance of the positions. There have also been attempts to suggest that there can be other functional alternatives to unequal rewards for motivating people to fill different positions.

Second, the fact, that modern society continue to follow ascriptive factors such as race & gender to substantially limit access to elite positions, even for highly talented people, also challenge the logic of Davis-Moore.

Third, there are serious questions about which positions ought to be highly rewarded. In a capitalist economy, a given occupation's pay is determined by the market, not by a rational assessment of it's worth to society. The result has been extremely high salaries for 'rock-stars', athletes & movie actors whose contribution to society is debatable, very low salaries for such crucial occupations as social workers, child-care providers & teachers.

Fourth, Davis-Moore ignore the role of power plays in determining how well various occupations will be rewarded, professional associations, such as the medical associations & labor unions, have artificially drive up the wages of their members by restricting the supply of workers.

Finally, the extents of social inequality are the extremes of wealth. Major film stars earn as much as \$ 20 million per movie. Physician's annual salaries commonly exceed \$ 200,000. Presidents of major corporations routinely make at least 100 times more money than their entry level employees. At the same time, 38 million people are living below the poverty line, & hundreds & thousands are homeless.

The Davis-Moore thesis does make some good points. The relatively low wages paid to scientists & engineers in the former Soviet Union did seem to make them less willing to work hard. And 75% of Americans polled in 1987 agreed that "no one could be expected to study for years to become a doctor or lawyer unless they expected to earn a lot more than ordinary workers. However, the theory is at best one-sided in that it ignores the negative impact of structured inequality on the working & lower classes (L.L. Lindsey & S. Beach: 236).

1.5 Relevance of Theories;

There is a harvest of theories essaying & expediting on the concept of social stratification, but none of the theories encompasses the whole cause & concept of social stratification. Prominent among these theories are conflict theory and functionalist theory. These two approaches condensed themselves only to one variable approach. That is to say that the conflict theory views social stratification as the outcome of economic inequality in a society; and functionalists view that social stratification is functional to the society.

But an eminent sociologist Max Weber holds a different view. He agreed with certain fundamental features of Marxist thought, particularly with the crucial significance of the economic aspects of stratification. For Weber, as for Marx, control over property was a basic fact in the determination of the life chances of an individual or a class. In contrast to Marx, however, Weber added to the economic dimension of stratification two other dimensions, power & prestige. Musing meticulously over the theories as hinted at above, the conflict & functionalist theory are not cogent approaches, to give us an all inclusive concept of social stratification. On the other hand, it is Max Weber who seems to vindicate an approach to study social stratification which takes care of so many dimensions factors or variables into account. It is because of this fact that "class, status & power are prominent variables for the study of Social Stratification among Kashmiri Muslims. Thus, the

Weberian approach to social stratification has more relevance to our study. So, the social stratification among Kashmiri Muslims will be analyzed within the framework of three variables i.e. caste, class & power.

There is a lot of literature available on the theme of social stratification in India. In fact, the most researched area in the Indian sociology deals, directly or indirectly with the social stratification or caste. In this regard, the Indian society has been studied both by the local sociologists as well as the alien sociologists. The focus of these studies has been on the origin, dynamics, implications and change in the caste system. Moreover, there have also been numerous surveys which were conducted on the literature available in the broader theme of social stratification including caste in India (In this regard see I.C.S.S.R's) (The rise of Indian sociology owes its origin mainly to the interest in understanding Hindu Social Organization and the typical caste institution. A large of Indian as well as western sociologists interested in understanding Indian society have paid special attention to the analysis of the traditional caste system and the changes taking place therein. But along with this interest in Hindu social life, some attention is also now being paid to understand the socio-cultural life of Muslim community who constitute the largest minority of the country. In this way the sociological study of Muslims has also come to the forefront in the development of sociological literature in India today.

Like all other societies, in Kashmir also there exist various forms of social stratification among the Muslim community. However, historically a shift it witnessed from one form of stratification to other. According to 1921 census of India, majority of the Muslims in the Indian sub – continent in general and Kashmir in particular are the descendents of locals who changed their religion from Hinduism to Islam. Hence some Muslims and non Muslims say that these local Muslims who originally entered individually or in large groups consciously brought into their practice of Islam, their former Hindu caste practices and customs. With the course of time and advent of Dogra rule in Kashmir, the Muslims of Kashmir came under the oppression of the rulers that divided the people in to two classes; landlords and the working class resulting in prominent stratification based on the property and agriculture.

The abolition of Zamindari system, modern education, migration from rural to urban areas, changing political attitudes, etc. have produced far – reaching impact on the attitudes life styles, usages, customary practices and mode of economic life among the Muslims in Kashmir in modern times as well as the impact of Islamic sanctions on the traditional community.

Enormous literature exists on social stratification and its various parameters. The origin and evolution of social stratification at international, national and regional levels have been studied in spatio – temporal perspective. The ancient, medieval and modern literature on it, have been thoroughly received and analyzed, the social stratification, its nature and structure, has also been elaborately studied by sociologists, Anthropologist and ethnographers. But such studies are confined to the social stratification among the Hindus.

A large of Indian as well as western sociologists and social anthropologists interested in understanding Indian society have paid specific attention to the analysis of traditional caste system and the changes taking place therein. But such studies are confined on the Hindu society and culture, and through insufficient light on different aspects of social life or particularly social stratification among Indian Muslims. The empirical realities demand that the social stratification may also be studied among the non – Hindu in India.

In the recent time some attention is being paid to the study of social stratification and modes of social life prevailing among Muslims in India. But a comprehensive study of a Muslim community in India is still awaited. In this way the sociological study of Muslim has also come to the forefront in the development of sociological literature in India today.

As it is clear from the above mentioned facts that there is a dearth of data as well as of sociologists and social anthropologist's who have taken interest in their study. It is therefore, a matter of some satisfaction that the collection of some papers in Imtiyaz Ahmad's book has succeeded in bringing together papers covering most of the areas significant Muslims concentration in India, excluding Kashmiri society from the coverage in these

papers because this field is completely unexplored so far. So, this study is an attempt to explore this cruel social reality.

Hence a sociological study of social stratification among Kashmiri Muslims is of great importance/significance and requires systematic enquiry modes of investigation for understanding the traditional modes of life, the social changes in modern times as well as the impact of Islamic sanctions on the traditional community life. The focus of the study will provide a comprehensive picture of the patterns of social stratification among Kashmiri Muslims. The study will also try to throw light on variation/similarity between other areas of Kashmir. It will help us in understanding of how social stratification arise, how they are sustained, how they change over time, and what are their consequences for a range of social and personal goals.

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