BLOCK 4
MOBILITY AND REPRODUCTION

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UNIT 10 CONCEPTS AND FORMS OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

Structure

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10.0 OBJECTIVES

After having studied this unit you will be able to:

- describe various types and forms of mobility;
- highlight dimensions of mobility and its implications; and
- outline modern analyses of mobility.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

By social mobility is meant any transition from one social position to another. Change in social position involves generally significant change in life-chances and life styles. The concept of social mobility is classically defined by Pitirim A. Sorokin. According to Sorokin, the shift of position may be undertaken by an individual or social object or value. That is to say, anything that has been created or modified by human activity can experience social mobility.

The importance of social mobility as a concept in sociology is quite obvious. Any change of position in society experienced by an individual or a group has its impact not only on the individual or the group, but also on the society at large.

Implicit in invoking the concept of social mobility is the recognition of gradation in a society. The gradation is normally done in terms of power, prestige and privileges. That is to say, a hierarchical structure then operates in such societies. This opens up the possibility of sociological investigation of whether or how an individual or a group gains or loses power, prestige and privileges in a society. In other words, along the line of hierarchy whether one moves up or falls down signifies change of social position i.e., social mobility.

Time taken to effect the change of social position may vary from society to society. The dimensions of social mobility are many. Sociology of social mobility is right with the contributions of various scholars who have theorized on the concept on the basis of their respective field-studies and data collected thereby.

It is quite obvious that a change of position may take place either along a horizontal axis, or a vertical axis. So, the shift of social position can also be analytically understand in terms of two basic, viz, horizontal mobility and vertical mobility.

10.2 TYPES AND FORMS OF MOBILITY

We will now turn to a description of types and forms of social mobility.

10.2.1 Horizontal Mobility

Horizontal social mobility means movement by individuals or groups from one position to another in society which does not involve a shift into a higher or lower stratum. According to Sorokin, horizontal social mobility means the transition of an individual or social object from one social group to another situated on the same level. With respect to the American society, transitions of individuals, as from the Baptist to the Methodist religious group, from one citizenship to another, from one family (as husband or wife) or another by divorce and remarriage, from one factory to another in the same occupational status, are all instances of horizontal social mobility.

Since horizontal mobility does not involve a major movement up or down the hierarchical ladder, the horizontal dimension of social mobility cannot throw much light on the nature of stratification present in any society. Nevertheless, it does indicate the nature of divisions exiting in a society. Such divisions do not primarily indicate any major status differentiation in a society. More contemporary sociologist Anthony Giddens considers that there is a great deal of mobility along the lateral direction in modern societies. He prefers to define horizontal mobility as lateral mobility involving geographical movement between neighbourhoods, towns or regions.

10.2.2 Vertical Mobility

In sociological literature, most attention is given to vertical mobility, simply put- an upward or downward change in the rank of an individual or group. Examples of vertical social mobility are for too many. A promotion or demotion, a change in income, marriage to a person of higher or lower status, a move to a better or worse neighbourhood-all serve as examples of vertical mobility. Essentially vertical mobility involves a movement which ensures enhancing or lowering of rank. It is important to remember that some movements may be bother horizontal and vertical at the same time.

Classically P. Sorokin defines Vertical Social Mobility as the relations involved in a transition of an individual (or a social object) from one social stratum to another. According to the direction of the transition there are two types of vertical social mobility: ascending and descending, or 'social climbing' and 'social sinking' respectively.

Anthony Giddens refers to vertical mobility as movement up or down the socio-economic scale. According to him, those who gain in property, income or status are said to be upwardly mobile, while those who move in the opposite direction are downwardly mobile.

Interestingly, Giddens comments that in modern societies vertical and horizontal (lateral) mobility are often combined. Often one form of mobilitydeads to the other. For instance, on individual working in a company in one city might be promoted to higher position in a branch of the firm located in another town, or even in a different country.

10.2.3 Forms of Mobility

Analytically one can conceptualize various modes or forms of the change of social position experienced by an individual or a group. Drawing evidences from the American society P. Sorokin states that, both the ascending and descending currents of economic, political and occupational mobility exists in two principal forms.

They exist as:

i) an infiltration of the individuals of a lower stratum into an existing higher one; and

ii) a creation of a new group by such individuals, and the insertion of such a group into a higher stratum instead of, or side by side with, the existing groups of this stratum. Correspondingly, the descending or downward mobility has also two principal form as:

iii) dropping of individuals from a higher social position into an existing lower one, without a degradation or disintegration of the higher group to which they belonged; and

iv) degradation of a social group as a whole, in an abasement of its rank among other groups, or in its disintegration as a social unit.

A more recent treatment on forms modes of mobility is advanced by Ralph H. Turner. Contrasting the predominant modes of mobility of England and the United states of America, Turner has suggested two ideal-typical normative patterns of upward mobility. They are:

i) **Contest Mobility** is a system in which elite status is the prize in a open contest and is taken by the aspirants on efforts. The term elite is used by Turner in a simplified sense to mean high class category. White the "contest" is governed by some rules of fair play, the contestants have wide choices in the strategies they may employ. Since the "prize" of successful upward mobility is not in the hands of a established elite to give out, the latter can not determine who shall attain it and who shall not.

ii) **Sponsored Mobility** is one where the established elite or their agents recruit individuals into their fold. In this case elite status is given on the basis of some criterion of supposed merit and cannot be taken by any amount of effort or strategy. Upward mobility is like entry into a private club where each candidate must be "sponsored" by one or more the members. Ultimately the members grant or deny upward mobility on the basis of whether they judge the candidate to have these qualities they to see in fellow members.

As along as in a society there is a gradation of social positions, there is a scope, at least theoretically, to conceptualize a transition from one social position to another. Such changes are undertaken or experienced by a individual, a group, or even a social value/ object. Such change of social position is called social mobility.

Activity

Try to locate examples of horizontal and vertical mobility among the people you know. Note your, results and discuss with other students in your study centre.

If such a change in experienced laterally it is called horizontal social mobility. A movement along a vertical axis would be a case of vertical mobility. In sociology most attention is given to the various aspects of vertical mobility - which could be either upward or downward.

Analytically one can talk about various forms of social mobility also. The important forms are: contest mobility and sponsored mobility. In case of contest mobility, an individual or a group though its own efforts and achievements actualize mobility. Whereas, under sponsored mobility, instead of the strivings and efforts of the depressed categories it is being granted or offered by either already entrenched higher social groups or government/society at large in terms of certain criteria.

Check Your Progress 1

i) Describe in about five lines the concept of 'contest' mobility

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ii) Outline in about five lines the idea of 'sponsored' mobility.

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10.3 DIMENSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF MOBILITY

In order to operationalise the concept of social mobility and to study its various forms, we need to discuss the various dimensions of the concept. Subsequently, these dimensions are all linked with the basic character of any society. In this section, we identity the important dimensions of social mobility and also indicate their implications in terms of the wider social structure.

10.3.1 Intragenerational Mobility and Intergenerational Mobility

There are two ways of studying social mobility. Either, one can study individual's own careers-how far they move up or down the social scale in the course of their working lives. This is usually called Intragenerational moblity.

Alternatively, one can analyse how far children enter the same type of occupation as their parents or grandparents. Mobility across the generation is called Intergenerational mobility.

In other words, study from the standpoint of changes over the lifespan of an individual is a case of intragenerational mobility-study. If the study is undertaken from the standpoint of changes within family over two or more generation, it would be a case of intergenerational mobility study.

Intragenerational mobility is also called popularly as career mobility. To find out about career mobility, people are asked to identify the jobs they held at various points in their lives.

Studying the American occupational structure, Blau and Duncan have found that a person's chances of moving up the occupational ladder are strongly influenced by.

i) Amount of Education

ii) The nature of the person's first job

iii) Father's occupation

Blau and Duncan's mobility model can be figuratively illustrated as follows:

Son's Education

Father's Education

Son's Present Occupation

Son's First Occupation

Father's Occupation

In the illustration the direction of the influence is shown by the arrows, and the importance of the influence is indicated by increasing the number of lines constituting the arrow.

Less obvious factors also play a part in occupational attainment. Small families can given each child more resources, attention and encouragement. Those who postpone marriage are more likely to succeed than those who marry early, Willingness to postpone marriage may be a sign of an underlying personality trait, etc.

The study of career mobility or intragenerational mobility which deals with the changes during a person's working life, covers a rather short period and does not throw much light on how class is inherited. Also, such a study throws less light on the nature of the society as such. To judge the extent to which a society is open or closed it is always better to compare the positions of parents and children at similar points in their career or at similar ages. That is, intergeneration mobility studies are more fruitful in sociological research.

10.3.2 Range of Mobility

When people move up or down the social scale, they may travel through one or many strata. The social distance thus covered is denoted by the term 'range'. It could be movement covering a short social distance, i.e., short-range shift. Also, a big slide across a number of strata (up or down) is also possible. This is a case of long-range mobility. For example, when Blau and Duncan collected information on a national sample of 20,000 males, they concluded that there is much vertical mobility in the United States. Interestingly, nearly all of this is between occupational positions quite close to one another. 'Long-Range' mobility is rare. On the contrary, Frank Parkin stresses on instances of 'long-range' mobility.

10.3.3 Downward Mobility

Anthony Giddens proposes that, although downward mobility is less common than upward mobility, it is still a widespread phenomenon. According to his findings, over 20 percent of men in the UK are downwardly mobile intergenerationally although most of this movement is short-range. Downward intragenerational mobility is also common. This trend is most often linked up with psychological problems and anxieties, where individuals fail to sustain the life-styles to which they have become accustomed. Redundancy can also be the cause of downward mobility. Middle-aged men who lose their jobs, for example, find it hard to gain new employment at all, or can only obtain work at a lower level of income than before.

In terms of intragenerational mobility at any rate, many of the downwardly mobile are women. It is so, as many women abandon their promising careers on the birth of a child. After spending some years bringing up a family, such women return to the paid work force at a later date, often at a lower level than that at which they left.

10.3.4 Upward Mobility

Acquiring wealth and property is the major means of moving up in modern societies, but other channels are also there. Entering an occupation with honour (Judge etc.), receiving a doctorate degree, or marrying into an aristocratic family are a few such channels.

Popularly it is being held that, the family serves as that social unit through which an individual is placed into the class structure of a society. Through the family the child can inherit property, occupation, educational opportunity, life-style, family connections, even titles and legal privileges. In pre/non-industrial societies, these may constitute the major process for locating individuals in the social structure. In industrial societies, inheritance processes do not guarantee transmission of social status by kinship to nearly the same extent, but such societies still do not eliminate inheritance as a significant process. Important here to note that imitations of higher class life-styles and behavior (at times crude, or otherwise) have also served as useful means of upward mobility in traditional as well as in modern societies.

10.3.5 Possibilities of Mobility

Studies of social mobility invariably leads one to the question of opennes and closeness of a society. Mobility is not possible if a society is rigid enough to allow any movement within its graded structure. On the other hand, mobility is facilitated if a society exhibits flexible character.

Very little vertical mobility is possible in a closed society. Pre-modern Colombia and India more or less approximate such type. In contrast, an open society allows for greater vertical social mobility. However, even in open societies people cannot move from one stratum to another without resistance. Every society has established criteria - which might be proper manners, family lineage, education, or racial affiliation etc., which must satisfied before people can move to a higher social level.

Most open societies tend to be highly industrialised. As societies industrialize, new skills are demanded and occupations are created that were pervasively unnecessary. New occupations mean more opportunities for a wide section of people. Additionally, urbanization contributes to vertical social mobility because ascriptive criteria become less important in the anonymity of the city. People become achievement oriented, competitive, and status-striving . In industrial societies, most often government also undertake welfare programmes which foster mobility

What makes mobility a reality is a change in occupation structure, enlarging the range and proportion of middle - and upper-level occupations while reducing the proportions of lower ones. Mobility created by changes in the occupational structure of the society is called structural mobility (sometimes also called forced mobility).

Box 10.01

It is important to appreciate that modern society has moved beyond the crucial transition from agricultural to industrial society. Advanced industrial countries move beyond the predominance of manufacturing occupations to develop the tertiary branch of the economy, viz., trade transportations, communications, and personal and professional services. That is to say, overall there is a predominance of 'service' sector in any advanced industrial society. Such a situation was forecasted by Daniel Bell almost three decades back. Agricultural employment declines both proporationately and absolutely, while manufacturing declines proportionally. This change increases white collar and middle-class occupations. These developments, rather than individual effort, account primarily for social mobility.

Many scholars have pointed out that the overall impact of capitalist path of industrialization has resulted in widespread downward mobility. While-collar occupations do not provide sufficient scope for vast sections of population for upward mobility. Marxist theory inspired scholars have showed that there is systematic 'degrading', rather than upgrading, of labour under the compulsion of late capitalism. The consequence has been large-scale downward mobility of a collective kind.

10.3.6 Comparative Social Mobility

Once social mobility as concept is clarified and we are acquainted with the theoretical implications, it would be useful to take note of actual empirical studies of social mobility. The findings and inferences of such studies covering diverse societies would help us to relate the concept and forms of social mobility with real determinate social situations. We can indicate the most representative studies.

Box 10.02

Originally, through Sorokin's study (1927) it is popularly believed that the chance to be mobile is greater in the United States than in any European society. Drawing instances from industrial societies of European continent Seymour Lipset and Reinhard Bendix (1959) showed that there is little difference from one industrial country to another. They divided their data into a simple manual - non manual distinction for a number of industrial societies.

Gerhard Lenski computed a manual- non manual index based on data from a variety of sources. His study shows the United States as first with a mobility rate of 34%, but five other European countries are close behind: Sweden, 32%, Great Britain, 31%, Denmark, 30%, Norway, 30% and France, 29%. So we can observe that the mobility rate is fairly similar in industrial societies.

Frank Parkin made a subtle, yet a substantive study to throw new light on social mobility. He sought out data from erstwhile communist run societies of eastern Europe and attempted some comparison.

i) the dominant class of managers and professionals, like such classes in capitalist societies, is able to transmit competitive advantage to their own children, and

ii) the privileged classes assure high position for their children, there is nevertheless much social mobility for peasants and manual workers in these societies.

Parkin cited a study of Hungary to show that 77% of managerial, administrative, and professional positions were filled by men and women of peasant and worker origin, and that 53% of doctors, scientist and engineers were from such families.

The increase in white-collar positions as a consequence of industrial expansion had provided in Eastern Europe a level of mobility for those lower in occupational rank that exceeds that in the United States and Europe. This fact instilled higher aspirations among the working classes.

These studies indicate that social mobility - its possibilities and implications, are all being connected to specific social contexts. In the next section, we would take up the more recent studies of social mobility which have been conducted with more rigorous theorization on the concept of social mobility and use of sophisticated techniques of research.

There are various dimensions in any study of social mobility. If change of social position in diagnosed over the life-span of an individual, it is a case of intra-generational mobility. If the change us across two or more generations, then it is called intergenerational mobility.

The change of social position may be across short long 'social distance.' Range of mobility takes care of this phenomenon.

As against popular belief, downward mobility is also widespread in modern industrial societies. In modern industrial societies it is mainly the 'achievement' oriented criteria that determine upward mobility. Most modern societies are believed to be more 'open' to facilitate social mobility. Nevertheless, every society has its own criteria and mobility attempts are also resisted differently.

Generally speaking all industrial societies exhibit a more or less similar degree of mobility. Communist societies may not be as closed as popularly thought to be so.

Check Your Progress 2

i) Distinguish between intergenerational and intragenerational mobility in about ten lines.

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ii) Write a note on 'downward' and 'upward' mobility in about ten lines.

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10.4 MODERN ANALYSES OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

Seymour Martin Lipset, Reinhard Bendix and Hans L. Zetterberg advanced a thesis that '. observed mobility rates are much the same in all western industrialized societies. This thesis had generated a debate among scholars of social mobility. With the help of more recent and detailed data many sociologists have contested the above thesis.

To appreciate the thesis of Lipset et. al, it is useful, first, to briefly consider the popular 'liberal theory' of industrialism inspired mobility studies. We can state its fundamental propositions as well as list down the logic of this thesis. Once we know this, we then can examine the Lipset, Bendix, Zetterberg's theory vis-a-vis the theory of industrialism. Subsequently, we would draw upon the view of other scholars who have strongly debated and reformulated the Lipset, Bendix and Zetterberg's view.

10.4.1 'Liberal Theory' of Industrialism

The main tenet of the 'Liberal Theory' is that there are certain defining pre-requisites for, and necessary consequences of industry impacting upon any society.

Accordingly, mobility trends in industrial societies, in comparison with pre-industrial one are:

i) absolute rates of social mobility are generally high, and moreover upward mobility i.e., from less to more advantaged positions predominates over downward mobility;

ii) relative rates of mobility of that is, mobility opportunities are more equal, in the sense that individuals of differing social origins compete on more equal terms; and

iii) both the level of absolute rates of mobility and the degree of equally in relative rates tend to increase over time.

P.M. Blau and O.D. Duncan (1967) are among those leading sociologists who hinted upon the above scenario. The arguments for such a conclusion are:

i) Within industrial society the dynamism of a rationality developed technology demands continuous, and often rapid, change in the structure of the social division of labour. The structure of division of labour itself gets more differentiated with more specialized jobs. High values of mobility thus follow as from generation to generation, as well as in the course of individual life times.

ii) Industrialism transforms the very basis of selection and allocation of particular individuals to different position within the division of labour. Instead of occupation, achievement orientation suits the rational procedures of selection. Moreover, the growing demand for highly qualified personnel promotes the expansion of education and training, and also the reform of educational institutions so as to increase their is accessibility to individuals of all social backgrounds; and

iii) The new modes of selection will suit the new sectors of economy - that is, the more technologically advanced manufacturing industries and services, and also within (he increasingly dominant form of large-scale bureaucratic organization. So, areas of economy which are resistant to the industrial way of life get marginalized and achievement oriented mobility pervades the expanding areas of economy.

10.4.2 Lipset and Zetterberg's Theory

Quite conveniently Lipset and Zetterberg's theory of mobility in industrial society is generally assimilated to the above mentioned liberal position. Instead, it is interesting to note that they do not seek to argue that mobility steadily increases with industrial development. According of them, among industrial societies no association is apparent between mobility rates and rate of economic growth. Social mobility of societies becomes relatively high once their industrialization reaches a certain level. Also they do not consider the high mobility of industrial societies as the result of a tendency towards greater openness. High mobility is then primarily due to effects of structural change of these societies. Lipset and Zetterberg's central hypothesis is that rates of social mobility display a basic similarity across industrial societies.

10.4.3 Reformulation of Lipset and Zetterberg's Hypothesis

Featherman, Jones and Hauser researched with advanced tools and techniques to revise the Lipset and Zetterberg's proposition. They showed that if relative rates of social mobility is considered, then only the proposition stands. Otherwise, if social mobility is expressed in terms of absolute-rates it would not be true.

Cross-national similarity cannot be confirmed if one goes by absolute rates i.e. going by set of observable characteristics of individuals or groups. This is so, as these rates are greatly influenced by a whole range of economic, technological and circumstances which vary widely (the structural context of mobility).

Activity 2Talk to various people in industry and see how far the Lipset and Zetterberg's hypothesis holds for India. Compare your notes with other students in the study centre.

The relative rates of mobility - that is, when mobility is considered as net of all such effects, the likelihood of cross-national similarity is much more, in this case, only those factors are involved that influence the relative chances of individuals of differing social origin achieving or avoiding, in competition with one another, particular destination positions among those that are structurally given.

Finally, the study of nine European countries conducted by Robert Erickson and John Goldlthorpe too refuted the 'liberal theory' of industrialism. They studies both western and eastern European societies and found no evidence of general and abiding trends towards either higher levels of total mobility or of social fluidity within the nations. They did not find any evidence that mobility rates, whether absolute or relative, are changing in any other consistent direction; nor again evidence that such rates show a tendency over time to become cross-nationally more similar.

10.4.4 Problems in Studying Social Mobility

After our exposure to the most elemental knowledge about social mobility, we have also tried to acquaint ourselves with the current, more advanced research findings on social mobility. Before we conclude our understanding of the concept and forms of social mobility, we need to at least indicate some of the basic problems that one encounters in studying mobility.

Following Anthony Giddens, we can list down the possible problems as follows:

i) The nature of jobs alters over time, and it is not always obvious that what are regarded as the 'same' occupations are in fact still such. For example, it is not clear whether mobility from blue-collar to white-collar work is always correctly defined as 'upward'. Skilled blue-collar workers may be in a superior economic position to many people in more routine white-collar jobs.

ii) In studies of intergenerational mobility, it is difficult to decide at what point of the respective careers to make comparisons. For example, a parent may still be at mid-career when a child begins his or her work life; parents and their offspring may simultaneously be mobile, perhaps in the same direction or (less than) in different directions. Now, the problem arises in term so whether to compare them at the beginning or the end of their careers?

Still to some extent these problems can be resolved. When it becomes apparent that the nature and esteem of a job has shifted radically over the period covered by a particular ‘ study, we can take care in attending the grading of occupational categories. The second problem, above mentioned, can be sorted out if the data allows so. This is done by comparing parents and children both at the beginning and at the end of their respective careers.

Check Your Progress 3

i) Briefly describe Lipset and Zetterberg’s theory.

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ii) Describe two of the problems in studying social mobility.

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10.5 LET US SUM UP

Modern analyses of social mobility essentially debate over the proposition of ‘liberal theory’ of industrialism. The ‘liberal theory’ of industrialism proposes that all industrial societies over a period of time would coverage to share similar characteristics of openness. Accordingly, the social mobility rates and pattern would also tend to be similar.

Lipset, Bendix and Zetterberg’s study on social mobility confirms that rate of mobility display a basic similarly across industrial societies. But they also point out that the high mobility of industrial societies is less an effect of greater openness of these societies. ‘ Instead they consider the high mobility as primarily caused by structural change of these societies.

Featherman, Jones and Hauser hold that only if relative rate of social mobility is considered then only the similarity of mobility trend among industrial societies would be confirmed.

Erikson and Goldthorpe through their studies showed that no common trend of mobility is available among different societies.

Studies of social mobility should also take note of the problems associated with such studies. Particular social position as determined by job-status is not immutable, because the social value attached any occupation may change overtime. Also, while studying intergenerational mobility it is to be carefully decided at what point of their careers should parents and children be compared.

10.6 KEY WORDS

Contest Mobility : Refers to mobility which occurs through open competition.

Horizontal Mobility : Refers to shifts in Position in a society which does not involve movement between strata.

Intragenerational Mobility : This is mobility which occurs within different generations of people.

Intergenerational Mobility : Refers to mobility within the time span of two or more generations.

Sponsored Mobility : This type of mobility refers to upward status shifts which occur due to the decision of the 'sponsor' or member of the elite group into which the individual is invited to join.

10.7 FURTHER READINGS

Blau, P.M. and O.D. Duncan (1967) *The American Occupational Structure*^ New York: Wiley.

Erikson, R. and J.H. Goldthorpe (1987). *The Constant Flux: A Study of Clas Mobility in Industrial Societies.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

10.8 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i) Contest mobility comprises a situation where the elite status is the goal which is achieved in an open contest. Success depends on the aspirants own efforts. This means that the contest is governed by some rules of fair play, and it complies that the successful upward mobility is not in the hands of the established elite to give out.

ii) Sponsored mobility is a situation where it is the established elite to recruit individuals into their group. The requirement for this cannot be acquired by open competition, effort or strategy. Thus upward mobility here is like being 'sponsored' by other members.

Check Your Progress 2

i) There are two different methods for analyzing social mobility. The first is intrageneration mobility and comprises a study of an individual's careers, and assessing how for up or down they have moved in the social scale.

The second method, that of intergenerational mobility is to see mobility in career and status across the generations.

iii) Downward mobility is when an individual loses status; in the case of upward mobility individual gains status. Downward mobility is widespread.

According to Giddens 20 percent of the men in UK are downwardly mobile intergenerational upward mobility involves gaining wealth and power, and position to a greater extent than earlier.

Check Your Progress 3

i) Lipset and Zetterberg's hypothesis is that there is no apparent relationship between industrial society and mobility rate. However social mobility becomes relatively high once industrialization reaches a certain level. They do not consider the high mobility of industrial societies as a result of greater openness, but feel it is a result of structural changes.

ii) Two of the problems in studying social mobility are:

a) The nature of jobs alters over time.

b) In studies of intergenerational mobility the point of comparisons regarding careers is difficult to decide.

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UNIT 11 FACTORS AND FORCES OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

Structure

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11.3.1 Elite Theories

11.4 Change in Social Environment

11.4.1 Industrialization and Mobility

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11.4.4 Rank and Position

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11.8 Subjective Factors

11.9 Social Mobility and Social Changes

11.10 Let Us Sum Up

11.11 Keywords

11.12 Further Readings

11.13 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

11.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- sum up the factors affecting mobility; and
- present the different views on this

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Social mobility is one of the most researched areas of social stratification. You have so far seen what is meant by mobility in different societies. In this section, we will look at some of the factors that have been identified as influencing social mobility. Certain things must be borne in mind before we begin this discussion. Firstly, no theory of social mobility (for, when we are talking of factors of social mobility, we implicitly have a theory in mind) can be separated from a theory of stratification, or of how society is structured more generally. In other words, the study of social mobility cannot be separated from social placement or recruitment. Secondly, while the following discussion will focus on factors affecting social mobility, it must not be regarded as a passive, dependent variable. Social mobility, or the denial of it, can itself have far reaching consequences for society and social stratification more specifically. Towards the end of this discussion, this

will be touched upon in a little more detail. Lastly, there are differences among scholars on what are seen as the factors affecting social mobility. In this section, we will take a brief look at some of the different ways in which the questions of mobility has been dealt with.

While it is true that social mobility has existed in all societies, even the most 'closed' societies such as the caste system in India, industrialization, it has been argued has significantly increased the rates of social mobility. Consequently, much of the mobility research has focussed on the .study of social mobility in industrial societies, and the factors affecting mobility there.

One of the pioneers in the study of social mobility is the Russian sociologist, Sorokm. According to him, there are certain primary factors that affect mobility- in all societies, and secondary factors that are specific to particular societies at particular times. That is, has argued that no society can be regarded as completely closed, denying any mobility, nor can it be completely open, as there are always barriers to mobility. He listed four primary factors, namely the demographic factor, the abilities of parents and children, the faulty distribution of individuals in social positions, and most importantly, the change of the environment. Let us now discuss each of these in turn.

11.2 THE DEMOGRAPHIC FACTOR

One factor that affects mobility in all societies is the demographic factor. In general, it has been observed that the birth rate of higher groups is lower than that of lower groups. Even though the death rates of the lower groups are higher, the net reproduction rate is such that there is usually some room at the top for members of lower groups. Perray, for e. g., found that out of 215 noble lineages in a certain region of France in 12000 only 149 were left a century later. In general, he found the life span of such lineages to be only 3 to 4 generations. They were then replaced by lineages of non noble birth, or by collateral lineages. Similarly, Alex Inkeles, in his study of stratification in the Soviet Union in the middle of this century, attributes the very high rates of mobility there partly to the loss of lives in the war, necessitating a high degree of mobility. The other important reason, of course, is rapid industrialization.

This is true not only in terms of higher and lower groups, but also in terms of urban and rural populations. The latter usually have higher net reproduction rates. Despite this, urban populations have been growing much more rapidly than rural ones. This is due largely to migration, rather than due to a natural increase in population.

Box 11.01

The demographic factor has a bearing on social mobility. Today advances in medical care and other factors have caused an increase in life expectancy. One j consequence of this is a rise in the retirement age, and the consequent loss of vacancies for new recruits. From another angle, society has a larger pool of human resources to deploy, because the working age now extends longer. On another front this has caused the problem of looking after the aged, a problem which has been there for decades in the western societies.

There a concomitant of this has been the emergence of old age homes, hospitals for looking after terminally ill patients, etc. From the mobility angle, this means that new kind of vacancies are created which must then be filled.

Thus the demographic factor definitely has a bearing on social mobility, but is itself not a purely biological phenomenon, as social factors in general have a bearing on demography. Mandelbaum and others have for example written on how cultural factors such as son preference have affected population structures

11.3 TALENT AND ABILITY

Talent and ability as factors making for social mobility have been discussed in different ways by different people. Sorokin notes that usually, abilities of parents and children do not match, m ascriptive societies, children may not always be as suited to their inherited status positions as their parents. Many ways ire suggested by Sorokin to get around this problem. Popular pressure may force-individuals to vacate positions they are unsuited for. The incumbents may themselves preempt this by vacating their positions and so on. Lipset and Bendix state that there are always new supplies of talent which must be absorbed somewhere or the other. Even in societies with inherited status positions, there were always opportunities for talented individuals to be upwardly mobile. For example under feudalism's first age, Bloch shows now individuals with military prowess could rise. Similarly, Bergel, in his study of social stratification points out that even in the rigidly hierarchical feudal system, there was opportunity for persons of low birth, even from among the bonded, to rise into favour, the 'ministeriales.' Closer to home, the bestowing of a jagir was a sign of appreciation for services rendered. Mobility of this kind, Turner has called 'sponsored mobility', contrasted to 'contest mobility', although these terms were not coined with respect to pre-industrial forms of mobility.

While the absorption of new talent might be regarded as problematic in societies with ascriptive status positions, even in societies that are regarded 'open', this may not prove to be easy. That is to say, an achievement oriented society may not really be as open as it is thought to be. In this context, it may be relevant to briefly mention the functionalist theory of Davis and Moore. In substance, this theory states that positions in society are filled on the basis of talent and training of individuals for the different social positions. The most able are attracted to the most important positions by the differential reward attached to them. In this way, society is able to use its best human resources in the most important positions. Thus stratification is a device by which social placement and motivation takes place.

Now while this theory has an appeal in terms of neatness and tightness, very fundamental criticisms can be and have been leveled against it. In the context of what we are at present discussing, namely the abilities of individuals, critics have pointed out that it is naive to assume that even the 'open' societies, much less the more 'closed' ones, allocated individuals to positions on the basis of ability. Class of origin, if not overt forms of inequality such as caste or race, bring about a situation where there is a reproduction of inequality generation after generation. Inequality of opportunity means that even able individuals from the less privileged groups will not be able to rise. We can also mention here the satire on "The Rise of the Meritocracy" by Michael Young, where he effectively

debunks the myth that the 'open' societies are really responsive to talent and ability. Various empirical studies of mobility in western industrial societies have also shown that at large amount of that mobility recorded is ' mass mobility', that is mobility across the manual/ non manual divide. The class of origin still matters in that the topmost positions and the lowest positions are largely self recruiting. Therefore talent as a factor has a limited role in explaining mobility.

11.3.1 Elite Theories

Talent and ability as the main reason for why individuals come to occupy certain positions was the chief argument of Vilfredo Pareto, one of the elite theorists. He contended that over time generations lose their innate qualities, or persons from lower strata might exhibit those qualities, and thus a change in the personnel of the elite would take place. "History is the graveyard of aristocracies," and Pareto. This was his famous theory of the circulation of elites.

This circulation in Pareto's theory was of two types. In the first, talented individuals from lower strata enter higher strata. At other times, when the abilities of higher groups are called into question, it is likely that groups from lower strata challenge and overthrow the supremacy of such groups. In other words, both individual and group mobility is possible. Max Gluckman has referred to this as 'repetitive change', in the context of changes in African chiefdoms. Of course, it may also happen that such a change does not take place within the confines of a given system, but ends in changing the system itself, i.e, the structure of positions itself. Maurice Duverger has referred to this as the difference between conflicts 'within the regime' and conflicts ' over the regime.'

11.4 CHANGE IN THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Of all the factors that Sorokin deemed relevant, the changes that take place in the social environment is the most important. Indirectly in fact, this can influence the demographic factor (for e.g. advances in medicine lengthening life expectancy), as well the talents of individuals (expansion of educational opportunities may allow the discovery of talent, for e.g.)

A major factor for mobility is thus social change. Changes of various kinds, economic, social, political, legal, technological, and other, have an effect on social mobility. These macro processes of change which affect not only mobility, but other aspects of society as well. One of the important economic changes that have been unidentified by sociologists as having an impact on social mobility is industrialization.

11.4.1 Industrialization and Mobility

Much of the theorizing on mobility has been concerned with the relationship of industrialization with social mobility. One of the leading arguments in this field, associated with Lipset and Bendix is that industrialization leads to an increase in mobility over pre industrial rates, and that once all societies have reached a certain level of industrialization, there is a similarity in their rates of social mobility. A different but related thesis is the Convergence thesis, which has been propounded by Kerr and others, that all industrial societies converge towards a common pattern of mobility among other things, like overall patterns of stratification.

Let us discuss first the theory of Lipset and Bendix. In a famous comparative study of a number of European countries and the USA, they sought to test two main hypotheses. First, that once all societies have reached a certain level of industrialization, they experience higher rates of mobility than pre industrial societies, Second, the common perception that the USA offers significantly greater opportunities for mobility than the countries of Europe. Their data confirmed the first hypothesis but not the second. Lipset and Bendix, list five main points, the factors of social mobility in industrial societies. These are:

i) Changes in the number of available vacancies

ii) Different rates of fertility

iii) Changes in the rank accorded to occupations

iv) Changes in the number of inheritable status positions

v) Changes in legal restrictions pertaining to potential opportunities.

Some of these, such as the different rates of fertility have already been discussed. Let us discuss the other.

11.4.2 Available Vacancies

It is commonly agreed that with industrialization, there is a shift in the occupational structure from Agriculture, to Industry, and later on, the Services. With the shift to industry, there is a sudden spurt in economic activity, an increase in the number of positions available in society. This has been well documented in numerous cases. The migration of people to cities from rural areas in order to work at the new factory jobs is one form of mobility. This has both geographical aspects, as well as a vertical aspect, as usually, city jobs are ranked higher in prestige hierarchies than rural ones. Other examples, can also be cited. New white collar positions also come into existence, as for example in the computer profession. All of these result in the expansion in the number of available vacancies. In this way then industrialization acts as a major factor generating social mobility.

11.4.3 Legal Restrictions

Changes in the political and legal framework can also be an important source of social mobility. The traditional caste order in India assigned individuals to traditional occupations, and certain occupations such as the learned occupations were legally or customarily forbidden to people of low birth. The democratization of political systems, with the concept of all citizens having equal rights under the law, removed barriers to social mobility. At the same time, the introduction of measures such as universal franchise, Panchayati Raj, etc. enabled persons hitherto denied political rights to enter into the political arena. Anand Chakravarti's study of village Devisar in Rajasthan, shows how changes in the wider political system were used for social mobility. Other examples abound.

Related to this is the fact that with industrialization and its demand for skills hitherto not known, it is unlikely that positions will come to be occupied on the basis of traditional specializations. Thus there is a reduction in the number of inheritable positions, and far larger increase in the number of positions filled through criteria of achievement. In this the education system play a major role. It is not the place of this section to discuss the relation of education to stratification, which is done elsewhere in your course, but this is directly related to the increase in non ascriptive positions.

11.4.4 Rank and Position

Mobility can also occur without any change in an individual's position, if the ranking of positions changes. For example, in the USA, one study shows that government positions have enhanced their prestige in the fifties compared to the twenties. Therefore government servants have experienced upward mobility without changing their jobs. This could, of course, lead to downward mobility as well. Due to reranking some occupations would come to be less important in the society and economy than formerly, and thus those occupying those positions would be demoted.

11.4.5 The Convergence Hypothesis

A well known and much debated hypothesis regarding the relationship of industrialization and stratification is the Convergence Hypothesis. This was most clearly articulated by Kerr and others who stated that in today's world, the fact of industrialization was a common denominator which would impel all industrialized societies towards a common future society which they called a pluralistic industrialist society. These societies would have common patterns of stratification as well as common patterns of mobility. Mobility would be high, as the demands of industrialization would necessitate the free and easy mobility of persons from one position to another. This was a functionalist argument in one sense. They also implied that there would be a continuous increase in mobility rates over time.

The argument of Kerr and others has been comprehensively criticized by Goldthorpe. He cities the work of Miller, who, using more data than Lipset and Bendix, shows that in fact there is a lack of convergence between the rates of mobility of industrial societies. This shows that perhaps it is not industrialization per se, but also other factors, such as cultural factors, the education system etc., which also have a bearing on social mobility. Goldthorpe himself holds the view that it is the political and ideological differences that are important between the socialist and capitalist societies, which Kerr and Company include under one umbrella category of 'industrial society'.

Activity 1

Converse with other students and teachers regarding the thesis. To what extent can it be upheld? Note down your findings.

There is a superficial similarly between the argument of Kerr and that of Lipset and Bendix, but in fact the latter's argument as already discussed simply states that after a certain level of industrialization, there is a rise in mobility rates. A continuous increase is not predicted, nor also a convergence. We may also note here that Sorokin did not predict either a continuous increase in mobility rates over time, nor did he predict a fall. He in fact believed that industrialised societies are not completely open, nor are pre-industrial ones completely closed. If at all, he held to a cyclical view of the rates of mobility, which would rise and fall.

11.5 DOWNWARD MOBILITY

So far we have only been looking a how various kinds of changes have enabled people to become upwardly mobile, however this is defined. The same argument has another side as well. Just as industrialization is seen as increasing rates of

upward mobility, it also brings about a great deal of downward mobility. Downward mobility can occur because certain occupations have lost in prestige through a reranking of positions, and thus their occupants have moved down. In a number of cases however, it may not merely be a case of demotion, but rather, that those very positions cease to exist. So this would be a case of structural (downward) mobility, rather than circulation (downward) mobility if such terms can be used. For example the coming of polyester and other synthetic fabrics in India has drastically reduced the demand for cotton. Coupled with a fall in global demand for Indian short staple cotton, many cotton farmers in India have had to face ruin. Some have turned to other crops, others to other occupations, and some have even committed suicide. With the coming of modern household gadgets for example, traditional occupations such as the washing of clothes can no longer employ so many people. What is of concern is not so much the loss of traditional jobs, which may have been quite demeaning to human dignity as in the case of the tasks perforated by the lower castes in India, as that if no alternative sources of livelihood are offered, large sections of people may sink deeper into poverty. Unemployment therefore is a consequence or aspect of downward mobility.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Explain what are 'elite theories'.

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2) Describe the importance of the social environment.

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3) Convergence Hypothesis implies: (Tick the right answer)

i) low mobility rates

ii) high mobility rates

iii) no change in mobility rates

iv) increase in rates of mobility

11.6 BARRIERS TO MOBILITY

Another aspect that is often ignored by the proponents of the view that industrialisation provides avenues of upward mobility, are the barriers to mobility. We have already mentioned during the discussion on talent as a factor of mobility, that industrial societies are not as open as they are made out to be. Some writers suggest that today the systematic class inequalities have given way to 'case' inequalities. There is also the view that capitalist societies are no longer as

inegalitarian as Marx had predicted they would become, and that there is a reduction in inequalities. It is doubtful whether this is true of the western countries today, but it is certainly not true of countries like India, where groups of various kinds have systematically been denied access to things that are valued. It is true that many of the occupations today are filled on the basis of formal qualifications acquired though the education system; however, it would be wrong to assume that all have equal access to education, or to education of uniform quality. Thus though legal barriers to mobility may have been removed, social inequalities themselves prove to be barriers to mobility.

11.7 THE MARXIST VIEW

At this point, it may be relevant to discuss the Marxist view, as many of the critical viewpoints may be directly or indirectly derived from it. The Marxist view of stratification and mobility is based on the class nature of society. Although Marxist view of these matters. Marx posited that as capitalism (he would not have used the term industrial society) developed, there would be a tendency towards polarization. By this he meant that the stratification system would come to resemble a pyramid, with the masses of people bunched at the bottom.) Even the intermediate groups such as the petty bourgeoisie, small landowners and others would in course of time find themselves demoted. Thus if at all mobility was a feature of capitalism, it was downward, rather than upward. The result of this polarization and pauperization would be the overthrow of the capitalist system and the creation of socialism.

Box 11.02

Marxist writers have further developed the theme of proletarianization. Given the growth in service sector occupations, they have sought to see whether the lower rungs of white collar occupations can in fact be included into the proletariat, and have concluded that they can be. Notable amongst those who have argued thus are Braverman and others, although other Marxists have disagreed. Outside the Marxist fold, there are those like Dahrendorf and others who argue that the changes that have taken place since the analysis of Marx have been so far reaching, that today's societies can no longer even be called capitalist, but rather, post-capitalist.

Therefore, from the Marxist perspective, the factors causing mobility are those that are basic to the system of capitalism, and furthermore, the opportunities for upward mobility are negligible, and the bulk of mobility is downward.

11.8 SUBJECTIVE FACTORS

The foregoing discussion has been about the various objective factors affecting social mobility, as seen from the different perspectives. Let us now look at the subjective factors, namely those factors that motivate people to be mobile. Here we are obviously talking about aspirations for upward mobility. In many cases, of course, mobility takes place involuntarily, as many happen in the case of a re ranking occupations. But given individuals in similar positions, what motivates one to strive for mobility and another not to. Let us look therefore at some of the subjective factors of social mobility. We can assume safely that individuals usually

with to be upwardly rather than downwardly mobile. Veblen's book, The Theory of the Leisure Class allows us to infer that every stratification system is automatically a source of mobility. This is because every individual's estimation of himself or herself is largely based on other's evaluation of them. And individuals will always seek to be well thought of in the eyes of their fellow men. Thus they will aspire to those positions which society deems to be worthwhile. The process of Sanskritization shows how it is in fact a commitment to the values of the caste system that is the source of aspiration for mobility.

Activity 2

Try to locate the subjective factor in people you know have had any kind of social mobility. Discuss your findings with other students in the study centre.

But as Beteille points out, while the upwardly aspiring groups wish to be included among the higher groups, once they arrive there, they try to retain their exclusivity. Thus in the case of the caste system both processes, those of inclusion and exclusion paradoxically coexist. This idea is similar to that of social closure, used by Weber.

But to return to the main argument, we may generalise by saying that wherever there exist systems of values, commitment to those values will automatically generate motivations for mobility.

Merton has also written about the importance of the reference group in determining social behaviour. He states that the individual who seeks to be mobile has as a reference group a non membership group, rather than his own group. Thus the norms which be adopts are deviant so far as his own groups is concerned. This process he terms "anticipatory socialization". Those individuals who for a variety of reasons are at the periphery of their social groups may undergo such anticipatory socialization. The process of Sanskritization can once again be used as an example of this, where a caste adopts the life style and customs of a higher caste, and over a period of time strives to be recognized as higher in the hierarchy.

11.9 MOBILITY AND SOCIAL CHANGES

In the discussion so far social mobility has been treated as a dependent variable, whereas social structure is the independent one. However, as the brief mention of Marx above shows, mobility, or the lack of it can itself be a source of the system. Thus instead of a discussion in terms of objectives factors versus subjective factors as distinct and separate, one should link structure and agency, and look at their interrelation. Giddens criticizes conventional discussions of mobility which look at classes as fixed categories which can be populated by different people at different times. Schumpeter for example likens classes to buses, which nave different passengers at different times. The problem here is two-fold. Firstly, one cannot separate a discussion of mobility from factors that structure class relations in general, and secondly, the very process of mobility from factors that structure class relations in general, and secondly, the very process of mobility can bring about changes in the system of stratification.

Merton's work on social structure and anomie, sheds more light on this. He differentiates between socially accepted goals and means of achieving these goals.

The goals refer to the values of society. Those who accept the goals and the means of achieving them are Conformists. But there may be those who reject the goals, i.e. The values, as well as the means of achieving them. These people may either retreat from social life, Retreatism, or may rebel against society, Rebellion. In the latter case, they may, as referred to earliest, postulate a new structure of society, rather than seek advancement within the given structure.

When a discontent with the existing system leads to change of the system, this itself will throw up new positions and therefore mobility. Therefore it is difficult to clearly separate the objective and subjective factors into watertight compartments. Social structure may itself generate anomie.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Marx has posited that in capitalism.
   i) these would be pauperization
   ii) there would be low mobility
   iii) there would be a tendency for polarization
   iv) all of the above

2) Describe some of subjective factors is social mobility.

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11.10 LET US SUM UP

This discussion has tried to present some of the main macro structural as well as more subjective factors that affect social mobility. At the same time, we have tried to take a somewhat critical look at the factors generating social mobility. An attempt has also been made to present differing viewpoints to enable student to develop their own critical faculties. A brief reading list is provided for students who with to go further. Unfortunately there is no a comparable amount of empirical work on mobility in India as there is on the developed countries of the west.

11.11 KEYWORDS

Convergence : A theory which stresses advent of a common industrial society as capitalism progresses.

Demographic : Pertaining to population, its growth rates and various other aspects such as life expectancy

Elite : The strata of society which has all the benefits of wealth and property.

Subjective : That which depends upon inter-person attitudes

11.12 FURTHER READINGS

Goldthorpe, J.rL (1967) Social Stratification in Industrial Society, in Bendix and Lipset, ed, *Class, Status and Power,* London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Lipset, Seymour and Bendix, Reinhard, (1959). *Social Mobility in Industrial Society,* Berkeley, University of California Press.

11.13 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) According to Pareto, talent and ability is the chief reason why individuals occupy certain positions. Pareto argued that is was innate superiority that created the elite. Yet it was possible that the elite might lose their abilities, or persons from lower strata can exhibit those qualities and thus a change in the elite could take place.

2) Sorokin is of the view that changes in the social environment lead to charges in the demographic factors such as life expectancy, and the talents of the individuals. Thus a change in social environment is a major factor in creating social mobility. Changes of different kinds like the economic, social, political, legal, technological all affect mobility.

Check Your Progress 2

1) (iii)

2) Every stratification system according to Weber is a source of mobility. This is because self-evaluation depends on the other evaluation of oneself. A good example of the subjective factors also, is the process of Sanskritization in which it is commitment to the caste system which is the source of aspiration for mobility.

UNIT 12 CULTURAL AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

Structure

12.0 Objectives

12.1 Introduction

12.2 Cultural and Social Reproduction: The Marxist Tradition

12.3 Cultural and Social Reproduction: The Durkheimian Tradition

12.4 Cultural and Social Reproduction: The Ethnomethodological Tradition

12.5 Cultural and Social Reproduction: The Structuralist Tradition

12.6 Cultural and Social Reproduction: Bourdieu

- 12.6.1 The Habitus and Field
- 12.6.2 Taste, Class and Education

12.7 Let Us Sum Up

12.8 Key Words

12.9 Further Reading

12.10 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the class and culture as a form of social stratification
- Conceptualise the concept of cultural and social reproduction
- Contextualise the various traditions of cultural and social reproduction
- Examine the dialectic relationship between habitus and field
- Understand the interface between education and cultural reproduction

12.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous units of this block we have looked that how *social stratification* leads to a division in the society in terms of factors such as wealth, power and prestige. Members of a particular stratum have common identity, similar interests and a similar lifestyle. As members of different social groups they enjoy or suffer the unequal distribution of rewards in society. We have also looked that how *social mobility* refers to the amount of movement from one

social stratum to another social stratum. It is generally assumed that social mobility is significantly higher in industrial societies than in pre-industrial societies. Social mobility reveals the scope of opportunity for talent and rewards for the genuine efforts. So, on the one hand, it is vital for understanding the class structure of any society, and on the other, in determining how meritocratic a society is. Therefore, in this unit we will focus on that how the cultural and social reproduction in the social world leads to easy and effective social mobility of the members of the dominant classes.

Many of the sociologists have seen class structure as leading to class action through giving rise to a particular type of class consciousness. Most of the work which discussed about class identity have emphasized on cultural differences. These cultural differences denote particularly differences in tastes and lifestyle between groups in the stratification system.

12.2 CULTURAL AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION: THE MARXIST TRADITION

In the opinion of Karl Marx, *wages* generate and create a distorted image of the relationship between people in the market arena. There emerge mainly two classes on the basis of the ownership and non-ownership of means of production. The one group who is having the ownership of the means of production offer wages to the working group (non-owners of the means of production) in return of their labour. Marx argues that it appears that wages are means of a fair exchange for the consumption of labour but in essence this labour power is generating the 'surplus value' for its consumers. Therefore, in true sense this wage relation is a relation of 'exploitation', and whatever efforts take place for changing the wage conditions through the efforts of trade union bargaining, wage increases, improved conditions of services, the mechanism of exploitation would be always reproduced. So according to Marx the components of a market culture are reproduced such that the real relations that befit the old order remain intact and hidden.

Louis Althusser's concept of 'interpellation' precisely offered the emergence of cultural identity through the cultural and social reproduction. 'Interpellation' is a process in which we encounter our cultural values and internalise and assimilate them. One's position in a particular relationship with power is decided by acceptance or non-acceptance of cultures' given attitudes. The most prominent example of interpellation could be the typical male and

female roles that are assigned by the society from a very early age. We are conditioned to believe that males are the dominant and more powerful sex, whereas women are more sensitive, compassionate and caring than men. The men are expected to go outside home and work hard to earn money to support their families. On the other hand, females should do household chores and do the rearing and upbringing of children. Therefore, from these examples we can see that how society interpellates these ideas into our mind and leads to cultural and social reproduction.

12.3 CULTURAL AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION: THE DURKHEIMIAN TRADITION

For Durkheim, the issues of social and cultural reproduction is not reveal their occurrence behind the distorted ideological mask of change but rather to search for the appropriate collective secular credo that will insure reproduction of solidarity in the face of change (Smith and Jenks 2000). In Division of Labour, Durkheim talked about the two ideal types of integrations across the continuum of modernity in the form of 'mechanical' and 'organic' solidarity. Mechanical solidarity has a relatively undifferentiated social structure, less specialization little or no division of labour and intense collective consciousness. Dynamic

density leads to change from mechanical to organic solidarity. Organic solidarity has much more differentiated social structure, high specialization and much greater and more refined division of labour. Further there is a movement away from collective consciousness into the ascendance of individual consciousness.

Durkheim and his followers attempted to produce a theory of benign reproduction. A theory, that holds society together in the face of potential fragmentation such as 'anomie'. Durkheim, in contrast to the Marxist respective, is asserting the necessity of social and cultural reproduction, the necessity of conformity through change. The Durkheimain tradition views cultural and social reproduction with the lens of optimism. It is consensual rather than divisive and its motivation is integrative rather than conflicting.

12.4 CULTURAL AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION: THE ETHNOMETHODOLOGICAL TRADITION

Garfinkel, the pioneer of ethnomethodology, similarly like Durkheim, considers the "social facts" to be the fundamental sociological phenomenon. But "social facts" of Garfinkel are entirely different from Durkheim's "social facts". Durkheim's 'collective consciousness' is similar to Garfinkels' concept of taken-for-grantedness of people's everyday knowledge. For ethnomethodologists, cultural reproduction is a necessary process as well as a purpose. In the words of Garfinkel the focus of ethnomethodology are as follows:-

For ethnomethodology the objective reality of social facts, in that, and just how, in is every society's locally, endogenously produced, naturally organized, reflexively accountable, on- going, practical achievement, being everywhere, always only, exactly and entirely, member's work, with no time out, and with no possibility of evasion, hiding out, passing, postponement, or buy-outs, is *thereby* sociology's fundamental, phenomenon.

(Garfinkel 1991:11)

Ethnomethodology has dissolute the role of sociologist as expert. According to it, the sociologist exercises the same skills and practices as the lay member but they have the capability of reflexing back upon such practices. It reiterates the essentialities of both sociologist and lay member as agents in the reproduction of culture.

12.5 CULTURAL AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION: THE STRUCTURALIST TRADITION

Structuralism is an influential perspective to the study of culture. It has its origin in linguistics. According to this perspective, social life is constructed and guided through language. It was Ferdinand de Saussure (1960) who originally provided that the underlying patterns of any cultural phenomenon of the social world has to be understood in terms of a linguistic phenomenon. Signs are very important aspects to understand the social life. Signified and signifier together form a sign. Saussure opined that there is an arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified. Language is not simply a collection of unrelated signifiers. Meanings

of signifiers are always relative to the other signifiers. Especially the main importance here is relations of difference, including binary oppositions. Therefore, here is a social world in which meanings, people, and all the other aspects of the social world, are being shaped by the structure of language. Saussure argued that language as a social and cultural phenomenon shared by members of a social group and transmitted to next generation, therefore, it tends to be fixed and unchanging.

While Saussure attempted to uncover the basic structure of signs and language which influenced the development of structuralism, on the other hand, Claude Levi-Strauss (1964) was the first to use structuralism in the understanding of kinship systems and myths. He primarily used geological metaphor to understand the cultural phenomenon. He argued that cultural phenomenon can be understood through the excavation of the cultural strata and subsequent appearance of their patterns of interrelation. In other words cultural elements are the manifestations of underlying patterns at a deeper level. The details of different kinship system or myths present around the whole social world could be very different, but the fundamental structure is the same. Overall in structuralism the meaning of a sign in a particular culture generally arise from convention of overcoming the arbitrary relation between the signifier and signified. Hence, these conventions which prevailed in the social world reproduce culture, and within structuralism culture is dependent on reproduction.

Check Your Progress 1

1) What do you mean by Cultural Reproduction?

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2) Briefly explain the concept of cultural and social reproduction from the lens of Marxist tradition.

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3) Discuss Durkheim's views on cultural and social reproduction.

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12.6 CULTURAL AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTIN: BOURDIEU

Bourdieu proposed a critical theory of culture. His ideas provide an insight into the nexus of power and authority in understanding the significance of culture within our social sphere. He focused his analysis on the education system, and how this institution plays an important role in the transmission and constitution of legitimate knowledge. Here is the way Bourdieu began his analysis:

the cultural field is transformed by successive restructuration rather than by radical revolutions, with certain themes being brought to the fore while others are set to one side without being completely eliminated, so that continuity of communication between intellectual generations remains possible. In all cases, however, the patterns informing the thought of a given period can be fully understood only by reference to the school system, which is alone capable of establishing them and developing them, through practice, as the habits of thought common to a whole generation.

(Bourdieu in Young 1971: 192)

In this sense Bourdieu is emphasizing that how forms and patterns of communication perpetuate the ideology of particular communities. According to him the education system is biased in the favour of the culture of dominant social classes. In this way, it disparages the knowledge and skills of lower classes. Addressing the contact of education, Bourdieu (1971) argues that the major role of the education system is cultural reproduction. Bourdieu differs from Durkheimian epistemology in terms of the transmission of the elements of culture. For Durkheim, there is always the transmission of the element of culture as a whole, whereas, for Bourdieu, it is the reproduction of the culture of the 'dominant classes'. These dominant classes have the power to construct the narratives and ability to impose their ideology and knowledge on lower classes. As well as they consider this transmission of knowledge and communication as legitimate. Further, the dominant classes are able to fashioned and champion their own culture as most worthy of being sought and possessed. They are also able to establish their own culture as the basis for knowledge in the educational system.

Bourdieu claims that the educational system is the major site of the struggle over the monopoly of symbolic violence. Symbolic violence is mainly practiced through cultural mechanisms. Through this symbolic violence repression becomes a natural way of human socialization towards a culture that is pervasively oppressive. Here we find obvious influence of Marxism on Bourdieu. He is very critical of the structures and institutions appearances and he tries to delve into deep and uncover due underlying essence and true conditions which are distorted by these mechanisms. For Bourdieu, educational system plays a significant role in reproducing existing power and class relations.

For Bourdieu the possession of the dominant culture is 'cultural capital'. He claims that those who possess the cultural capital have the power and means of reproducing the culture of the ruling class. Cultural capital becomes a benchmark for the distinction between different social strata in the social space. Class differences in educational attainment are mainly due to the uneven distribution of cultural capital throughout the social structure. According to Shaienks and

Gluszynski (2007) the children of parents who hold a postsecondary degree have 60 per cent chances to attend higher education themselves, while those children whose parents have less than a high school degree have only a 32 per cent chance of attending higher education.

Upper class background students have an in-built privilege as well as advantage because they have been grown up and socialised into the dominant culture. Bourdieu argues that, the success of all school education depends fundamentally on the education previously accomplished in the earliest years of life. Therefore, success in the schools depends on these prior skills and knowledge. Education never starts from the scratch; it has always a prior foundation. Students from the dominant classes have a process of socialization in such a way that they themselves internalised the required skills and knowledge during their initial year of schooling. In the words of Bourdieu, they 'possess the code of the message' through which they are able to decode the messages transmitted in the classroom. Hence, class background significantly affects one's chances to move upward in the strata. For example, the chance that a children born to the parents in the 30 to 40 per cent or 40 to 50 per cent ranges of income have chances to move up into the top 50 per cent of income earners was about 50 per cent. On the other hand, children of parents from the bottom 20 per cent of income earners have only a 38 per cent chance of moving into the top 50 per cent. Further, for the bottom 20 per cent of families, 62 per cent of children remained within the bottom 50 per cent of income earners (Croak et al. 2010). Therefore, there is a direct impact of cultural capital on the educational attainment of social groups. The middle-class student's subculture is closer to the dominant culture, so they have good chances of higher success rates than working-class students.

12.6.1 The Habitus and Field

Bourdieu (1984) in his later work developed his ideas in terms of the concept of habitus and field.

Habitus: This helps in understanding a connection between the culture of a society and the structuring of social relationships. The habitus are the mental structures that regulate the people act. It is a cognitive structure through which people perceive, understand, think and appreciate the social sphere. The habitus both produces, and is produced by, the society. A habitus is developed through long-term occupation of a position and experience within the society. Different social groups have different experiences and life chances in society, so not every group has the same habitus. It depends on the nature of one's position in that social world. The current habitus has always its creation and origin in the course of collective history: "The habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history" (Bourdieu, 1977:82).

Field: The field is a network of relations among the objective positions. Bourdieu sees the field that both "undergirds and guides the strategies whereby the occupants of these positions seek, individually or collectively, to safeguard or improve their position, and to impose the principle of hierarchization most favourable to their own products" (Bourdieu, cited in Ritzer, 2011:535). The field is an arena of competitive battles in which different types of capital such as *economic, cultural, social, symbolic* are strategically used. The strategies of agents, to safeguard or improve their social position, depend on their positions in the field.

Bourdieu sees relationship between habitus and field in two main ways, "on the one hand, the field *conditions* the habitus; on the other, the habitus *constitutes* the field as something that is meaningful, that has sense and value, and that is worth the investment of energy" (ibid:537). Thus, there is a dialectical relationship between habitus and field. Here in the words of Bourdieu:

The dispositions constituting the cultivated *habitus* are only formed, only function and are only valid in a *field*, in the relationship with a field…. which is itself a 'field of possible forces,' a 'dynamic' situation in which forces are only manifested in their relationship with certain dispositions. This is why the same practices may receive opposite meanings and values in different fields, in different configurations, of in opposing sectors of the same field.

(Bourdieu, 1984:94 as cited in Ritzer 2011:538)

According to Bourdieu, because of structural invariants, especially habitus and field, there is a tendency to generate a specific taste and lifestyles in the social world, which in turn is closely related to education.

12.6.2 Taste, Class and Education

In his empirical study, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984), Bourdieu discusses the aesthetic preferences of different social groups. In this work, Bourdieu is attempting to show that how the people's tastes and lifestyles are related to their socialization and education. He argues that there is a very significant relationship between the cultural practices to educational capital and secondarily, to social origin. Different social classes have different tastes and lifestyles, also these different social classes have also different levels of prestige. Therefore, cultural capital can take various forms, in terms of aesthetic preferences such as tastes in art, films, music and food and also in terms of educational qualifications and knowledge.

According to Bourdieu, there are different levels of cultural capital which divided the society into different social groups:

1. *Legitimate Culture* is the culture of the dominant Classes and allows an appreciation of what is regarded as high art, classical music and serious literature.
2. *Middlebrow Culture* involves an appreciation and understanding of the major art forms, but minor works are preferred to those with the greatest artistic merit. For example, in terms of music, this might involve an appreciation of Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue rather than the work of great classical composers such as Beethoven and Mozart.
3. *Popular taste* is akin to what might be seen as mass or popular culture and involves, for example, pop music.

People in the society learn to express good taste through upbringing and education. The people with the legitimate taste can have easy access to the culturally advanced networks. Bourdieu argue that the education system attaches the highest value to legitimate taste. The transmission of the cultural capital in the form of particular valued signs and the styles of their presentation is the primary function of education and different socialization variants. Therefore those who grown up with legitimate taste find it easier to succeed in the education system and they are also likely to stay longer.

Bourdieu argues that educational achievement or a well-paid job is solely not depending on good and distinct taste, but it surely helps. For example, privately educated, middle-class students often had detailed knowledge of premier universities, which they had acquired from both family and school. It also shapes teacher's perceptions of their students. Bourdieu's other major concept of the *cultural unconscious* resonates strongly with the notion of habitus. It refers to the tacit, assumed and unspoken grounds which precondition any cultural production. Therefore, the teachers unconsciously recognise different tastes. They have high affection and inclination towards the legitimate taste. Bourdieu argues that teachers are strongly influenced by the intangible nuances of manners and style while awarding grades to the students. The chances of a student are more likely to succeed if his style is closer to the dominant class or legitimate culture. Due to their relative lack of legitimate culture the students of working class are more likely to fail in the examinations. This prevents he working class students from entering higher education as well as in premier Universities. Therefore, in this way the major role of the educational system is the elimination of the students belonging to the working class from higher levels of education. Here in the words of Bourdieu:

the disposition to make use of the School and the predisposition to succeed in it depend, as we have seen, on the objective chances of using it and succeeding in it that are attached to the different social classes, these dispositions and predispositions in turn constituting on of the most important factors in the perpetuation of the structure of educational chances as an objectively graspable manifestation of the relationship between the educational system and the system of class relations. Even the negative dispositions and predispositions leading to self-elimination, such as, for example, self-depreciation, devalorization of the School and its sanctions or resigned expectation of failure or exclusion may be understood as unconscious anticipation of the sanctions that the School objectively has in store for the dominated classes.

(Bourdieu and Passeron 1977:204-5)

Check Your Progress 2

1) What do you understand by Legitimate Culture?

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2) Explain the characteristics of the Popular taste.

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3) Discuss the dialectics of habitus and field in the work of Bourdieu?

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4) Discuss the role of educational system in perpetuating the symbolic violence.

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12.7 LET US SUM UP

The idea of a cultural and social reproduction makes reference to the dynamic process on the one hand and the static aspect of social structures on the other. It reinforces the necessity of continuity and change in social experience. In this unit we have tried to analyse the idea of cultural and social reproduction through the prism of – Marxist tradition; Durkhemian tradition; Ethnomethodological tradition; Structuralist tradition and most exclusively and comprehensively through Bourdieu's prism. Bourdieu appropriately concluded that the main role of education is generation of cultural and social reproduction, i.e., the reproduction of the relationships of power and privilege between social classes. Social stratification and inequality is reproduced in the educational institutions. In educational system legitimate culture is rewarded and appreciated. On the one hand, the under privileged status of the lower classes is justified by examination failure and self-elimination, on the other, the privileged status of dominant classes is legitimated by educational achievements and success.

12.8 KEY WORDS

Culture : It is the way of life and the manner of living of a people.

Reproduction : In relation to the experience of social life, such reproduction must be an affirmation of the ancient regime.

Habitus : Habitus are the mental or cognitive structures through which people deal with the social world.

Field : The field is a network of relations among the objective positions within it.

Economic Capital : It consists of material goods- such as land or property, and income from employment and other sources.

Cultural Capital : It involves various kinds of legitimate knowledge.

Social Capital : It consists of valued social relations between people.

Symbolic Capital : It stems from one's honour and prestige.

Symbolic Violence : The violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity.

12.9 FURTHER READING

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12.10 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. According to Bourdieu, cultural reproduction is the social process through which culture is reproduced across generations, especially through the socializing influence of educational system in 'reproducing' the culture of the dominant classes.
2. Marxist's tradition mainly emphasizes that how the components of a market culture are reproduced such that the real relations that befit the old order remain intact and hidden.
3. In opposition to the Marxist approach Durkheim is informing us of the very necessity of cultural and social reproduction. He proposed the appropriate collective secular credo that will ensure reproduction of solidarity in the face of change.

Check Your Progress 2

1. This is the culture of the dominant classes in a society. It involves an appreciation of works of art in fields such as music and painting, which are considered to be the height of good taste.
2. It is the lowest form of culture. It includes music and songs totally devoid of artistic ambition or pretension.
3. There is a dialectical relationship between habitus and field. On the one hand, the field conditions the habitus; on the other, the habitus constitutes the field as something that is meaningful, that has sense and value, and that is worth the investment of energy.
4. The educational system is the major institution through which symbolic violence is practiced on people. The language, the meanings, the symbolic system of those in power is imposed on the rest of the population.

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