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**ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com**

Q4(b)

## **Examine gender. Ethnicity and race as major dimensions of social stratification**

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · Sociology GS 1 · 20 marks · Stratification and Mobility: Concepts

Stratification and Mobility: Concepts - equality, inequality, hierarchy, exclusion, poverty and deprivation; Theories of social stratification - Structural functionalist, Marxist, Weberian; Dimensions - Class, status groups, gender, ethnicity and race; Social mobility - open and closed systems, types, sources and causes.

### **Core demand of the question**

- Examine gender, ethnicity and race as major dimensions of social stratification
- Keep the examination within a 20-mark length

### **Revision summary**

Gender, ethnicity, and race are major axes of stratification beside class.

Gender organises care, wage, and patriarchy.

Race is a historical classification with institutional effects.

Ethnicity is politicised descent and culture, often a status claim.

Intersection, not separate columns, is the usable model.

### **Introduction**

Class does not exhaust who gets work, honour, and safety. Gender, ethnicity, and race are major dimensions because they organise labour, marriage, and the state as relations of power, not as leftover culture after the wage.

### **Body**

#### **Gender**

- Ann Oakley separated sex from gender and made unpaid housework visible as labour.
- **Sylvia Walby treated patriarchy as linked structures:** household, paid work, state, violence, sexuality, and culture.
- R. W. Connell mapped masculinities. Intersection with caste, after Dalit feminist work, blocks a single "women" residual.
- **NFHS** on anaemia, mobility, and decision-making, and SHG membership, show the Indian file.

#### **Race**

- Race is a social classification tied to colonial and slave histories, not a biological essence.
- W. E. B. **Du Bois** described double consciousness. Oliver Cox linked race to capitalist labour systems.
- Institutional racism in jobs, police, and housing stratifies life chances after formal equality.

#### **Ethnicity**

- Ethnicity is a claimed common descent, language, or culture, often politicised in the state.
- **Max Weber** already treated ethnic honour as a status claim.
- Indian illustrations include language movements, tribal status, and minority labour niches. Ethnicity can be a resource and a stigma.

### How they interlock

- **Patricia Hill Collins's intersectionality:** dimensions do not add as separate columns.
- A Dalit woman in informal work faces class, caste-ethnicity, and gender at once.
- Stratification theory that keeps only Marxian class, or only Weberian market, misses these axes.

### Against reduction

- They are not "natural". They are historically produced closures of opportunity and honour.

### Flow diagram

Stratification -> Class  
Stratification -> Gender  
Stratification -> Ethnicity  
Stratification -> Race  
Gender -> Intersection  
Ethnicity -> Intersection  
Race -> Intersection  
Class -> Intersection

### Conclusion

Gender, ethnicity, and race stratify labour, honour, and violence alongside class. Oakley, **Walby**, **Du Bois**, **Weber**, and intersectional work name the mechanisms. Indian **NFHS**, caste, and minority labour show they are not optional extras.

### Facts & figures

#### Walby

Patriarchy as six related structures, not only the household.

#### Du Bois

Race as a veil and as double consciousness in stratified America.

#### Weber on ethnicity

Ethnic membership as a believed common honour and closure.

#### NFHS

Indian indicators of gendered health and agency that class tables miss.

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