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Q6(a)

Why is gender dimension of social stratification ? How does gender intersect other dimensions of inequality based on caste, class, race and ethnicity ?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2019 · 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

- Why is there a gender dimension of social stratification? How does gender intersect other dimensions of inequality based on caste, class, race and ethnicity?
- Keep the discussion within a 20-mark length

Revision summary

Gender stratifies labour, honour, and the body in its own right.

Oakley, **Walby**, and Connell name care, patriarchy, and masculinities.

It intersects class as cheap and unpaid labour.

It intersects caste through endogamy and purity.

Race and ethnicity police women as group boundaries.

NFHS and PLFS show the joint odds.

Introduction

Stratification is not only class. Gender organises labour, honour, and the body as a durable rank. It is a dimension because it allocates life-chances in its own right, and because it cuts every other axis. Intersection is the joint, not an add-on.

Body

Why gender is a dimension

- Ann **Oakley** split sex from gender and made housework labour. Unpaid care is a class-like relation inside the home.
- **Sylvia Walby** named **patriarchy as linked structures**: household, paid work, state, violence, sexuality, culture.
- R. W. Connell mapped a gender order and masculinities. Rank is relational, not a women's residual.
- NFHS on anaemia, mobility, and decision-making, and PLFS on female work, show patterned odds, which is **Weber's** life-chances in a gendered key.

Intersection with class

- A wage table that codes only the male earner hides the double day. Heidi Hartmann tied patriarchy to capitalism's cheap flexible labour.
- Erik Olin Wright's contradictory locations still sit on a care subsidy.

Intersection with caste

- Endogamy and purity rules, as Leela Dube showed, make caste a gender system.
- Dalit feminist work, with Patricia Hill Collins's matrix of domination as a cousin, refuses a single "woman".
- Campus and labour-market exclusion stack jati with gender.

Race and ethnicity

- **W. E. B. Du Bois's colour line is lived in gendered work:** domestic service, hyper-visibility, and violence.
- Ethnic honour codes often police women's sexuality as the boundary of the group, as Fredrik Barth's boundary thesis implies.

How to analyse, not list

- Do not add inequalities as a heap. Ask how one institution, such as marriage or a factory, organises several ranks at once.
- **Census** and NFHS cells become intersectional only when the question names the joint.

Flow diagram

Gender order -> Stratification
Class -> Stratification
Caste -> Stratification
Race ethnicity -> Stratification
Gender order -> Class
Gender order -> Caste
Gender order -> Race ethnicity

Conclusion

Gender is a dimension of stratification because it systematically allocates work, honour, and safety. It intersects caste, class, race, and ethnicity by gating who may labour, marry, and speak. Oakley, Walby, Collins, and Dube are the tools. A class-only ladder is a male public fiction.

Facts & figures

Oakley

Gender as social; housework as work in the study of inequality.

Walby

Six structures of patriarchy that organise modern stratification.

Collins

Matrix of domination: race, class, and gender as interlocking, not additive.

Dube

Caste reproduction through gendered kinship and sexual control.

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