

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

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

Q1(e)

Is the social stratification theory gender-blind? Elucidate.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2025 · Sociology GS 1 · 10 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

- Show how classical stratification theory centred class, status and power and often ignored gender as a structure
- State the feminist charge of gender-blindness with named theorists
- Note Indian caste-gender work
- Give a balanced elucidation, not a slogan

Revision summary

Marx, Weber and Davis-Moore mapped class, status, power and function, usually with a male default.

Gender-blindness means treating the household as a unit and unpaid care as non-economic.

Hartmann, Walby, Oakley and Acker made patriarchy a structure of stratification.

Crenshaw's intersectionality warns against adding gender as an afterthought.

Indian work on **Brahmanical patriarchy** and Dalit feminism shows caste and gender as one field.

The elucidation is critical but not a dismissal of class analysis.

Introduction

- **Social stratification theory explains structured inequality:** who gets resources, honour and power, and how that pattern is reproduced. **Karl Marx** organised the map around class and property. **Max Weber** added status and party. Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore asked what functions inequality serves. For a long time this canon treated the household as a unit and the worker as male. Feminist sociology calls that gender-blindness, and the charge is largely just.

Body**Where the classical theories look away**

Marx's classes are owners and labourers. Women's unpaid domestic labour, reproduction and the wage gap inside the working class are not central to Capital. **Weber's** status groups can include honour and lifestyle, which could have opened a door to gender, but his political sociology still writes citizens and officials in a masculine default. Davis and Moore speak of functionally important positions as if recruitment were sex-neutral. Even Pierre Bourdieu's later capital theory, which is richer on taste and embodiment, was criticised for underplaying gender until feminist readers pushed habitus toward the patriarchal household.

• **Heidi Hartmann described Marxism and feminism as an unhappy marriage:** class analysis needs a theory of patriarchy, and gender analysis needs a theory of capitalism. Sylvia Walby listed structures of patriarchy, including paid work, household production, the state and culture. Ann Oakley and later Joan Acker showed that "job" and "organisation" are already gendered. Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality, though born in legal studies, matters for sociology: caste, class and gender do not add as separate columns.

Indian elucidation

In India a class-only map misses how endogamy, dowry and honour reproduce hierarchy. Uma Chakravarti's **Brahmanical patriarchy** and Sharmila Rege's Dalit feminist standpoint argue that stratification is sexed at the foundation. The canon is not wholly blind: Weberian status helps. As a tradition, though, it explained public class and forgot private gender.

Flow diagram

Stratification canon -> Class Marx
Stratification canon -> Status and party Weber
Stratification canon -> Function Davis-Moore
Stratification canon -> Gender often missing
Feminist theory -> Gender often missing
Caste-gender India -> Gender often missing

Conclusion

Classical stratification theory is gender-blind when it takes the male public actor as the unit and treats the family as a black box. Feminist and Indian caste-gender work show that sex and kinship are structures of inequality, not side topics. A full account of stratification has to hold class, status, caste and gender together.

Facts & figures

Hartmann's unhappy marriage

The argument that Marxism without patriarchy, and feminism without capitalism, each leave stratification half-explained.

Walby's structures of patriarchy

Interrelated sites including household, paid work, the state and culture, not a single domestic scene.

Brahmanical patriarchy

Uma Chakravarti's account of how caste hierarchy is reproduced through control of women's sexuality and marriage.