

Gender stratification

Gender stratification refers to the inequalities between women and men regarding wealth, power, and privilege. Gender is a socially structured principle and represents a hierarchical, asymmetrical, and unequal division between men and women.

Gender stratification refers to the **social ranking, where men typically inhabit higher statuses than women. Often the terms gender inequality and gender stratification are used interchangeably.** Gender stratification can be examined at the level of individual outcomes and interactions or with a macro perspective that compares indexes of gender inequalities across countries. Although welfare states research examines many aspects within and across societies, it provides important insights in how state policies can shape patterns of gender stratification.

Gender stratification is basically unequal power based on gender.

Perfect example is the amount of men vs women in politics. Literally men have more power because more senators, congressmen, governors, and mayors are men. ... **Gender stratification is basically unequal power based on gender.**

Forms of Gender Inequality

.1. Women Works Longer than Men:

In most of the societies the male-stream is the main stream who argues that women have comparative advantage in household non-market production, like cooking and cleaning for the family that can be called emotional and personal caring work.

Based on this thinking, household jobs are then asymmetrically distributed.

Women are more valued in home. Men are specialised in market-based production. Thus, being the bread-earners, males enjoy both power and status.

2. Inequality in Employment and Earnings:

Historically, men have greater participation in work outside home than women. But women (particularly of poor households) share unequally household duties in addition to economic production. Thus they work longer than males. This kind of 'division of labour' may be seen as the 'accumulation of labour' on women, as described by Amartya Sen. Household activities are often viewed as 'sedentary activities' which require less 'calorie' to gain energy.

3. Ownership Inequality:

In case of social inequality let us turn to another kind of inequality, called ownership inequality—a classic case of social inequality. In most of the societies, ownership over property and means of production rests mainly on male members. The law of inheritance provides such ownership rights on male child. Such denial coming out of hierarchical dualism within the family not only reduces the voice of women but also prevents them from participating in commercial, economic and social activities.

4. Survival Inequality:

Another crudest form of gender disparity is the unusually high mortality rates of women, though biologically, women live longer than men! Thus, more boys than girls are born everywhere leading to a 'deficit' of women and a 'surplus' of men. In developed countries because of absence of gender-bias in health care and nutrition, women outnumber men. In Europe and in North America, 105 or more girls are born per 100 boys. Such high female-male ratio (1.05) in these countries is attributed to a high gendered survival rate in different age groups.

5. Gender Bias in the Distribution of Education and Health:

Health and education—the two major forms of human capital—are related to economic development. Human capital gets accumulated as a society advances in education. However, one finds a huge education and health

gaps between developed and developing countries. In recent times, despite a large increase in economic advancement in Asia and Africa, these countries lag far behind the developed countries in terms of educational attainment—particularly in respect of women’s education. Gender disparity not only hinders economic progress but also exacerbates social inequality.

6. Gender Inequality in Freedom Expression:

Let us talk about gender inequality beyond economic issues or factors. Women are not only subject to income or asset inequality but also in terms of freedom and power deprivation of women goes beyond one’s imagination. They lack not only economic freedom at home because of absence of autonomy in household decisions, limited or complete absence of property ownership rights and the poor wages earned but also lack any freedom in airing opinions over education of children.

In some backward poor societies the right of women giving opinion is completely denied. Such un-freedoms, however, are not uncommon even among the educated elites who enjoy enormous power and authority in the male-dominated society. Historically, this sort of low socio-economic status of women has been continuing nowadays.

7. Gender Inequality in Respect of Violence and Victimization:

Finally, anti-female bias starts before the girl child is born (consequent upon sex-specific abortions) and this attitude of the society a female member carries throughout her life.

It is because of the unequal sharing of income, property, household benefits (health and nutritional deprivation), women are subject to both physical and sexual violence—the opposite of freedom, and an extreme form of coercion. This is common for both poor and not too much uncommon in rich countries as well as among rich people. One in three women in the world is beaten or raped during her lifetimes.

Dowry harassment is considered as an ‘instrumental use’ of violence. Dowry death is the most serious form of domestic violence. Wife beating is not uncommon. Sexual violence is an obnoxious form of human rights violation. In addition, with the increase in poverty level, trafficking of

women and children for sexual exploitation has become a high-profit-low-risk trade for those who organise it.

There are many causes of such violence's but physical prowess of men, dynamics of power and injustice, low or absence of education of women seem to be the most cogent reasons for gender inequality and subordinate status of women globally.

Gender inequality in India is a multifaceted issue that concerns men and women. Some argue that various gender equality indices place men at a disadvantage. However, when India's population is examined as a whole, women are at a disadvantage in several important ways.

Gender stratification meaning

Stratification occurred in different ways like a widow remarriage was not something to even think about. Sati practice was also common i.e. the women were obliged to end their lives after husband death. The decision making freedom was not amounting for women of the society. Joan Acker was the one sociologist who criticized the gender role in stratification.

There was an argument between feminist that whether a female position should be recognized by her husband occupation and authority or her own position. In today's time, a female position is studied as a separate category. The stratification between the genders can be seen in different ways. For **example**, it is a traditional thinking that mechanical branch is suitable for boys only, thus the number of girls in this branch is much lesser than other engineering branches. Likewise in many companies, there is the difference in payment of men and women being placed at the same level. There is one more example where the number of female employees at a company is lesser than men.

Although this system is studied in a detailed way and nowadays women empowerment process is happening at a large scale. The companies mostly IT companies are employing women more and they have made many policies regarding the betterment of women in society. For example, Accenture Company has made a rule that a minimum of 1/3 of the total employees should be females.

Three categories of occupational segregation among women

Women who work outside their houses like adopting a full-fledged career in any career. For example, a women working in some multi-national company comes under this category.

Some of the percentage of women does not go outside their homes, they work from home and earn from part-time jobs. For example, women opening beauty parlors in their homes or women taking up the weaving work at their homes earn from part-time jobs only and a major proportion is the housewife and they depend on their respective partners for financial support. For example, a homemaker does not earn anything but the work day and night without a holiday depending on her spouse for money matters. Women have different priorities regarding occupation and lifestyle. These set a difference in the status bar of married couples in which either only one person earn or both of them earn. This difference sets the status bar of education and lifestyle of their offspring's too.

Another sociologist **Karl Marx** researched the impact of women in any society. He stated that a society which cannot provide respect and

opportunities to a woman will not develop as a society.

Functionalist perspective

The functionalist perspective of gender roles suggests that gender roles exist to maximize social efficiency

Key Points

- The functionalist perspective sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. This approach looks at society through a macro-level orientation and broadly focuses on the social structures that shape society as a whole.
- This theory suggests that gender inequalities exist as an efficient way to create a division of labor, or as a social system in which a particular segment of the population is clearly responsible for certain acts of labor and another segment is clearly responsible for other labor acts.
- The feminist movement takes the position that functionalism neglects the suppression of women within the family structure.

The Conflict Perspective

Conflict theory suggests that men, as the dominant gender, subordinate women in order to maintain power and privilege in society.

Key Points

Conflict theory asserts that social problems occur when dominant groups mistreat subordinate ones, and thus advocates for a balance of power between genders.

Frederich Engels compared the family structure to the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, suggesting that women had

less power than men in the household because they were dependent on them for wages.

Men, like any other group with a power or wealth advantage in Conflict Theory, fought to maintain their control over resources (in this case, political and economic power). Conflict between the two groups caused things like the Women's Suffrage Movement and was responsible for social change

The Feminist Perspective

Feminist theory analyzes gender stratification through the intersection of gender, race, and class.

Key Points

- Gender stratification occurs when gender differences give men greater privilege and power over women, transgender and gender-non-conforming people.
- Feminist theory uses the conflict approach to examine the reinforcement of gender roles and inequalities, highlighting the role of patriarchy in maintaining the oppression of women.
- Feminism focuses on the theory of patriarchy as a system of power that organizes society into a complex of relationships based on the assertion of male supremacy.
- Intersectionality suggests that various forms of oppression— such as racism, classism, and sexism — are interrelated to form a system of oppression in which various forms of discrimination intersect. The theory

was first highlighted by Kimberlé Krenshaw.

- Intersectionality suggests that various biological, social, and cultural categories– including gender, race, class, and ethnicity – interact and contribute towards systematic social inequality. Therefore, various forms of oppression do not act independently but are interrelated.

- Mary Ann Weathers drew attention to the ways in which white women face a different form of discrimination than working class women of color, who additionally must fight racism and class oppression.

Sources: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-sociology/chapter/sociological-perspectives-on-gender-stratification/>

Gender stratification meaning, categories, examples and overview, November 7, 2017 by Sociology Group

<https://www.sociologygroup.com/gender-stratification-examples/>

Parashar, A. “Gender Inequality and Religious Personal Laws in India.” The Brown Journal of World Affairs 14, no. 2 (2008): 103-12.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/24590717>

Ghosh, R. “Human Rights and Sexism in Indian Education.” India

International Centre Quarterly 13, no. 3/4 (1986): 57-76.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23001437>

<http://www.economicdiscussion.net/gender/7-forms-of-gender-inequality-discussed/11884>