Indira Gandhi National Open University
Elective Course in Sociology-14
Society and Stratification
Tutor Marked Assignment (TMA)

Maximum Marks: 100 **Programme Code: BDP**
Weightage: 30% **Course Code: ESO-14**
Assignment Code: ESO-14/AST/TMA/2026-2027

Answer all the questions.

Marks

Section – I

Answer the following in about 500 words each.

1. Discuss Max Weber's explanation of Social Stratification. 20

2. Discuss class as a form of Social Stratification. 20

Section – II

Answer the following in about 250 words each.

3. How are gender identities constructed? Discuss 12

4. Discuss the relevance of Jajmani System. 12

5. Write a brief note on ethnic minorities. 12

6. What do you mean by social mobility? Describe the factors that influence social mobility. 12

Section – III

Answer the following in about 100 words each.

7. Explain the concept of power elite. 06

8. What do you understand by downward mobiliy? 06

1. Discuss Max Weber’s explanation of Social Stratification. 20

Answer

Max Weber explained social stratification as the unequal distribution of opportunities, respect and power among people. His approach is often called *multidimensional* because he did not believe that a person's position could be understood through wealth alone. In *Economy and Society*, Weber examined three related but distinct dimensions: class, status and party. These dimensions affect one another, but they do not always place a person at the same level in society.

Class and economic life

For Weber, **class** refers mainly to people's market situation and the life chances connected with it. People who possess similar opportunities to earn income, obtain goods and improve their economic position belong to a similar class situation. Ownership of property matters, but so do education, qualifications, skills and the kind of services a person can offer in the market. A landowner, a skilled doctor, a salaried office worker and an unskilled labourer do not have equal economic opportunities, even when they live in the same city.

Weber distinguished between property classes, whose position depends on ownership of assets, and commercial or acquisition classes, whose advantages arise through markets and earning opportunities. He also recognised social classes as broader categories between which mobility is relatively common. He discussed privileged property owners, educated professionals and employees, small business owners and workers. These examples show that economic inequality has more divisions than a simple opposition between rich owners and poor workers.

Unlike a caste or a close-knit community, a class does not necessarily share a strong common identity. Two shopkeepers may face similar market conditions without knowing one another or organising together. Members of a class may act collectively if they recognise common interests, but class membership by itself does not guarantee class struggle.

Status and social honour

A second dimension is **status**, which concerns the social honour or prestige given to people and groups. Status groups are often recognised through their lifestyles, social customs, education, family background, occupations and patterns of marriage. Members may try to preserve their standing by setting boundaries about who can join them or share their social activities. Weber called the restriction of opportunities by such groups *social closure*.