CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study deals with the 'social structure' and 'social stratification' and its dynamics among the Catholics of Dakshina Kannada District of Karnataka. To be precise, it is concerned with the caste differentiation that is found among the Konkani speaking Roman Catholics of Dakshina Kannada and its effect on their community life, Church and their relationship with the other sections in the district.

Meaning of Social Structure and Social Stratification

Social structure and social stratification are fundamental concepts in sociology. The term structure is used to refer to the network of interrelations between the component parts of any whole. By social stratification we understand the inequality that is distributed in the society, that is the unequal distribution of goods and services, rights and obligations, power and prestige.

Social stratification as a sociological concept refers to the fact that both individuals and groups of individuals are conceived of as constituting higher or lower differentiated strata or status groups, that in terms of some specific or
generalized characteristics or set of characteristics. This often includes at least implicitly some evaluation of the higher and lower layers, which are judged to be better or worse according to a scale of values with reference to such objective criteria as, relative moral worth, relative equality, and inequality, and degree of justice and injustice. India is considered as one of the most rigidly stratified of all known societies in human history. Indian society is stratified on the basis of caste, religion, economy, language, culture, race etc. Therefore, the study of social stratification has a special importance for understanding Indian society.

Social structure and social stratification are closely related. When the individuals or kinship groups in a society are ranked along any one of the several dimensions, namely, local community status, power, occupational prestige, income or wealth, family and ethnic group position, etc., there results a distribution of differential ranking, that can be conceived of as having a certain structural shape.

Social inequality is the basic fact of human life. The phenomenon of social inequality finds mention in the earliest writings known to mankind. Thinkers and philosophers right from the early times have devoted great attention to the study of social inequality. The subject of the rich and the poor, the rulers and the ruled is elaborately discussed in the early
writings like those of Plato, Aristotle, Kautilya, Manu and others. In the Biblical writings and in the early literature of ancient China also we find the description regarding hierarchical distinctions among social categories. St Thomas and St Augustine also discussed the subject in detail. They attempted to find out why human society is divided into different classes on the basis of power, property and prestige and tried to set forth the proper mode of arranging these classes in hierarchical order. Philosophers like Bruke, Baudham and Locke in England, Rousseau in France, Hegel in Germany discussed and debated this problem of inequality and class system. For many social scientists and historians of the present century the problem of social inequality and class system has become the subject of immense interest.

Therefore, social inequality, in one form or another, has thus preoccupied the minds of thinkers right from the beginning of human society. Unequal distribution of human beings based on the natural factors like age, and sex and social factors like wealth, prestige, ability, occupation etc., is a universal phenomenon found in primitive as well as in modern societies. Social stratification is not based on biological differences as sex or race alone. These biological differences must be socially amplified with respect to dress, food, occupation, residence, mobility or combination of many of these. Therefore, social
stratification usually includes a host of factors and manifests itself in almost every aspect of social life. This unequal distribution is everywhere associated with hierarchies of individuals and groups that sociologists call strata. These strata more or less get organized into a system of hierarchical relationship.

A classless society is a sociological myth. According to Pitirim A. Sorokin an 'unstratified society with real equality of its members, is a myth which has never been realized in the history of mankind' (Sorokin : 1959:12). In some ancient societies the class system may not have been sophisticated and well defined, nonetheless they had a rudimentary form of class system. Therefore, generally we can accept the fact that social stratification is universal, unavoidable in any society, even if it is not desired or attempted to eliminate. Even in Karl Marx's communist society, a society according to him having no classes, and no class struggles, there would still be categories like, writers, poets, musicians, fisher-folk and so on.

Origin of Stratification

The origin of any stratification system cannot be explained in terms of history. However, the non-existence of social stratification in a society cannot be proved. Every society has adapted to or developed its own system of stratification. In
general the principal types of stratification are Estate system, Caste system and social Class system. The estate system found in European countries consisted of three sections - the Noble, the Clergy and the Commoners. The system of caste is found predominantly in India. The membership in a caste system is purely ascribed or hereditary. The caste hierarchy consists of 5 sections, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya, Sudra, and Panchama. However, in reality there are hundreds of castes and sub-castes. The class system is a universal phenomenon in the modern societies. The dynamics as income, wealth, property and modern attributes as education, modern occupation, determine one's class position in a given society. The nature and number of social classes in a society varies from society to society.

Different writers viewed the origin of stratification from different sources. Sociologists have distinguished several general types of stratification. When a society exhibits stratification it means that there are significant discontinuities in the distribution of goods and services or of property, rights and obligations. Different types of stratification means that there are significant discontinuities between the systems of stratification exhibited by various societies.

Stratification has regarded social stratification as the differential ranking of human individuals who compose a given social system and their treatment as superior and inferior relative to one another in certain socially important respects (Parsons : 1954:69). Naturally, stratification is a differentiated ranking of human individuals or groups arranged in a vertical order on the basis of social system. There is always superior and inferior feeling among the members of different classes based on the commonly accepted standards or value system. These relations are essentially social relations. Parsons calls 'Patterning' or 'Ordering' of social relations as stratification system of society.

Pitirim Sorokin puts it in his work 'Social and Cultural Mobility', Social Stratification is 'the differentiation of a given population into hierarchically superposed classes. It is manifested in the existence of upper and lower social layers. Its basis and very essence consists in an unequal distribution of rights and privileges, duties and responsibilities, social values and privations, social power and influences among the members of a society' (Sorokin : 1959:11).

Sorokin mentions three important factors that lead to the stratification of society. They are: i. living together, ii. Innate differences, and iii. Environmental difference (Sorokin : 1959:337). In his opinion no human group can continue for any
length of time without organization, and organization always means allotment of roles and statuses to the individuals, which in other words is stratification. Secondly, due to differential permutation and combination of the chromosomes there are fundamental differences both in the physical as well as the psychic structure of the individuals. These innate differences find differential participation in society and this leads to stratification. Thirdly, the environmental differences that according to Sorokin are permanently operating also cause social stratification. (Sorokin : 1959:340).

Sorokin identifies three major types of stratification, namely economic, political and occupational. Unequal distribution of economic wealth leads to economic classes, unequal distribution of political power leads to political classes and inequality among occupations brings about occupational strata. However, these three categories do not remain separated from one another because of the universal phenomenon of inter-correlation of strata. There is the general tendency of the confluence of these three powers in a single group. The class which is economically powerful tends also to acquire the other two powers namely, the political and social and vice-versa. Though this is a general trend, it cannot be described as an inevitable rule. Because a number of instances
can be cited, where superiority in one field may not be evident in the other.

Thinkers like Ratzenhofer, Oppenheimer and Gumplowicz have emphasized the role of war in the stratification of society (Sorokin: 1959:341). They observe that war has always been an important social force that has lead to the stratification of society. Because after every war there emerge two classes - the victors and the vanquished, conquerors and the conquered. The victors become ruling aristocrats, and the vanquished become slaves or subjects. In this way, every war leads to stratification. Sorokin has contested this war theory of stratification. For him war is not the only or the major cause of stratification. Because without war also there can be stratification in society due to such factors as, innate differences, social living and environmental changes. However, war adds one more stratum to the existing number of strata in a society - the conquerors occupying the highest stratum.

Karl Mannheim (Mannheim 1936), Tonnies (Tonnies 1887) and others have defined stratification as the 'arrangement of classes in a graduated hierarchy'. Thus stratification expresses itself in the form of classes. A group of individuals to be called as 'class' must possess two characteristics. Objective conditions like mode of living, food habits, clothes, style of life etc., help in the identification of class. Though objective
conditions are important they cannot by themselves lead to the formation of a class. In addition to the objective factors the subjective attitudes are also important in the formation of class. The way in which different members of classes define themselves and define others is also important in the class-system. According to Lippmann (Lippmann 1950), 'the pictures that they carry around in their heads, the pictures of themselves and the pictures of others, help in the identification and formation of classes'. Almost similar views are echoed in the writings of Karl Mannheim. He observes that 'gradually class interests develop into a system which embraces all life and those interest are interwoven with political, religious and scientific interests, the result of which is the gradual development of class ideals and a definite class psychology. (Mannheim : 1957:142).

Karl Marx was one of the foremost to give a systematic analysis of social stratification. Marx explained that social class or stratification is determined by the system of relation to the means of production. And 'status' of individual or group is determined by their position in the system - ownership and non-ownership of means of production. Thus to him the nature of classes depends on the mode of production and services. Hence, the basis of stratification system or class-structure is economic. He stated 'life involves before everything else.
eating and drinking, a habituation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of life itself' (Marx and Engels: 1939:16). Hence, man in order to survive and satisfy his basic needs has to work. In this process he exploits nature, comes in contact with different individuals and groups, develops co-operation as well as conflict and hence creates history. When classes emerge they are forced to participate in the struggle for existence, hence conflict becomes the main basis of relationship among the classes. In view of this fact Marx declared that 'history of all hitherto existing societies, has been the history of class-struggle'. (Marx and Engels: 1888:46).

Veblen's (Veblen: 1899:31) theory of leisure class is another classical work on stratification. Like Marx, he also believed that human culture has evolved through many stages and the present stage is the result of accumulated constant change. In fact, he divided human culture into three stages, the savage, the barbarian and the civilized. These stages are further subdivided into lower and higher. The lower savage society was marked by a simple division of labour based on sex and a peaceful habit of life. With the transition from a primitive peaceful society to a warlike, predatory society, the leisure class gradually begins to emerge. Further, as society moves from
the lower stage to upper civilized stages, these leisure classes become accentuated in magnitude and in other forms.

The rise of leisure class, in fact, coincides with the emergence of private ownership. Veblen writes that private property associated with the pecuniary element and technological methods of production are more prominent in giving rise to the leisure class. Members of this class are characterized by behaviour motivated by pecuniary elements, hence, there occurs an idea of status - differentiation. Worthy and honourable employment becomes associated with the upper classes and unworthy and menial employment becomes associated with the lower classes. Thus employment becomes a major criterion to judge whether one belongs to the upper or the lower class.

Among the leisure class there is a system of hierarchical gradations. Members of each grade choose their next higher ones as patrons. It becomes incumbent upon lower classes to observe and approximate standards set by the upper classes. Exemption from industrial occupation and other employment that has to do directly with everyday work of getting a livelihood, is the characteristic of the leisure classes and it constitutes the most important factor in distinguishing them from the lower classes. This principle sometimes takes the extreme form. Veblen has cited the example of the absolute taboo on doing any type of work among some of the Polynesian chiefs. They are forbidden
even to feed themselves and would rather prefer to starve than carry food to their mouth. Similar examples are also found in Feudal Europe. The story is told of a French kind, who in the absence of a servant would not care to move the chair on which he was sitting, even if it caught fire and prefer to burn himself slowly to death.

In modern society the accumulation of wealth has become one of the most important bases of distinction between the upper and lower classes. Wealth has become 'intrinsically honorable and confers honour on its possessors'. Veblen writes that wealth acquired through inheritance is more honourific than acquired through one's own efforts. Though the old bases of class distinction have been modified, they still continue to serve as a mark of distinction. What we witness today, said Veblen, is the transformation of modern culture into a 'pecuniary' culture, which is characterized by cannons of pecuniary emulation, pecuniary standards of living, pecuniary efficiency, and pecuniary education, with conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption.

Dahrendorf refutes the idea of private property leading to social inequality and argues that if social inequality were really based on private property the abolition of private property would automatically eliminate inequality. But experience in propertyless and quasi-propertyless societies of
the communist nations does not confirm this. Therefore, the origin of inequality is to be found elsewhere.

Dahrendorf writes: 'the law is both a necessary and sufficient condition of social inequality. There is inequality because there is law, if there is law there must also be inequality among men'. Every society is a moral community and therefore, recognizes certain norms of conduct of its members. These norms have sanctions to enforce them by rewarding conformity and penalizing deviance. Those who conform to the social norms are rewarded and those who deviate from them are penalized. 'This' he writes 'leads to inequality of ranks and thereby stratification'. Hence he concludes that 'the origin of social inequality lies neither in human nature nor in historically dubious conception of private property', but it is an offshoot of society's endeavor to ensure conformity to its accepted norms.

The Dynamics of Distributive Systems

The distributive system generally operates at two different levels. Viz. ascribed attributes and achieved attributes. The former includes the inborn or innate attributes as related to birth, source of origin, ethnic origin, age, sex, caste and at times the religious attributes. The achieved attributes include, income, power, property (wealth) and prestige and other
characters as, occupation, education etc., which are acquired in individuals efforts or earned through other sources. In the primitive societies the stratification system operated on the bases of ascribed attributes while the modern society exhibits predominantly the achieved attributes.

In a distributive system almost all the products of man's labour will be distributed on the basis of two seemingly contradictory principles, viz., need and power. Power determines the distribution of nearly the entire surplus possessed by a society. The privilege is largely a function of power and to a very limited degree, a function of altruism. Therefore to explain most of the distribution of privilege in a society we have to determine the distribution of power. Prestige is related to power and privilege. It is largely though not solely, a function of power and privilege at least in societies where there is a substantial surplus. However, power is the key variable in the triad from the causal and explanatory standpoint.

The force appears to be the effective form of power. Men respond more readily to the threat of the use of force than to any other. Therefore, if force is the foundation of political sovereignty, it can also be the foundation of the distributive system in every society, where there is a surplus to be divided. Where coercive power is weak, challenges inevitably occur and
the system is eventually destroyed and replaced by another based more firmly on force.

However, according to Edmund Bruke, the use of force alone is temporary. Though force is most effective instrument for seizing power in a society, and remains the foundation of any system of inequality, it is not the most effective instrument for retaining and exploiting a position of power and deriving the maximum benefits from it. It is advantageous to make increasing use of other techniques and instruments of control and to allow force to recede into the background to be used only when other techniques fail. The rule of might is both inefficient and costly. As long as it relies on force, much of profit is consumed by the costs of coercion. Therefore, there takes place a shift from might to right, where the force / power is legitimized. If this power is to be accepted as rightful and legitimate they must be exercised in accordance with the conceptions of justice and morality held by the majority.

Vilfredo Pareto explains the shift from the rule of might to the rule of right in his theory of circulation of elite - lions and foxes. The transition from the rule of might to the rule of right usually means greater decentralization of power where diverse centers of power can develop and compete side by side.
Max Weber (Weber 1947:180) is another thinker who wrote on stratification. Weber puts forth his theory of stratification in response to the deterministic nature of Marx's theory of class-based stratification. Marx emphasized the role of economic factor in his theory of class. To him, control over property was the chief determinant of class. But Weber, without denying the role of economic factor, added two more factors namely, power and prestige which were left out by Marx. Weber advocated that all these three factors namely economic factor, power and prestige are the interacting bases of social hierarchy. He writes that economic factor creates class, power creates parties and prestige creates status groups. Thus, to Weber, classes, parties and status groups are the phenomena of the distribution of power within a community. Power, that is, the probability that one actor (or a group) within a social relationship, will be in a position to carry out his (its) own will despite resistance, is the keynote of Weberian theory of stratification.

According to Max Weber stratification manifests itself in three main dimensions, viz. class, status, and power (party). Classes appear in the context of market situations and the basic categories he agreed with Karl Marx, are property holders and non-property holders. Within these two categories, source or amount of income may also distinguish classes as, rentiers and individualists, or skilled and unskilled workers.
Status groups in a variety of senses stand opposed to class. They belong to the sphere of social honour, and are distinguished by varying degrees of prestige. Members of a status group participate in a common style of life, subscribe to common ethical standards and at times strive to realize exalted ideals. Status group distinguishes itself also by restricting or prohibiting social relation and marriage alliance between its members and other groups. The stratification by status is the normal situation, in periods of economic and technological stability because wealth confers prestige and high status requires wealth to support it.

The party organization, according to Weber, results from efforts of people to exert collective influence on community and societal decision-makers. Weber's analysis of power, domination and the process of legitimization by which a dominant status group becomes accepted as dominant, are too extended and complex. For Weber, economically conditioned power is not identical with power. The emergence of economic power may be the consequence of power existing on other grounds. Frequently, the striving for power is also conditioned by the social honour it entails. Not all powers entail social honour nor power is the only basis of social honor. However, social honour or prestige may even be the bases of political or economic power. Power and
honour may be guaranteed by the legal order though it is not their primary source.

Perhaps, the most significant contribution of Weber is in the form of making a distinction between 'class' and 'status group'. In this connection he refers to the term 'class situation' and 'status situation'. He writes that the basis of 'class' is economic interest - an individual belonging to a particular class possesses the same 'life-chances'; therefore, an individual's 'class situation' is ultimately a product of the 'market situation', whereas the basis of 'status group' is the social order based on honour. For him, the way in which the 'status honour' is distributed is most vital in understanding the stratification system. Thus, Weber has concluded that 'classes' are stratified according to their relations to the production and acquisition of goods; whereas the status groups are formed according to the principle of their consumption of goods as represented by 'special style of life'. To Weber, the differences in life-style are very important in understanding the phenomenon of stratification.

Thus, Weber's distinction of class and status group, has considerably helped understanding how societies were actually stratified into classes, than the economic determinism of Marx. In fact after having analyzed the various ways in which the classes have evolved and marked off from one another, Weber
observes 'classes are aggregates of individuals who have the same opportunities of acquiring goods, the same exhibited standard of living' (Weber : 1947:180).

C. Wright Mills (Jeffries : 1980:137)speaks of four dimensions, viz. Occupation, class, status (prestige) and power. Occupation is understood as a set of activities pursued more or less regularly as a major source of income. From the individual's point of view, occupational activities refer to type of skills that are marketable. As source of income it is connected with class position. It also carries expected quota of prestige and therefore is relevant to status position. They also involve certain degree of power over other people, directly in terms of the job, indirectly in other social areas. Occupations are therefore tied to class, status and power as well as to skill and function.

A class is a set of people who share life choices because of their similar class situations. Class situation in its objective sense has to do with the amount and source of income. Today, even property is the source of income. Property and their yields determine the class-chances. The varying unequal chances are factual probabilities of the class structure.

Prestige involves at least two persons, one to claim it and another to honour the claim. The bases on which people raise prestige claims and the reasons others honor these claims,
include property and birth, occupation and education, income and power — anything that may invidiously distinguishes one person from another.

Power or to be powerful is to be able to realize one's will even against the resistance of others. The power position of groups and of individuals typically depends upon factors of class, status and occupation, often in intricate interrelations. The power of classes, occupations, and status groups refer to political power to influence or to determine the policies and activities of the state. The accumulation of political power by any stratum is generally depending upon a triangle of factors viz. willful mentality, objective opportunity and the state of organization.

The dynamics of class, status, and power give rise to a stratification system, which is a class system. However, the study of class stratification has characterized by considerable divergence and disagreement. Some scholars have viewed stratification primarily in terms of differences in power, while others have emphasized subjective opinions as its most important basis. Some have conceived of stratification as a coercive system of institutionalized injustice; other have seen it as a division of labour reflective of individual effort and ability. Stratification also has been viewed as an expression of commonly
held values, and by other, as a balance of conflicting interests in society.

On the other hand, the ascribed attributes exhibit quite diverse patterns of stratification system. The prominence of these attributes varies from society to society.

**Ethnic Stratification**

Louis Wirth defined an ethnic minority as 'a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics are singled out from others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination' (Jeffries 1980:153). In most societies ethnic groups are found in a hierarchy of power, privilege and prestige institutionalized. Like all stratification systems, ethnic inequality endures beyond the lifetime of single individuals.

Ethnic stratification is a system of stratification wherein some relatively fixed group membership, e.g. race, religion, is utilized as a major criterion for assigning social positions with their attendant differential rewards. Endogamy is an indication that ethnocentrism is present in sufficient degree for ethnic stratification to emerge. Insofar as distinct ethnic groups maintain their autonomy mutual ethnocentrism will be preserved.
Ethnocentrism in itself need not lead to ethnic stratification. Donald Noel argues that there are three crucial components of ethnic stratification viz. ethnocentrism, competition and differential power (Jeffries 1980:154). When two distinct ethnic populations come into contact with each other, inequalities or stratified relations are likely to occur only when all three of these variables are operating simultaneously. The presence of competition, structured along ethnic lines, is an additional prerequisite for the emergence of ethnic stratification. Competition and ethnocentrism do not provide a sufficient explanation for the emergence of ethnic stratification, unless the groups are of such unequal power that one is able to impose its will upon the other. Inequality of power / differential power is the fundamental element in the genesis of any stratification system. Differential power is absolutely essential to the emergence of ethnic stratification and the greater the differential power the greater the span and durability of the system. Once the dominance is established the group in power takes all necessary steps to restrict the subordinated groups, hamper their effectiveness as competitors and institutionalize the emerging distribution of rewards and opportunities.

Therefore, ethnic stratification will follow only when the groups are characterized by a significant degree of
ethnocentrism, competition and differential power. Without ethnocentrism the groups would quickly merge and competition would not be structured along ethnic lines. Without competition there would be no motivation or rationale for instituting stratification along ethnic lines. Without differential power it would be impossible for one group to achieve dominance and impose subordination to its will and ideals upon the others.

Caste connotes a rigid ascription form of ethnic stratification based on skin colour, heredity or other genetic or physical characteristics. One is born into, lives his or her life, and dies within a caste group, with no chance of ever leaving it. Ethnic caste systems usually have three major characteristics: (1). The practice of endogamy in which marriage is allowed only between members of the same castes, never between castes. (2). Rules of etiquette that specify appropriate difference in behaviour of members of the subordinate group when they interact with members of the dominant group. (3). An ideology or belief system that justifies the subordination of the lower caste, usually on the grounds that they are less intelligent and incapable of producing a 'high culture'. We also witness the element of class within caste. Lloyd Warner was one of the first social scientists to observe this interaction.
Age Stratification

Age strata divide people into groups in a manner similar to class strata. An age stratum is composed of people of about the same age who share the attendant life circumstances of that age.

The age stratification differs from other stratification systems. The distribution of power, privilege, and prestige is curvilinear, not as are class, ethnic and sex stratification-linear. The very young and the very old are the most powerless and underprivileged age strata, whereas the middle strata-young adults and the middle aged have the most access to power, privilege and prestige.

Children have no formal power and few privileges compared to other age groups. They experience control and domination in many institutional areas where they are competent to have some voice in decision making. During adolescence, young people are given increasingly more access to power and privilege. Adolescents are physically larger and stronger and can encounter parental force and manipulation with their own strategies. More commonly young people remain in their families and turn to the peer group as a major source of power.

Young adults by securing a job move into the institutional arena of power and privilege. With a job, a person for the first time can claim a certain amount of authority by virtue of his or her position in an occupational hierarchy. Privileges such as
voting, drinking, and property ownership also are granted to the young adults. Middle aged persons (40-60) ordinarily reach the highest point of power and privilege in the life cycle. At this stage they usually reach the top positions of their occupation and accordingly command a high degree of legitimate authority over others. They are often accorded special opportunities and difference because of their higher occupational position.

When a person reaches the old age stratum he/she is stripped of formal power and peak earnings as a result of forced retirement. Old age is believed to be associated with a decline in physical attractiveness, energy, good health, sexual powers and flexibility in thought. Generalization about the loss of prestige, power and privilege among the aged should be carefully qualified. Although they experience a decline in stratification rewards, there is also a concentration of great wealth and power among a small number of aged. In a capitalistic society successful persons are able to accumulate great wealth in the 50's, 60's and 70's. It is also true that a small segment of the aged hold many of the most important and powerful officers in government. For most aged there is a sharp decline in income, prestige and formal authority yet a small number of the aged are the richest and most powerful persons in the community.
Racial Stratification

Race is a distinct category of people who share certain biologically inherited physical characteristics such as skin colour, hair colour, and texture, facial feature, head form, eye colour, and height. The most commonly used system has three major racial categories, Viz. Negroid, Mongoloid, and Caucasoid, along with some other racial groups.

Racial stratification system is such where the biological arguments have been adduced to perpetuate inequality among people. However, racial stratification has a social basis rather than a biological one. Sociologically speaking, race is a social concept that is held by groups and individuals to differentiate other groups as being distinct from themselves. Physical appearance and cultural indicators are the key criteria in such labeling processes. The use of the term race is to distinguish a power relation of superiority and inferiority.

Most sociologists argue that systems of racial stratification have a social rather than biological basis. Contemporary social scientists believe that there are no significant innate differences regarding intelligence among various racial groups. The scientific evidence indicates that the range of mental capacities in all ethnic (or racial) groups is much the same.
Whether or not there are genetic differences in intelligence and ability among races, the consequences of their alleged innate racial differences are used by the majority to make judgements regarding superiority and inferiority and to justify prejudice and discrimination against racial minorities.

**Sex Stratification**

As other factors, one's sex may independently determine access to power, prestige and privilege. A woman may be in an advantaged position in all the hierarchies but be denied a management position because of her sex. Women who reach positions of responsibility in organizations still face inequalities related to their sex. The discrimination can be explained by sexual and aggressive motives.

Males on the average are bigger and stronger than females, in the human species. Men have tended to dominate women and have developed ideologies to justify their dominance. Men generally are the sexual aggressors and women are the sexual prizes for men. Since members of the bigger sex can force themselves on the smaller sex, the former can satisfy their sexual drives at will whereas the latter have sex forced upon them at times they may not want it. The unattractive males can force themselves on attractive females but unattractive females rarely do the
reverse. Sexual repression has been a basic female tactic in this situation of struggle among unequals in physical strength.

Women may allow themselves to be subject to force after a provisional bargain is made in which the male attains sexual favours in exchange for long-range commitment such as marriage or engagement. A woman having repressed all her energies and devotes all her energies to child bearing does not have power in the larger society because she is separated from occupational positions that grant power. Occupational achievement is perhaps the major source of prestige and power in society. Since most women value emotional support from their husbands and stability in their marriages they may hesitate to assert a militant feminist position for fear of threatening family security. These are important factors that mute the potential for organized action on the part of women.

Privilege involves not only access to the good things in life but also immunity from the unpleasant things in life. Much of the household labour which women are involved in are unpleasant and monotonous. Distinction can be made between individual and institutional discrimination. Womenfolk suffer due to both. Traditional gender-role socialization, social stereotypes prevent them from achieving success in life. Women generally have less prestige than men do because they are employed in occupations that rank low in social honour -
clerical, and secretarial jobs etc, which do not require high
degree of creativity, independent decision making or action.
Female stereotypes are often very negative with respect to
intellectual abilities. As with ethnic stereotypes, women are
surrounded by cultural beliefs about their inherent or natural
tendencies.

Any society is therefore divided into varying gradations,
between the powerful and the powerless, the rulers and the
ruled, the rich and the poor, the honoured and the despised.
These categories simply signify high or low access to society’s
rewards - of wealth, status, privilege, power and prestige.

The study of social stratification has focused primarily
upon the hierarchy of social class and social classes are always
tied to the distribution of economic wealth. An exclusive
emphasis on social class limits one’s understanding of the
complexities of social inequality in modern societies. Therefore
we need to emphasize multiple hierarchies. Class is one of them.
But ethnicity, sex, and age are also important. The observation
reveals that whites are more privileged than blacks; men than
women young and middle-aged adults than children and aged. The
end result of one’s position in all the hierarchies, taken
together, ultimately determines his/her access to power,
privilege and prestige.
Approaches to the study of social stratification

Broadly speaking, there are two main approaches to the study of social stratification, viz. The Functional approach and the Conflict approach. According to the functional approach, social stratification is functional and positive aspect of society. It brings about harmony and integration in the society by fulfilling its basic needs in so far as it allocates roles as per the intent and ability of the members of society. The conflict approach emphasizes the role of class, class-conflict, and class-consciousness in social stratification.

The Functional Approach

The functional approach theory of social stratification, which has been put forward chiefly by Parsons, and Davis and Moore has its roots in Durkheim’s functionalist stance in his studies of religion and division of labour. What these scholars have shown is that social stratification inevitably occurs in all societies because it serves ‘vital functions’ for their survival and coherent functioning.

The functionalists are very much concerned with the problem of integration and equilibrium in society. For functionalists the ultimate rewards and the essence of all rewards in society is prestige or being regarded high by others. Strata emerge from the process of differentiation and evaluation in the form of
social classes each composed of actors in roles enjoying roughly the same prestige.

Talcott Parsons (Parsons 1942:309) was one of the early writers who presented the functional approach to study of stratification. Parsons differentiated societies on the basis of 'ascribed and achievement dimensions'. He writes that non-literate and kinship oriented societies are characterized by ascribed orientation, whereas, modern societies are achievement oriented. In the ascribed oriented societies, the rewards are assigned on the basis of birthright characteristics, whereas in achievement-oriented societies the rewards are attained by one's own efforts. Further, Parsons argued that in achievement-oriented societies, there must be a strong relationship between the division of labour and the distribution of rewards. The roles which involve the greatest degree of 'responsibility for the affairs of the collectivity' will have better 'facilities' at their disposal, and these facilities are 'in themselves rewards'. He further observes that the presence of division of labour and achievement values within a society, lead to differential rewards for position of varying responsibility. The differential rewards are the basis of stratification system. Parsons strongly argued that stratification is necessary and also desirable for a complex achievement-oriented society. It is necessary because it distributes rewards to positions according
to the amount of collective responsibility assigned to them and desirable because, this arrangement permits the entire system to function effectively. Parsons thereby seems to echo the views of Emmanuel Kant who stated that 'inequality among men is a rich source of much that is evil but also everything that is good' (Dehrendorf 1969:16).

For Parsons the necessity for stratification arises from any society having to allocate its members to different positions in its structure and to motivate them to perform their duties adequately. Therefore, social inequality is an unconsciously devolved device by which societies ensure that the more important positions are conscientiously filled by the more qualified persons.

Davis and Moore had developed a lengthy manuscript about the functional theory of stratification. In the light of ensuing debate, they condensed their ideas into a brief article. From their article it seems that they were rather influenced by Talcott Parsons' essay on stratification (1942).

In their paper, an attempt is made to explain that stratification is an inevitable phenomenon of social life. They emphasized that social hierarchy is the result of inevitability of differentiation of roles and duties. This differentiation of roles and duties is inevitable for the survival of mankind. These different duties and roles carry differential power and
They write that every society performs two functions: first, it must place 'the particular members' into 'the particular positions' and then motivate them to perform the duties associated with the positions. An individual cannot perform all or most of the functions by himself in a society. For different functions, an individual possessing different caliber and ability is required. Such individuals are rewarded according to the value attributed to the functions they perform. Here the functions that have the greatest importance for the society are given greatest rewards and therefore, the person who performs such functions occupies highest ranks. Unlike Talcott Parsons, they argued that such inferences are not only confined to the achievement-oriented societies, but all societies, simple or complex, distribute their members into certain positions and allocate differential rewards. Thus like Parsons, Davis and Moore also advocated that differential rewards are the basis of stratification and hierarchy.

From the functionalist perspective, the supporting ideologies support the existing stratification system. Rather than justifying social inequality, this view places stratification system in an extensive cultural context and regards them as being maintained by systems of interrelated ideas based on commonly held values. Little emphasis is placed
on the role of supporting ideologies in benefiting the upper strata and aiding the exploitation of lower strata.

The Conflict Approach

The conflict theory of stratification has emerged as an antithesis of the functionalist approach. Conflict theorists approach the problem of social inequality from the standpoint of the position of various classes and groups within the society. It is their needs and desires, rather than of the society, becomes the root-cause of social inequality. Social inequality is the result of the monopolistic control over the goods and services by a minority of people, the capitalists.

When the functionalist view social stratification as a source of stability, the conflict theorist look at social inequality and class hierarchy as the main source of social change. They outline the society inherently unstable because of its inherent contradictions and class-antagonism. The conflicts emanating from social inequality lead to change in the structure of society.

The supporting ideologies help the upper strata to maintain their position of power and dominance and to exploit and deprive the lower strata. They are primarily the conscious creation of the upper stratum, used as weapons designed to keep subordinate
strata quiescent and to forestall and divert the development of true stratum consciousness. They are the source of 'false consciousness'.

The major protagonists of this view are - Karl Marx, Ralph Dahrendorf, G.E.Lenski and C.Wright Mills. The Marxian approach has been adopted by a number of scholars in India including D.P.Mukherji, A.R.Desai and R.P.Dutta. It is generally viewed that the caste stratification in Indian society corresponds with the class stratification. The upper castes are the dominant classes because they own land (means of production). The scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes constitute the class of wage earners.

The Symbolic Interactionism

Another theory for understanding the structure and dynamics of stratification system is symbolic interactionism. It is a major theoretical school in sociology but it has seldom been applied to the study of social stratification. This theory entails a more detailed and explicit frame of reference for examining the relationship between society, culture and the individual and gives particular insight into the ways in which stratification systems affect the psyches and life histories of individuals. It examines the manner in which the action of
individuals has import for both the maintenance and the change of systems of social stratification.

The stratification system in any society, is invested by the members, with meanings pertaining to its characteristics and the reasons for its existence. The structure and dynamics of stratification must be understood within the context of the meanings individuals ascribe to it, to themselves, and to their position in the stratification system. The dimension of meaning or the definition of the situation is considered of major importance at both the individual and the socio-cultural levels of analysis. Individuals ascribe meanings to individuals, events and ideas and their definition of the situation is a key element in their relations to them.

Stratification systems are maintained through socialization into the meanings that support and justify them. Change within stratification system rests in part upon how readily individuals accept new meanings about the nature of stratification and their place within it. The symbolic interactionist perspective focuses on the dynamic interplay between individual personality and the socio-cultural system. The value, norms, and beliefs of society are cultural definitions of reality with which individuals must deal in one manner or another.

Through internalization in the process of socialization, supporting ideologies become part of the self conception and
life organization of the individual. They support stratification systems because they are part of the general cultural pattern and become a major part of the content of the socialization process. Whether the social hierarchy is one of class, ethnicity, sex or age, those at the bottom are viewed negatively.

Social Stratification and Mobility

Although the system of social stratification provides for a structural shape to a given society, we do not perceive it a process that is static or constant. As the significance of the dimensions or stratification varies from society to society and time to time the system of stratification also changes. Therefore, in any stratificatory system social mobility is in-built. That is, individuals or groups constantly move from one status to another in a given system. This is mainly due to the change that is taking place in the objective criteria, their relative importance and changes in evaluations and rewarding processes. Therefore to study any society today, we also need to examine the process of change.

While stratification refers to the ranking of individuals, classes and groups into different strata, the concept of mobility refers to a change in the position of individuals, classes and groups in the ranking of social hierarchy within the
stratification system. Thus, both the stratification and mobility are interrelated concepts. In the view of Miller, 'much about stratification can be explained by levels of and changes in rates of mobility. The study of mobility shows the system of stratification in movement and change' (Miller 1960:2). Thus it is clear that mobility focuses attention upon movement within the stratification system.

Different thinkers have defined the term mobility differently. Pitirim Sorokin has defined social mobility as 'any transition of an individual or social object or value - anything that has been created or modified by human activity - from one social position to another' (Sorokin 1964:133). Lipset and Bendix have also offered a similar definition of the term social mobility. According to them social mobility 'refers to the process by which individuals move from one position to another in society - positions which by general consent have been given specific hierarchical values'. Further, 'in the study of social mobility we analyze the movement of individuals from positions possessing a certain rank, to positions either higher or lower in the social system' (Lipset and Bendix 1959:2). Herbert Goldhamer also, in an article in the International Encyclopaedia of social Sciences, has defined social mobility as 'the movement of individuals, families and groups from one social position to another'.
All these definitions emphasize the changes in 'positions' rather giving less consideration to the changes in 'roles'. The latest researchers have proved that both 'positions' and 'role' are inseparable entities. In fact, the position of an individual is determined by his role. Therefore, mobility always corresponds to the changes in position as well as in the roles of individuals.

Social mobility is a complex multidimensional concept. It can be examined in terms of the movement both in the vertical and horizontal direction. Sorokin has classified two types of social mobility, viz. Horizontal social mobility and Vertical social mobility. By horizontal social mobility he means 'the transition of an individual or social object from one social group to another, situated on the same level. In this transition a change takes place without any remarkable change in the social position of an individual (or a social object) from one social stratum to another' (Sorokin 1964:133).

Further, Sorokin writes that there are two types of vertical social mobility as 'ascending' and 'descending' which he alternately called 'social climbing' and 'social sinking'. The 'ascending' or 'social climbing' takes place in two different forms. First, when individuals belonging to a lower class improve their status and rise up in the class hierarchy. Sorokin described this ascending as an infiltration. Secondly,
when an entire group belonging to a low class improves its status and rises to higher status en-masse. In this case social hierarchy is affected whereas in the first case it is not. 'Descending' also takes place in two different ways. First, it is manifested when individuals belonging to higher class lose their status and sink down in the class hierarchy without affecting the higher group to which they belonged. Secondly, when an entire group belonging to a higher class loses its status and sinks down in the class hierarchy. Such movement of entire group downward will either displace the old group or will create a new group side by side with the existing one.

Pitirim Sorokin has offered an extensive literature on social mobility and has given certain important factors that lead to social mobility. He has divided these factors into primary and secondary. Among primary factors the most fundamental are (Sorokin 1964:346):

1. Demographic factors, which lead either to the dying out of the upper strata or to their relative diminution in the total population. Demographic factors play an important role in the study of social mobility. It is an established demographic fact that the rich classes have a low fertility whereas the poor people have high fertility. Because of low fertility the rich class cannot replenish itself. As a result a 'social vacuum' or 'demographic vacuum' will be produced at the top of the class
pyramid. This vacuum at the top of the pyramid signifies that
some of the positions are not filled, and some of the
concomitant functions are not diligently performed. No society
can tolerate such vacuum at the top. As a result it sucks the
people from below to fill the vacuous condition, i.e., people
from middle and low classes move up to fill the vacuum. But once
a low class individual or a middle class individual joins the
upper class his fertility also declines and hence vacuum is
again caused. Thus, there will be perpetual vacuum at the top,
which leads to vertical mobility.

2. Dissimilarity of parents and children. Dissimilarity of
parents and children is another primary factor that leads to
social mobility. Generally, it can be noticed that in every
society successful men, eminent artists, scholars and scientists
who have attained pinnacles of success, fail to leave behind
worthy children. On the contrary due to some unknown reasons
ordinary parents who have not distinguished themselves in any
way beget illustrious and brilliant children who rise to
pinnacles of achievement in various fields. As a result of this
unique coincidence in nature, Sorokin feels that there occurs
vertical mobility. Because sooner or later the dull and
inefficient children of talented people sink down in the
hierarchy whereas talented children of the poor class climb up
the class ladder. Thus dissimilarity of parents and children leads to vertical social mobility - both upward and downward.

3. Change of environment, especially of the anthropo-social environment. Change in the anthropo-social environment is also an important primary factor that leads to vertical social mobility. That is, innate, inherited qualities find manifestation and attain full fruition when proper social environment is provided. Sorokin has given certain examples to illustrate this fact. 'A man with the specific talent for strategy may climb up very rapidly in time of war, and may not promote himself in time of peace. A fine artisan may rise in a society with a system of handicraft industry, and he may not have any chance in a society of machine production. A purely physical force often has been the cause of leadership in primitive societies, but it has much less importance in present society. An exclusive honest and asceticism led to a social rise in the Middle Ages, and the same qualities are likely often to ruin a man under existing conditions. ...' (Sorokin 1964:336). Thus he observes that these examples show that the social position of an individual depends not only on himself, but also on his environment.

4. Defective social distribution of individuals within social layers. Defective social distribution of individuals within social layers is another important primary factor that leads to
vertical mobility. In every society we find the existence of the machinery of social selection. The important function of the social selection machinery is to see that, all the positions are adequately filled and all the functions are diligently performed. Therefore, it is the primary task of the social selection machinery to see that, the highly qualified and the efficient people hold important positions, and that the inefficient people are removed from their positions to low positions. Sorokin observes that in no society social selection machinery will be efficiently functioning.

Besides these primary factors of vertical social mobility, there are several other secondary factors that lead to vertical social mobility. In fact, Sorokin has included local and temporary factors in the secondary factors of vertical social mobility. He writes that all these primary and secondary factors 'permanently break the existing equilibrium of the social distribution of individuals and make vertical circulation inevitable' (Sorokin 1964:363).

Dumont's theory of Social Capillary also stresses the role of demographic factors. He states that 'what is gravity to the physical world, capillary is to the social order'. The property of capillary is that, the thinner the liquid, the faster the rise of the liquid through the wick. If we compare the hierarchy to a wick and size of the family to the liquid then we can say
that smaller family rises up faster in the hierarchy, whereas a larger family rises very slowly in the hierarchy. Therefore, social climbing becomes easy and faster if the burden of the family is less, and social climbing is hindered and becomes slow if the family is big. Discussing about the intensity of social mobility Dumont writes that 'social capillary increases, as the society becomes more and more complex as a consequence of industrial-urbanism'.

An Italian engineer-economist, and sociologist, Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923) has put forth 'the theory of circulation of elite' to explain the phenomenon of social mobility. Pareto has used the 'elitist model' to show how mobility occurs in a society. Stratification divides society into two major divisions, namely, the upper class, which contains the aristocracy or the elite and the lower class. He has described the elite as those people 'who have the highest indices in their branch of activity'. The elite are supposed to possess the qualities of superior intelligence, character, skill, capacity and concrete objectives, whereas the non-elite do not manifest any such qualities. Pareto further divides the elite into two categories namely 'the governing' and 'the non-governing'. While the former hold key positions and in fact man the entire governing machinery, the latter have no such positions and power. However, there is a perpetual struggle going on between
these two classes to occupy power and positions. The governing elite remain in power so long as they retain their character as lions - namely the qualities of force, faith and idealistic convictions. But these qualities are ephemeral and are not possessed by a particular class forever. When the governing elite lose these lionine qualities, (which according to Pareto they are bound to lose sooner or later) and imbibe the baser fox like qualities of 'ruse' materialistic goals and emotions of masses that signals their decline. Pareto opined that the circulation is a two-way traffic. When a class of governing elite sinks down the hierarchy, its place is taken over by the others who in the meanwhile would have acquired the lionine qualities of rulers. Thus the process of sinking down and climbing up continues perpetually.

The reference group theory which was developed as a result of the works of James, Cooley, Mead, Hyman, Sherif, Newcomb and Merton, is very useful in understanding the structural conditions and motivational forces that give rise to social mobility. These writers have shed useful light on the various standardized social factors that provide for passage from one social group to another in the various institutional areas. Concepts such as the 'reference group', 'subject-group', 'anticipatory socialization', 'relative-deprivation' and
Caste Stratification in Indian Society

Traditional Indian society was characterized by social inequality based on status distinctions. Caste has been the typical system of hierarchical arrangement of groups in terms of high and low statuses. Its peculiar character has drawn the attention of a large number of scholars both from India and abroad. Louis Dumont, a French sociologist, contrasts the Indian society based on social inequality with the western world which is based on the principle of equality. He observes that caste hierarchy is based on the notion of purity and pollution. According to Dumont ritual status accorded by birth determines rank in the caste hierarchy. The principle of purity-pollution is so pervasive that not only men and women are ranked higher and lower, but even occupations, food, clothes and utensils are considered pure and impure. Ritual status to some extent also corresponded in traditional Indian society with 'power' in social, economic and political spheres.

The concept of Varna also refers to a hierarchical arrangement of groups based on birth, but it is relatively general in which caste system is rooted. Varna not only constituted division of society into four classes but also

'marginal man' are very useful tools of analysis to understand the various dimensions of social mobility.
provided a system of social stratification. Each Varna was placed in the system, at a particular position in the hierarchical order and was assigned specific tasks and duties. Initially there was some fluidity with regard to change of duties and functions associated with a particular Varna. But in course of time the Varna became rigid and insulated enclaves without having any inter-Varna relations. However, today it is the caste system that permeates the social fabric of life.

The twin concepts of Varna and jati have remained influential throughout the history of Hindu society. Literally the word Varna refers to colour and it is often confused with jati. It is accepted that there have been four Varnas dividing Hindu society into four classes represented as the priests, warriors, traders and functionary groups. It is believed that the four Varnas were represented in the descending order of four colours namely, white, red, yellow, and black corresponding with Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. However, Varna remained closely linked with caste. In several contexts Varna, even today has remained a caste like phenomenon.

Both Varna and (jati) caste are an all-India phenomenon as the four broad divisions and numerous caste groups characterized by endogamy and hierarchy are found all over the Indian society. Caste varies from region to region but the four Varnas represent an all-India category. The Varnas are placed in a strict rank
order and this may not be true of the caste in different parts of the country. In reality Varna is more of a notion or a model rather than a social practice. Caste is more of a social practice and institutional mechanism in real life situations. The Varna model has acquired some kind of a religious sanctity, which G.S.Ghurye calls as the Varna-dharma. However, Varna-dharma is more of an ideal rather than reality.

Theoretically caste system is rooted in the Varna division of society into four caste categories viz., Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra and a fifth category of the untouchables, who constitute its lowest stratum in social and ritual hierarchy. The Varna model of caste system is macro-structural in nature. But the reality of caste lies at the existential level and not at the ideal-typical level which the Varna theory postulates.

At the existential level castes or jatis are divided into hundreds of regional endogamous groups. The linguistic barriers between regions have served to isolate them further. The regional cultural variations, the built-in system of institutionalized inequality and mutual repulsion among jatis have further reinforced the regional and local character of castes. Empirically, castes or jatis exist as microstructures of Indian society. The Varna model, which has the appearance of a macro-structural phenomenon, is in reality a cultural framework of caste as a pure category. It lays down normative principles
without having much to do with actual processes of structural and functional variations in the reality of caste.

In terms of Varna model, caste hierarchy is very simple and clear, with Brahmin at the top and Sudra at the bottom. But in terms of the caste, hierarchy is quite complex, as there are thousands of castes in India. In each linguistic region of the country there are hundreds of castes. Castes are further divided into sub-castes. Hierarchy is found not only between different castes, but also within castes and sub-castes. Thus a simplified model of Varna hierarchy fails to understand the complex and elaborate caste divisions.

Caste has been considered fundamentally as a system of hierarchy based on religious principle. According to Dumont caste system is a unique system and cannot be understood in terms of European point of view, which emphasizes equality as a basic value. His basic premise is that hierarchy and inequality are natural to human beings. He is also of the opinion that in Hindu society primacy is accorded to holism and not to individualism. Holism implies corporateness of the human group, but its constituent elements are hierarchically arranged. The principle of hierarchical division is sui-generis, a sort of religious ethic. Things, food, human beings, rituals, institutions all are arranged in a hierarchical order, are and provided with religious sanctity. Dumont is of the opinion that
the dichotomy of purity and pollution decides the rating of people in different strata of caste hierarchy. Dumont argues that there is a separation between power and hierarchy or ritual status. The caste which enjoyed political or economic power did not necessarily enjoyed the highest ritual status and visa-versa. Thus caste hierarchy is fundamentally based on religious ideas of pure and impure. His approach implies the ranking of people in 'grades' or 'classes' in terms of the holy religious ideas. It neglects the influence of other factors on shaping caste hierarchy.

According to M.N. Srinivas, the idea of hierarchy is omnipresent in the caste system. As the various castes form hierarchy, the occupations practiced by them, the various items of their diet, and the custom they observe also form separate hierarchies. A rank of a caste is dependent on the ritual it performs, customs it observes, its traditional privileges and disabilities, the myth of its origin, the items of its history, its ability to accept or reject cooked food, water, and hukka, landholding and the political power it enjoys. These are rival claims regarding place of caste(s) in hierarchy. In fact, caste hierarchy of caste has its base in Hindu religion and ideology. It is argued that certain concepts like Guna, Karma and Dharma justify caste system and thereby provide it ideological basis.
Approaches to the study of Caste

For the study of caste and class in India various approaches are used — Marxist verses Functional, Structural verses Cultural, and Interactional verses Attributional approach. These approaches have been borrowed from the west and are clearly reflected in the studies of social stratification in India.

Attributional Approach to Caste

This approach attempts to understand the institution of caste on the basis of its attributes or the characteristic features. Therefore caste is explained on the bases of certain qualities that are inherent to it or a part of it. These attributes are observed externally in the behaviour and interaction of castes in the caste system. The attributes are the basis of defining castes. The phenomenon of caste has been studied for a long time by scholars as historians, sociologists and philosophers and by travelers, Christian Missionaries and administrators. Various attempts have been made to understand the origin of caste, which resulted in different theories of origin of caste. In these theories some mention is made directly or indirectly of the attributes of caste.

The theory of Divine Origin — According to the purushasukta hymn of the Rig-Veda, from the self-sacrifice of the Creator (Purusa) or primeval Being, the system of Varna originated. From
each part of his body a particular Varna sprang. From the head or mouth the Brahmin; from his arms the Kshatriya; from his thighs, the Vaisya and from his feet the Sudra. Each was given its social position and also the rank depending upon the part of the body it came from. This also identified with each Varna a duty. (The castes emerged later and gradually from mixed unions). These duties gradually developed into the professions or the occupations of each of these orders, over which they had a monopoly. The order also prescribed certain constraints or restrictions on the interaction between the various groups. The first three orders were given the privilege of ‘thread ceremony’ and therefore were categorized as the ‘twice born’ or dvija or dvijati while the Sudra were called Ekjati since they were not allowed the same privilege.

The theory of Three Gunas - We find a shift from the mythological reference to the origin of caste and the attributes to philosophical ideas in Guna theory. This philosophical doctrine emphasizes the existence of three inherent qualities or Guna that can be found to characterize different objects or beings. These 3 Gunas are (a). Sat, the quality of virtue, truth, wisdom, beauty and goodness, (b). Rajas, the quality of passion, violent force, and activity. (c). Tamas, quality of dullness, gloominess and stupidity. The Brahmins were associated
with sattvic quality, the Kshatriya and Vaisya with rajasic and Sudra with Tamasic qualities.

The theory of cultural contact - This explains the ranked orders developed from actual cultural contact between two cultures, the Indo-Aryan and the indigenous. On the basis of difference of physical features and other racial characteristics as colour the Aryan created a two-fold classification - the Arya Varna and the Dasa Varna. The hierarchy was decided on the possession of certain attributes as - dominion over men and animals, twice born, priestly or sacerdotal functions and Aryan or non-Aryan. The Brahmin were placed at the top of the hierarchy and the non-Aryans at the lowest because they possessed none of these attributes. To preserve the racial purity and superiority the Aryans introduced various restriction or taboos on contact with natives. However, with some miscegenation the number of statuses increased giving them caste-like character.

The attributes of the castes help in ranking the castes, in determining interaction between castes and determining the behaviour of members of a caste. In the study of G.S. Ghurye on caste, six attributes were held in great significance. Viz., (1) caste as the segmental division of society, each caste with a social life of its own; (2) the hierarchy, with Brahmin on top and the untouchables at the bottom of the hierarchy; (3)
restriction on food, dress, speech, customs and social interaction; (4) civil and religious privileges and disabilities; (5) restriction on choice of occupation; and (6) endogamy.

J.H.Hutton sees caste as a very complex institution, which has as its core, the idea of endogamy. Other attributes include restriction on who one eats and drinks with; and fixed hereditary occupation. Further he identifies the processes of fission (splitting into smaller units) and fusion (uniting into larger units).

M.N.Srinivas and Louis Dumont look at the attributes highlighted by Ghurye and Hutton with a different emphasis. They concentrate on the structure of relations that arise between castes on the bases of these attributes. For Srinivas, hierarchy is the core or the essence of the caste system. He points out that the status of the top-most, the Brahmins, and the bottom-most, the untouchables, is the clearest in terms of rank. The middle regions of hierarchy are flexible as regards to ranks that there are disputes about the mutual positions in the hierarchy. Here the process of attempting to change one's rank by giving up attributes that define a caste as low and adopting attributes that are indicative of higher status, he calls, Sanskritization.
The underlying principle of the caste system for Dumont is the principle of the opposition of the pure and the impure. He emphasizes three major attributes of castes namely, the hierarchy, separation and division of labour. The principle of purity and pollution is the basis of the relationship that arise between castes in the spheres of commensality and marriage.

**Interactional Approach to Caste**

Interaction is a communicative behaviour between persons or groups. Interaction denotes a relationship between different castes in a village or region. According to F.G. Bailey castes stand in a ritual and secular (political, economic) hierarchy expressed in rules of interaction. The ritual system is always brought into correspondence (or overlaps) with the political and economic status. Relationship is not merely a matter of ritual practice. It is a matter of power because there emerges a dominant caste to which many other castes are subordinate. The caste system is held together because of the concentration of power in the hands of the dominant caste. Since ritual rank is always consistent with political and economic status, once a caste becomes wealthy it changes its pattern of interaction with other castes so that it may claim a higher rank in the ritual hierarchy. A caste's rank in the hierarchy is expressed through its pattern of interaction with the other castes. Here, the
interaction pattern becomes an indicator of ritual status in the hierarchy. Interaction pattern is understood in the acceptance and distribution of food; acceptance and extension of services; acceptance and refusal of water; willingness or unwillingness to smoke together; the tendency to sit together or apart, and even the exchange of gifts is included.

Adrian Mayer analyses inter-caste relations and their relation with the unity of the village. He identifies economic and political interaction and commensality as the factors that determine caste hierarchy. It is from the interaction between the various castes in a village that a hierarchy of castes emerges. Caste hierarchy is not just determined by economic and political factors. The single most important factor is commensality, which clearly indicates the hierarchy prevalent in the village.

McKim Marriott looks at caste ranking or hierarchy in terms of the local context. He takes into account the specific, local factors operant in the particular context. Like Bailey, he observed that the political and economic rank of castes generally tends to coincide with the ritual hierarchy. In fact ritual hierarchy emerges out of and expresses the economic, political and other such non-ritual hierarchies of interaction.

On the whole the Interactional approach propagates the view that caste-ranking flows from the interaction pattern. The
ritual hierarchy tends to match with the non-ritual hierarchy (i.e. economic and political status). However, interaction alone cannot account for the ranking of a caste in the hierarchy. Some reference also has to be made to attributes. Interactional approach localizes hierarchy to a large extent and proposes that ranking flows from interaction. Localization along with undue emphasis on interaction leads to the neglect of the ideological aspects of the caste system, caste system a system of ideas.

Louis Dumont’s understanding of caste places emphasis on relations rather than attributes. Explanation of the attributes of one caste can be offered only with reference to the relationship between castes. Caste is a set of relationships of economic, political and kinship systems, sustained by certain ‘values’, which are mostly religious in nature. For Dumont, equality and inequality are contrasting concepts. He considers egalitarianism to be the value of the west and hierarchy to be the value of the east. For Dumont caste is not a form of stratification like class but caste is a special form of inequality, the essence of which is constituted in the fundamental assumption—purity and pollution, or opposition of the pure and the impure. Hierarchy in India indicates gradation but not power and authority; and ranking is basically religious in nature. E.g. the king is subordinate to the priest though he has dominion over the world. Unlike Bailey, Marriott and Mayer,
Dumont talks only about ritual hierarchy. A secular hierarchy does not seem to exist because hierarchy itself is religious in nature.

**Caste and Mobility**

In spite of the rigidity and closed nature of Indian caste system, there are still some channels open for an individual or a group of individuals to change the caste status in an upward direction. Some of these channels are of recent origin, but many of them are as old as the caste system itself and are found inherent in the system. M.N. Srinivas points out 'Sanskritization' as one of the important process of social cultural mobility within the caste system where the lower castes try to imitate the cultural patterns of the higher ones.

In view of Milton Singer it is not only the Brahmin or Dvija castes that act as exclusive models for other castes but sometimes, even merchants, peasants or other dominant castes are emulated. Owen Lynch has observed that this process is not sufficient to explain the developing political processes in rural India, especially after independence. Lynch suggests that post-independent parliamentary democracy and organization of different political parties have brought new paths for upward mobility. Here the group that is often emulated, is of the elite, and hence Lynch calls it the process of elite emulation.
He shows that, especially after independence the political participation paves the way for upward caste mobility.

Westernization is another process by which the higher or forward castes and others too took lead in exploiting the modern advantages. Westernization brought about new opportunities in educational, economic, and political realms, which were basically caste-free. These opportunities were instrumental in motivating many lower castes to fight for upward caste mobility. The concepts of 'Sanskritization', 'Westernization', 'De-Sanskritization' introduced by M.N. Srinivas are of immense help in understanding the various aspects of caste dynamics.

Yogendra Singh (1977) writing about the changing pattern of social stratification in India has identified three trends of social mobility, at the village level, at the metropolitan and regional level and at the national level. While the traditional upper castes seem to be experiencing a serious challenge to their positions at the village and regional level, at the national level they continue to hold their sway. Thus there seems to be unevenness in the openness of the system of social stratification in India. Though a number of interest groups, quasi groups and classes are emerging they do not as yet have structural crystallization in the system of social stratification. Thus he feels that caste still provides a
reliable matrix for the analysis of stratification and social mobility in India.

Noel Gist (1954) found that in two cities of Southern India, there was 40 per cent of occupational mobility in all the caste groups, whereas in the case of Brahmins it was 82.7. He observes that most of the mobility is due to expansion of economy leading to more job opportunities. Edwin Driver (1962) found that education is a powerful means of occupational mobility. Sharma (1969) who also found considerable occupational mobility in the six villages of Rajastan observes that though the occupational mobility leads to changes in the caste structure it does not bring about corresponding changes in the class structure. Gangrade (1975) found that the rate of occupational mobility is quite high among the Harijans and the main reason for this is educational attainment.

Dubey's book 'Social Mobility among the Professions' is one of the few attempts to study the mobility patterns in a middle size Indian city. After ranking the various occupational groups according to the prestige values in modern India, he has tried to assess the rate and range of mobility on the basis of correlation tables. He observes that growth of education and other secular values and the privileges given to Scheduled and Backward Castes have injected tremendous dynamism into the Indian social system. Thus he concludes that in India the
movement of middle classes into the elite is undoubtedly the highest.

The book edited by James Silverbearg entitled 'Social Mobility in the Caste System in India - An Inter-disciplinary Symposium' is a very useful work in the field. Bernard Barber's article 'Social Mobility in Hindu India' gives a lucid analysis of the various aspects of social mobility in Hindu India. He has analyzed the deep impact of the traditional values according to which, to the Hindu, social mobility was both impossible and immoral in his worldly life. He goes on to discuss the various aspects of mobility such as structural determinants, unit of mobility, internal and external forces of mobility, natural happenings and their impact, technological change and its impact, urbanization and its impact and various implications of Sanskritization and Westernization processes. William L. Rowe in his article has analyzed the problem faced by low castes in their attempt to climb up the social hierarchy through Sanskritization. Burton Stein in his article has provided a historical perspective of social mobility in medieval India.

In the light of the foregoing discussion it can be concluded that due to the impact of modernization, the traditional pattern of stratification in India is being transformed by new patterns especially due to the widespread modern educational system. It has not only introduced new values
and ideologies among the different strata of Indian society but has also injected new dynamism into a system, which was known for its changelessness. As a consequence, new occupations and new opportunities based on achievement, rather than ascription, have emerged.

The Objectives of the Study

This study examines the stratification system and the process of change in a particular community, namely, the Catholic Community of Dakshina Kannada.

Theoretically and dogmatically Catholicism does not justify any categorization on the basis of inequality. It rather propagates universal brotherhood. However, social categorization is quite evident in the community mentioned above. It is divided into several caste-like groupings. Specifically the customs they observe and the caste differentiation they tolerate are not much different from those found among the Hindus. In general it is observed that the Catholics in India still continue some of the practices that are peculiar to the caste from which they were converted to Christianity.

The available literature and the practices that are observed indicate that the Konkani Catholics in Dakshina Kannada have internal sub-divisions. They call these divisions in Konkani, 'Zath' or 'Kuli' (jati, kula from Sanskrit). The chief
Zaths are Bamon, Charodi (Chardo), Gowdi and Sudir. There are other groupings too, as Render, Madval, Kamti, etc., corresponding to Hindu castes.

The proposed study concentrates on certain specific areas as:

1. Examine the indications of traditional caste stratification, and understand the present situation about the traditional caste stratification.

2. A closer view to examine the relative position of the objective criteria of stratification, as wealth, power and status today.

3. The different spheres of life in which the Christian principles of equality are operative.

4. Attempt to understand the effect of stratification on church organization or religious practices.

5. Trace the difficulties if any, to any section to assimilate itself into the mainstream Catholicism.

6. The inter-community life - the interaction between Catholics and the other communities in the district; interaction of catholic status groups with the similar status groups among the non-Catholics.
The Sample

According to the census of India 1981 Christian population in Dakshina Kannada is 2,12,922, which constitutes 08.96% of the population of the District. Although this consists of all the Christian denominations in the district the number is quite significant. There are 38,388 households identified of Christians (census 1981) which comprises 10.28% of the total number of the households in the District.

Table 1. Population of different religious groups in Dakshina Kannada.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Group</th>
<th>Households</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>373355</td>
<td>2376724</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0.002%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhists</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.004%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0.002%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>38388</td>
<td>10.28%</td>
<td>212922</td>
<td>08.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>289995</td>
<td>77.68%</td>
<td>1835796</td>
<td>77.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jains</td>
<td>2635</td>
<td>0.71%</td>
<td>13646</td>
<td>0.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>42138</td>
<td>11.29%</td>
<td>313425</td>
<td>13.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhs</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.005%</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>0.004%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Religions</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion not stated</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.001%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.001%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India 1981.

Although the Christians in Dakshina Kannada are divided as different denominations, the census treats them under one category. However, the census 1921 shows that the greater bulk
of the Christian population in Dakshina Kannada is Catholics. They comprise the 90.72% of the total Christian population of the district. The present picture may not pose a much different situation.

Table 2. Population of Christian Denominations in Dakshina Kannada.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholics</td>
<td>96,484</td>
<td>90.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestants</td>
<td>4,966</td>
<td>04.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutherans</td>
<td>3,080</td>
<td>02.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian Christians</td>
<td>1,747</td>
<td>01.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglicans</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>00.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South India United Church</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>00.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodists</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Population Census of India, 1921.

The Catholic population of Dakshina Kannada district is scattered all over the district. Organizationally they are brought under different parish units under a parish priest who is their religious head and person responsible for their religious as well as some of their temporal needs. The different parishes and area form a varado (deanery). The diocese of Mangalore, of Catholics, includes in its jurisdiction all the
Catholics of Dakshina Kannada. (It also includes certain parishes outside the district, i.e. in the area falling in Kerala State political).

The proposed study is empirical in nature depending mainly on primary data collected through fieldwork. However, it has also made use of the secondary data available. A brief survey and study on the historical origin and socio-economic aspects of the Catholics of Dakshina Kannada is included. The existing secondary sources, the church records, archives and other available documents the Indian census reports, and other relevant government publications were found to be of much use.

As the main source of data is fieldwork, structured interview schedule was employed as the basic technique. According to the directory, Mangalore Diocese, 1999, the diocese consists of 147 parishes which are grouped under 15 varadoes - deaneries. Since the community is well organized into deaneries and then the parishes and each parish has a ready-made list is available of the households that come under its purview, a stratified simple sampling method was found to be more convenient. A sample of 225 households / families was selected. Respondents were selected from different zones as Mangalore City, Mangalore North, Mangalore South, and Udipi-Kallianpur, so that the sample is geographically and culturally a representative one. The numbers of the respondents were chosen
proportionate to the caste-population generally known. The respondents were selected from different parts because, though Dakshina Kannada Catholics appear to be culturally one unit, there are some variations in the day-to-day practices. They are observed in terms of cultural elements as language use, degree of caste affiliation, attitude towards ethnicity, belief system, practice of local cults, occupation pattern, etc. Therefore, selection of one parish in particular and a study concentrated in only one parish would give only a partial view of the subject under study. Besides the caste representation in each parish will be disproportionate. Because as it is observed that the castes are distributed in zonal direction; that is, traditionally people settled and spread caste-wise in different areas. The mixture of different castes in residential pattern is only the recent trend.

The age category of the respondents is distributed from 21 years to 90 years. However, more respondents were selected from the age category between 51 and 80 years in order to obtain more reliable, experience-based information. The Graph No. 1 shows the distribution of the respondents in age categories.
Significance of the study

The community under study is not only significant in number but it also has a significant role in the society in general in Dakshina Kannada, in the areas of education, charitable work and social welfare activities. Therefore, the significance of this study can be viewed from different aspects:

1. Various attempts have been made to study and understand the Catholic community of Dakshina Kannada from different perspectives, especially in its historicity and popular
religious practices. However, there is a dearth in the literature on the social aspect, its social structure and social arrangements. This study has the significance of bridging this gap in our knowledge.

2. The Catholics of Dakshina Kannada have a fairly long history as a Catholic community. Therefore they have an established Catholicism. They have retained some distinctly Indian features of social organization like the caste system and joint family organization. Therefore, their Catholicism has elements that are truly local.

3. This community is significant in Dakshina Kannada because of its number and activities. Any attempt to understand this community will be a help to understand the society of Dakshina Kannada as a whole.

4. It will explore the internal dynamics that are at work within the Catholic community as it is meeting the forces and factors of change. Therefore, it is an attempt to understand the community better.

5. There are very few studies with regard to stratification among Catholics. This would fill the gap of our lack of knowledge about stratification among Catholics.

6. The history of the Catholics of Dakshina Kannada is sufficiently well recorded and can be used for understanding
the development of their religious life and institutions. This study will be a contribution to the same.

7. It is also hoped that this study will lead to formulate some theoretical statements that will contribute to the general theory of stratification in India.

Limitations of the study

The community chosen for the study is situated on the coastal belt of Karnataka. And the life of the community reflects a typical coastal life pattern. Therefore this study may not be applicable to communities living elsewhere in India. Similarly the conclusions drawn in this study may not be applicable to all Catholic communities elsewhere.

This is a descriptive study on the social life of the chosen community. The material or the literary source available on this community is very limited. Therefore one has to depend largely on the primary source for data collection.

The age categories of the respondents vary from 21 to 90 years. But the greater number of respondents are chosen from the age category between 51 and 80 years to gather more reliable information on the cultural elements that are already fading away or that have become latent, in their continuity. Therefore a random sampling method could not be strictly applied in this study.
The study concentrates specifically only on the Konkani speaking Roman Catholics scattered all over the Dakshina Kannada District. It does not include all the Christians or Catholics in the district. Therefore the study limits itself only to one section of Catholics in Dakshina Kannada.

Catholics in Dakshina Kannada are scattered all over the district unevenly. In certain areas they are scarcely spread while in some areas they are in greater number. Therefore we observe a good deal of cultural diversity among the Catholics of Dakshina Kannada depending on the adaptation of the local cultural elements where they live. Some of their cultural elements resemble to that of the local culture, while certain practices are peculiar to Catholics alone. Further, there is a lot of variation in these respects in relation to caste and area of habitation. On the other hand we find the Catholics well integrated into the local culture. Therefore, a definite frame of cultural elements specific to Catholics cannot be drawn.

Another limitation of the study is that it does not identify the exact caste-wise distribution of the catholic population. The church or Christianity in principle does not practice caste system. Therefore, there is no definite record maintained to identify the caste of a household. Though traditionally castes were spread in definite areas, in recent years we find them living together in many residential areas.
Besides, due to the influence of modern social development's people do not openly confess to what caste category they belong. Therefore it is difficult to carry on keen observation on caste related behaviour.

Scheme of the Study

The findings of the study and the content are presented in different six chapters.

The 1st chapter contains a brief introduction to the topic in general, social structure and stratification. It presents a brief summary of the theoretical content of the topic chosen. It contains brief accounts on the dynamics of distributive system, approaches to the study of stratification, stratification and mobility, caste stratification and approaches to the study of casts in Indian society, and mobility in caste stratification. The chapter also specifies the objectives of the study, the sample, the limitations and the significance of the study.

Chapter II gives a brief account on the geographical and regional setting of Dakshina Kannada district. It contains some demographic features of the district, general ecology, economic conditions, agricultural categories, castes and communities, and the different religious traditions in the district.

The social setting of the community chosen for the study, Konkani Roman Catholics of Dakshina Kannada, is presented in the
chapter III. It presents the accounts on Christianity in India and Dakshina Kannada district, nature of religion in practice, organization of parish life of Catholics, marriage and family life, linguistic background, education, and occupation patterns. In brief, it informs about the social life of the Catholics in Dakshina Kannada district.

Chapter IV concentrates on the core theme of the study, stratification or caste among the Catholics of Dakshina Kannada. The account contains the Christian attitude to caste in India, and caste differentiation among the Catholics in the district. It concentrates on different factors that contribute to the caste consciousness, and the other attributes of social differentiation. It also discusses the changes in the attributes of caste among Catholics and the resultant social mobility.

The effect of stratification on community life and the account on the Christian principles of equality at work is presented in chapter V. This chapter also discusses the inter-community relations with the people belong to the other faiths in the district.

Chapter VI is basically a summary of the study in general. It contains the conclusions drawn based on the study conducted and discussion in the preceding chapters. In addition, some recommendations are made for the further study on the community.