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## UNIT 60 SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

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### 60.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the meaning, concept, dimensions and forms of social stratification
- Comprehend the Indian social structure and the relationship between caste and class as forms of stratification
- Patterns of emigration in India and its relationship with stratification system
- Explore the relationship between ‘Indian social stratification systems’, ‘Diasporic characteristics’ and the ‘Economic impact’.

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### 60.1 INTRODUCTION

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Social stratification is as old as human civilization and an inherent character of almost all known human societies. It refers to the unequal social relations between individual and groups in a society. All the members of the society are a part of this arrangement of unequal social relations. Indian Diasporas are no exception and are influenced and predisposed by the social stratification system. There are several terms that are closely related to the concept of social stratification.

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### 60.2 SOCIAL STRATIFICATION: MEANING AND CONCEPT

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According to Raymond W. Murray “*Social stratification is a horizontal division of society into higher and lower social units*”. Tumin (2003) refers to social stratification as arrangements of any social group or society into a hierarchy of positions that are unequal with regard to power, property, social evaluation, and/or social gratification. Social Stratification thus is a system of hierarchical positioning of individuals and groups in the society that may be advantageous and disadvantageous to them in terms of

social rewards. Analytically, stratification can be viewed as an evaluative ranking of social units governed by set of norms and regulated by some principles. At a more concrete level, it is viewed as the empirical distribution of resources in the society. There are some groups in the society who have more access to resources while others have limited or no access to the resources which creates inequality in the society. Hence, social stratification invariably implies social inequality and inequality perpetuates if the distribution of the resources are intrinsically uneven and unequal. Thus, stratification systems are both a cause and consequence of inequality.

All societies have three kinds of resources that are fundamentally valued namely: (a) power - the ability to impose one's will on others; (b) prestige – respect from others; (c) property – wealth owned. These resources are unequally distributed among individuals and groups in most societies. These three Ps namely (power, prestige and property) forms the basis of the divisions of the society and categorization of the people. Max Weber (1968) emphasizes upon the three different ways of ranking which include: *Class*, *Status* and *Power*. Weber (1947) differentiates between class and status; indicating that class is an economic category and a product of the market situation, while the status is a reflection of the social order based on honour or prestige. Status is determined by the social prestige one enjoys. Socioeconomic status is a construct used by the social scientists to measure the social ranks that factors all the three dimensions of social stratification namely power, prestige and property. Indicators to measure and determine socioeconomic status include income, occupational rank, education etc.

Another important area of social division is related to gender. Though in variation, gender divisions pervade in almost all known human societies in all areas of life- social, economic and decision-making areas.

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### **60.3 STRATIFICATION IN INDIAN SOCIAL SYSTEM**

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Indian social system is unique as compared to many other societies. Its caste system is unique and very much prevalent in India and Indian soncontinents that includes Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In addition to this India has also social stratification in terms of class, status and gender.

Caste system is known for its specific socio-religious mode of segmentation in India based on varna system of Hindu religion. Varnas refer to the traditional system of four classes dividing the Hindu society into four orders namely Brahmins, (priests), the Kshatriyas (warriors), the Vaisyas (traders) and the Shudras (working classes) which became a frame of reference or model for the classification of specific groups ranked in order of social status. Thousands of castes as jati, an endogamous and inherited community are attached to the varna. In this system of stratification, caste functioned as the central principle in all aspects of life namely economy, polity, religion and culture. Some of the basic characteristics of the caste system are: membership by birth, hierarchy, hereditary occupation, pollution and purity ascribed to different castes, endogamy, commensality and unique culture. There is no uniform pattern of caste structure throughout India. Caste and class, as different forms of stratification existed in India since the ancient days. Even today, there are thousands of castes in India with different names and nomenclatures, but there exist only five or six classes throughout the country. They may include the upper/elite class, upper middle class, middle class, lower middle class, lower /working class. These two systems coexist in an inverse relationship and constitute the opposite poles of the caste-class continuum. This continuum refers to the rigidity-fluidity dimension of social stratification. The coexistence of the two forms of

social stratification is not of the type where class system can function only within each caste group separately, but rather it is of the type in which both the systems cut across each other.

A 'status group' is a collection of persons who share a distinctive style of life and a certain consciousness of kind. While caste is perceived as a hereditary group with a fixed ritual status, a social class is a category of people who have a similar socio-economic status in relation to other segments of their community or society. Caste system is characterised by 'cumulative in-equality' but class system is characterised by 'dispersed inequality'. The members of a class have a similar socio-economic status in relation to other classes in the society, while the members of a caste have either a high or low ritual status in relation to other castes. The traditional Indian society was organized primarily on the basis of caste stratification. Thus, there exists a close relationship between caste and class in India. Traditionally, it has been observed that caste reflected a feature described as 'summation of status' principle. If the status of a caste was low in ritual (pollution-purity) hierarchy, it was also lower in its access to economic, political and social statuses. In such a situation, caste also encompassed features of class in a manner of speaking, although not all of its features.

By definition caste is a closed group, its membership is by birth, thus caste status is ascribed and it cannot be achieved by economic or social mobility. Class, on the other hand is an open group and its membership is based on achievement criteria, which could be economic, political or social in character. Caste also constitutes a community; its mobility is group-based and the efforts to rise in status through the process of 'Sanskritization' in the past involved entire caste group. (Sanskritization is a process by which lower caste or tribes in the caste hierarchy seek upward mobility by imitating and following the rituals and practices of the dominant or upper castes). Class, unlike caste does not have a communitarian attribute, although it may evolve group cohesiveness based on common interest. Class in this sense is an interest group, whereas caste constitutes a community. With new socio-economic developments and activities of the caste-based social and political movements (including the reservation policy) caste groups also have evolved as interest groups, and to that extent some features of class have also been incorporated in the caste organizations. This is particularly true for a large number of caste associations which have been in existence in India since the time of the British rule and which have only multiplied now.

The caste and class structure differs considerably between the urban and rural settlers in India. In both the urban and rural context, the nexus and interplay of caste and class influence the level of hierarchy of a particular stratum. Indian society is also undergoing changes due to impact of technological innovations, modernization of agriculture, industrial and entrepreneurial development, political empowerment of the weaker sections of society and revolution of the mass media. The policy of positive discriminations in favor of the SCs, STs and OBCs has also impacted significantly in bringing about social mobility among these sections of society. The growth in the professional entrepreneurial classes in India due to rise in the services sectors has also attributed to the changing structure of Indian society. The middle classes in India roughly amount to one third of the population, being estimated at 350 millions. This is a very significant number and it is associated with the growth in the industrial, urban and information technology related sectors of Indian society. The class and caste structures both in the rural and urban India continue to make adaptive changes in response to the various forces of change such as economic development, impact of communication technology, exposure to social media, western cultural and institutional values etc.

**Check your progress 1**

**Answer the following question**

1. What is social stratification?

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2. Differentiate between ‘status’ and ‘caste’

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**60.4 SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN THE INDIAN DIASPORA**

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Social stratification has been influenced by the patterns and experience of various diaspora. The term “Diaspora” literally means ‘scatter’ or ‘disperse’ symbolically indicating that way the Indian migrants have scattered across the world through external migration. Over the past two millennia, there are five broad distinct patterns of external migration that have occurred from India. They include; (1) Indentured labour emigration, (2) *kangani/maistry* labour emigration, (3) “Free” or “Passage” emigration, (4) “Brain-drain”, or voluntary emigration to the developed countries of Europe, North America etc. and (5) Labour emigration to Gulf and West Asia. While the first three forms were the consequence of colonial rule, the last two forms of migration were the result of the post-colonial socio-economic development in India. This section briefly explains each of these patterns of migration among the Indian Diaspora and also examines their relationship with the Indian social structure and stratification.

**Indenture system** was based on contract and an emigrant was bound to work for a given employer for three-to five-year term for a specific wage. Indenture labour migration system in India began in 1834 and officially ended in 1920. But, by then more than 1.5 million Indians had been shipped to Africa, Asia and Caribbean countries. People from varied socio-economic strata entered the Indentured labour contracts in those days. There were Hindus, Muslims and Christians who worked as indentured labourers. Within Hindus, there were Brahmins, middle castes, artisan castes, agricultural caste, lower castes, etc. The ratio of Hindus and Muslim among the indentured labourers seemed to represent the then all-India ratio of the two communities, i.e. 86:14 (Saha 1970: 34). Among the Hindus, about 16 percent represented the higher caste, 32 Percent belonged to agricultural and intermediate castes and the rest were from the lower castes and untouchables. Majority of them were young and male. Roughly around the same period, another form of labour migration namely **Kangani/Maistry** system had developed. The recruitment and the management under Kangani system were undertaken by the people called the *kangani* (referring to foreman) and Maistys (referring to supervisor) in Tamil language. The kanganis and Maistys, as leaders directly recruited migrants largely from South India through networks of their own extended family, kinship, caste groups and village. They were authorized by the Colonial rulers

of tea, coffee and rubber plantations in Srilanka, Malasia, Burma to recruit entire families and ship them to plantation sites. As a result, about five million Indians mostly poor Tamils migrated to these countries. The Kanganis (foremen) and Masitrys (supervisors) formed the main link between the managements and the labour force. They generally belonged to higher caste and had considerable influence among the subordinate caste groups in the villages and commanded respect of wider sector of the village community. They were also placed above the laborers in the economic hierarchy. Several of these kanganis and Maistrys who were initially labourers had stepped into the role of recruiter and supervisor and thus achieved considerable social mobility with the rise in the income and social status. Before these systems were banned in 1938, it is estimated that between the years 1840 and 1942, more than 4.3 million Indians were recruited to work in Srilanka, Malasia, Burma etc. Majority of them were Tamil speaking Hindus.

One of the major reasons for labour emigration from India during the colonial times was the oppressive caste system. The lack of social and economic mobility among the lower castes in India made them seek better a venues through emigration abroad. Studies reveal that mass migration among the workers from South India in the colonial period was due to higher caste restrictions in the region and large numbers of lower caste in South India (Kuper, 1960). Indenture, Kangani and Maistry system of contractual labour recruitment acted as 'agency' for the mass exodus of unskilled laborers from India. They were highly exploitative during the British colonial regime to fulfill the growing demand for labour in various British colonies. **Passage Emigration** was also known as *Free emigration* or the '*Emigration of the trading castes and classes*'. During and after the Second World War, a large number of Gujaratis and Punjabi Indians moved to South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda etc. through the 'Passage Emigration'. **Brain Drain** refers to the large scale voluntary migration of highly skilled and educated professionals that occurred from India to developed nations such as North America, Canada, Australia and European countries, etc. since the late sixties. Sikhs were the early Indian migrants who settled in Britain and North America. The fifth form of Indian migration is known as '*Labour Emigration to West Asia*' as several Indians migrated to West Asian countries in search of new opportunities. (Jain, 1989).

Based on the above patterns of emigration in India, the expansive Indian population abroad is often referred to as the three waves or broad subsets of Indian Diaspora namely; the Old Diaspora, the New Diaspora and the Gulf & other Diaspora. The 'Old Diaspora' constitutes unskilled Indian migrants who left India to other countries before the World War II. The 'New Diaspora' consists of highly skilled migrants who left India to the western developed countries from the mid-1960s. The Gulf and other Diaspora includes the skilled, semi-skilled, lower-skilled and unskilled labour from India that has migrated to Gulf and other countries to work in oil and service industries. The landscape of the Indian Diaspora has considerably changed in the recent decades. The New Indian Diaspora has increased after the 1990s software boom and millions of skilled and semi-skilled Indians have migrated to US, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand etc. Indian Diaspora is highly organized in their destination countries. Indians have variety of sub-groups based on region, caste, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, profession that are active in different countries. Most Indian Diaspora are aware about their religion, regional and caste based origins and their personal identities are significantly affected by such awareness. This awareness perpetuates in their traditions and practices (it is not uncommon that most Indians abroad still maintain their traditions while celebrating the birth ceremony, marriages, cremations etc. (There might be few

exceptions wherein some individuals may not observe the above said rituals). Besides, the Indian Diaspora invariably maintains the economic strata which are deeply hierarchal. Diaspora community has class structure that broadly ranges from poor, middle-class, upper-middle class and the elite. In the next section, we shall explore in detail how and why these identities act as status groups and affect the Indian Diaspora.

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## 60.5 INDIAN DIASPORA – CASTE AND CASTE IDENTITY

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Does caste and class as forms of stratification affect/ impact Indian Diaspora? Does the Indian Diaspora retain Caste Identity in the destination countries? These are some of the questions which makes student of Diaspora studies curious. Studies and instances reveal that caste consciousness is not uncommon among the Indian Diaspora. Indian caste system in a foreign country has not been eliminated, but has only changed its forms in the new social and geographical context.

### Caste System in Colonial Diaspora

The disappearance of the caste system in colonial diaspora is largely due to the history of indenture as entirely incompatible with the ritual requirements and prohibitions of the caste system. Indenture itself is an escape from caste atrocities, poverty and unemployment. In addition, it was impossible to adhere to the rituals associated with castes such as ceremonies, marriage, festivals etc. Therefore, Caste system is prevalent in very lighter form in many colonial diasporas.

Mathieu Claveyrolas's (2015) paper "The 'Land of the Vaish'? Caste Structure and Ideology in Mauritius" observed in the Mauritian context that ". Firstly, because the incomplete and inconsistent registers mix up caste names with sub-castes, family names, professions and geographical origins. British employees were not necessarily familiar with caste names, or were not very scrupulous when recording them. Secondly, because candidates for indentured labour adopted individual strategies

The case of Mauritius can be interesting for our learning. Mauritius, an independent country since 1968 is mainly inhabited by the descendants of Indian indentured labourers. The pre-dominance of caste system in Mauritius raises several questions over the practice of caste system among the Indian Diaspora. Can one remain a Hindu without practicing caste based practices? Is casteless Hinduism prevalent? While caste is not explicitly formulated in Mauritian social relations, reality suggests that there is silent reproduction of the caste based social structure. Mauritian society follows the Indian Brahminical caste structure based on *varna*. Individuals are identified as a *Maraz* (Brahmin), a *Babujee* (Kshatriya) or a *Vaish* (Vaishya). These three categories are generally known as the *grand nasyon* (high castes as opposed to the as *ti nasyon* (low castes). Further, Mauritian society has subtler classifications of castes as *jati* namely katri among the Babujee, the Ahir, Kurmi or Koiri among the Vaish, the Chamar, the Dusadh or the Nonia among the lower castes. Again there are subdivisions into family names and *gotra* (*lineages*). There are mixed intellectual views on caste system outside India. Some argue that caste system has been gradually attenuated outside India while others acknowledge the persistence of caste overseas. Few others opine that 'castes' have survived even though the system has failed to establish itself in the foreign soils. Studies indicate that the indented labourers of the 'Old Diaspora' belonging to lower strata concealed their family names, caste and sub caste identities in the countries of

destinations in order to start a new life with a higher status. Even few high-caste individuals masked their caste identity fearing that planters would consider them unfit for agricultural work. The pride of belonging to higher caste is prevalent even among the New Diaspora although not explicit. Indian immigrants (even though belonging to 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> generation) are well aware of their caste or jati. It is a different question if they do not wish to discuss or dwell upon it. Another example of persisting Caste system in Mauritius is related to the Sanatan Dharma movement. Questioning and contesting the ritual monopoly of Brahmins, the Vaish organized the visit of Indian Brahmins to Mauritius to initiate them into priesthood. As a result, the Hindu Mahasabha which was originally controlled by the Brahmins split was taken over by the Vaish in 1985. It is striking to note that several of the Mauritian lower castes have chosen the path of sanskritisation, to gain social mobility. The lower caste groups are practicing vegetarianism, adopting higher caste rituals, discontinued making animal sacrifices etc. In Mauritius, the Vaish community has been quite successful in such caste-based upward social mobility. They have used the caste system's potential for their group's ascension rather than get rid of it. The reassertion of caste divisions in Mauritius is a vivid example of the fact that Indian caste system is resilient and adapting with the changing times (Claveyrolas, 2015).

### **New Indian Diaspora**

Caste system which is covertly obscured in Diaspora communities gets reflected in the form of prejudices and biases. There are several examples of caste-based discrimination among the New Diaspora as well. In United States, a Dalit man employed by Cisco filed a legal complaint following serious workplace harassments by his upper-caste co-workers in 2016. This became a landmark case on caste discrimination in American legal system and it exposed the widespread prejudice against dalits in the Silicon Valley. Likewise, in UK, a middle-aged woman who suffered caste-based abuse in the supermarket in 2017 filed a complaint, but the police were not able to handle it because they did not understand the nature of the discrimination as they did not have any idea of the caste. UK Government's refusal in 2018 to amend the Equality Act to include caste-based discrimination has made for a difficult and uncertain process in bringing such cases to court. Discrimination based on caste affects at least 270 million people worldwide, mostly in South Asia. In U.K, at least 50,000 people are affected. Research by the Dalit Solidarity Network, a UK-based Dalit advocacy group, found that 85% of UK-based dalits believed British-Indians continued to follow the caste system, and around 50% of them had experienced some form of caste-based discrimination. Most Dalit Diasporas especially engineers in US and UK don't want to reveal their caste because most of their Indian co-workers are from dominant castes. They fear that their career prospects will be hampered if they revealed their caste identity due to prejudices. Recent legal developments have increased the visibility of caste based discrimination in Britain among lawyers and among the public at large. The review of the UK's equality framework offers an opportunity to bring caste within the ambit of UK discrimination legislation, which is yet to become a reality (Waughray, 2018). However, many Hindu organizations in UK have expressed dissatisfaction and are against the legislation which reveals the Diaspora's stand and confusion over the caste related issues in a foreign land. In Africa too, many Indians endorse caste identities and prefer to marry within caste. There may not be rigid caste practices among the Indians in the Africa, but the spirit of caste system persists. Most caste communities have their own caste-based groups in USA, UK, Canada, Australia, Singapore, African and

other countries. These groups are active in supporting the new immigrants through scholarships, funding for students, organizing several social activities and meetings. Several immigrants seek support and avail benefits from such network, although subtle discriminations exist within these groups based on the sub-caste and regional communities. Inter-caste, inter-religion and inter-racial marriage among the Indian Diaspora is not uncommon although there are emotional and social tensions associated with it.

Case studies reveal that Indian Diaspora is divided on the caste lines abroad and hence is not a single monolithic strata or class. Dalit community is asserting their dalit identities to protect their interests. Dalit movement which was confined to Indian sub-continent has broken the national boundaries and serving as 'interest groups' at the international platforms. More heterogeneous the society is, more complex are the ways to judge people differently based on their achieved and ascribed status. Indian Diaspora which is a diverse group portrays interesting mix of both achieved and ascribed status. While the educational and professional achievements of most Indians abroad are a reflection of their achieved status, their caste identity echoes their ascribed identity. Caste and its ideology has been the inherent feature of Indian cultural system. Hence, it can be argued that the visible and sometimes invisible presence of the elements of caste among the Indian Diaspora serves as markers ethnic Indian identity across the globe.

### **Caste based Organisations in USA**

#### **The Case of TANA and ATA**

The idea of starting a national organization of Telugu speaking people in USA was under consideration by people of Telugu origin for about two to three years (1988-90). Finally, in early part of 1990 about two dozen likeminded individuals from various parts of USA gathered for an informal meeting in Chicago and discussed various aspects related to Telugu people of USA and India. After long deliberations, an idea to start a National Organization named American Telugu Association (ATA) was agreed by the participating delegates. Additional input was solicited from various individual around the country about forming an Interim Board of the organization and formally registering the organization in Illinois as a not-for-profit organization.

**Telugu Association of North America** (also referred to as **TANA**) is a non-profit organization and is one of the oldest Indo-American national level organisation primarily for networking of Telugu people in North America. Anjaiah Chowdary Lavu is the President of TANA and Niranjana Srungavarapu is the Executive-Vice President for the 2021-2023 term. Dr. Hanumaiah Bandla is the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. Venkata Ramana Yarlagadda is the Chairman of TANA Foundation

Brahman Samaj of North America (BSNA) is the largest Brahman organization with the sole objective of bringing Brahmans together and help them seek their own cultural and social identity. It endeavors to create an international community of Brahmans (<http://www.bsna.org/index.htm>)...BSNA provides a platform for youth to meet and develop contacts with other members of the community all over the world... Matrimony has been an important consideration in every community in every part of the world. The BSNA provides potential contacts for those who want to marry in their own Brahman community



### Caste among non-Hindus community in Diaspora

Caste cuts across religions in the Indian diaspora. In fact, caste-based discrimination has been reported among Indian Sikhs and Christians within the diaspora. Various Ravidasi Gurudwaras in the UK are testimony of the existing caste divide among the Sikh population (Juergensmeyer 1982, Judge 2010). The presence of Dalit Sikhs and their Gurudwaras has been discussed later in the paper to highlight a different shade of caste among Indians in the US diaspora.

### Matrimonial

Caste permeates the whole Diaspora community, through in some cases it is not very rigid. In the case of marriage, one can still find the relevance of caste in USA and UK especially among the NRIs. The following advertisements are some of the example of caste based matrimonial.

**BY NATIONALITY**

**NRI/GREEN CARD**

**SM4 USA-H1B 1983/5'5"/BOTh, MSc. Public Health, Tamil Iyer Veg. boy, also has Canada PR, frm well Qlfd Hindu Brahmin Vegetarian girls pref. from US / Canada.**  
 Cont: 984222461, 984222461  
 E-mail: rkamilly@gmail.com

**34, 5'8, NRI, Working in Canada. Divorced. Seeks hindu/punjabi girl, Call-XXXXXXXXXX**

**NRI Jalan (Bansal)  
 H'some cultured,  
 status family boy  
 25/5'8" BBA (California)  
 having own family  
 business in India & USA  
 Looking for beautiful  
 educated homely girl  
 (pref. Green card  
 holder), from good  
 family background**

**Suitable Send Biodata+  
 Photo to  
 xyz@yahoo.com  
 P. O. Box X C  
 Times of India,  
 D. N. Road, Mumbai**

Source: <http://blog.ads2publish.com> and <https://www.advertisementindia.com>

### Gender in Diaspora

Migration influences gender relations, either entrenching inequalities and traditional roles, or challenging and changing them.

Gender is an integral part of the migration process. The impacts of migration for women and men depend on many factors, all of which have gender implications. These include: the type of migration (temporary, permanent, irregular, regular, labour, natural disaster- or conflict-induced, independent or as dependent spouse); policies and attitudes of the sending and receiving countries; and gender relations within the household. Gender affects how migrants adapt to the new country, the extent of contact with the original country and the possibility of return and successful reintegration (Boyd and Grieco 2003).

Changing labour markets globally have increased both opportunities and pressures for women and men to migrate internationally in larger numbers. For example, in Latin America the shift in economic emphasis to service sectors has led to an increased

demand for female labour, which in some areas has given women an incentive to migrate into these areas.

In the initial years of Indenture, women were considered as ‘unproductive labour by the authorities, who were reluctant to supply food rations for women unless they worked. They were given a lighter variety of work as well as the payments (Lal 2000: 48). By 1886 their demand increased because of the lesser wages, unpaid domestic services, and social stability which they provided. They were fully integrated into the plantation economy and played a crucial role as labourers. There are references that several of them reached to the level of ‘Sirdarni’ (Female supervisor) (Gunpunth 1984; Emmer 1986). Several women obtained a small piece of land to cultivate after their period of contract was over. They grew vegetables and raised poultry and cows, not only for their consumption but also to earn some extra money.

Many of these women especially in the Caribbean became the matriarchs of large families. Chan Choenni writes that these matriarchs were assertive, walked freely on the streets, many smoked and even drank alcohol but they were feared and respected for what they have achieved (Choenni and Choenni 2012). Ironically in the postindentured period when the number of women grew, and patriarchal Indian practices were revived, many matriarchs strived to imbibe the very practices that they had broken. They insisted on their daughters and grand- daughters to imbibe the izzatdar (showing honoured behaviour) behaviour. This izzatdar revival was a general trend which took a bigger form in the 1920s (Choenni and Choenni 2012). It was an after effect of the revival of Indian culture and rebuilding the Indian identity among the diaspora communities.

Women also participated in the larger movements like the Satyagraha in South Africa which came to fore during the resistance between 1907 and 1911. Gandhi described the women as “passive resisters,” for supporting their husbands and sons (Gandhi 1961: 275). But these women were willing to take a larger role in the Satyagraha, and Gandhi himself recognized that they acted very “bravely,” and their work has attracted the “motherland” (Indian Opinion, 11 December 1909)

**Check your progress 2**

**Answer the following question**

- 1. Write a note on caste system in the colonial diaspora?

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- 3. How does gender equation impacted during the migration process?

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**60.7 LET US SUM UP**

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Almost all societies are stratified according to wealth, power, prestige, and other resources the societies value. Systems of stratification include slave societies, caste societies, and class societies. The two major explanations of stratification are the

Functionalist and Conflict views. Functionalist theory states that stratification is necessary and inevitable to induce people with the special intelligence, knowledge, and skills to seek key roles that are important in society. Conflict theory argues that stratification exists because of discrimination and prejudice against the have-nots of society. Caste and Class are two different forms of stratification that coexist in India. Caste is a form of social stratification determined by one single factor i.e. ritualistic legitimation of authority perceived as hereditary. Class of a person is based on multiple factors like economic status, education, power, achievements etc. The co-existence of Caste and class system is deeply entrenched in the Indian social structure. The interplay of caste and class in India is a complex phenomenon and it is reflected in Diaspora although covertly, obscured and invisible in the global stratification system.

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## 60.8 KEY WORDS

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- Social Stratification** : Refers to the system of hierarchical positioning of individuals and groups in the society based on the factors like wealth, income, ethnicity, race, education, and power.
- Hierarchy** : A rank order of castes or groups from top to bottom.
- Caste system** : Hierarchical structure that is determined by birth and hereditary transmission of life- style and customary practices
- Class system** : Group of people sharing common resources and similar status with regard to wealth, power and prestige.
- Power** : Refers to the extent which a person can influence the action of others and make decisions.

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### Check Your Progress 1

- 1: Social Stratification thus is a system of hierarchical positioning of individuals and groups in the society that may be advantageous and disadvantageous to them in terms of social rewards. Analytically, stratification can be viewed as an evaluative ranking of social units governed by set of norms and regulated by some principles.
- 2: A 'status group' is a collection of persons who share a distinctive style of life and a certain consciousness of kind. While caste is perceived as a hereditary group with a fixed ritual status, a social class is a category of people who have a similar socio-economic status in relation to other segments of their community or society. Caste system is characterised by 'cumulative inequality' but class system is characterised by 'dispersed inequality'. The members of a class have a similar socio-economic status in relation to other classes in the society, while the members of a caste have either a high or low ritual status in relation to other castes.

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1: The disappearance of the caste system in colonial diaspora is largely due to the history of indenture as entirely incompatible with the ritual requirements and prohibitions of the caste system. Indenture itself is an escape from caste atrocities, poverty and unemployment. In addition, it was impossible to adhere to the rituals associated with castes such as ceremonies, marriage, festivals etc. Therefore, Caste system is prevalent in very lighter form in many colonial diasporas.
- 2: Gender is an integral part of the migration process. The impacts of migration for women and men depend on many factors, all of which have gender implications. These include: the type of migration (temporary, permanent, irregular, regular, labour, natural disaster- or conflict-induced, independent or as dependent spouse); policies and attitudes of the sending and receiving countries; and gender relations within the household. Gender affects how migrants adapt to the new country, the extent of contact with the original country and the possibility of return and successful reintegration