

Class System-

Social class is a set of concepts in the social sciences and political theory centered on models of social stratification in which people are grouped into a set of hierarchical social categories. In common parlance, the term "social class" is usually synonymous with "socio-economic class," defined as "people having the same social, economic, or educational status.

Nature and characteristics of a class-

- 1) It is a status group.
- 2) The status is achieved and not ascribed.
- 3) It is a universal and de-facto group- it is universal, since a class system is maintained in all corners of the world, due to its inherent economic nature. And these classes are not legally or religiously defined.
- 4) There is an element of prestige and stability in the group- this element of prestige and stability is attained due to the function that a person of that group performs, and the rank he or she is attributed to because of the function.
- 5) It is an open economic group- it has been termed likewise since entry and exit from class structure is flexible enough. Movement up and down the hierarchy is not flexible, and dependent upon one's economic status.

Origin of Class System:

Class structure has its origin in the feudal system. Feudalism is a grouping of legal and military customs, prevalent in medieval Europe, which flourished between the 9th and 15th centuries, or any similar grouping of legal and military customs. Simply defined, it was a system for structuring society around relationships derived from the holding of land in exchange for service or labour.

Ranked from the highest to the lowest class as- Kings, Nobles/Lords, Knights and Peasants at the bottom most layer and maximum in strength. This society was formed mainly due to security reasons. Nobles wanted security of maintaining control over their far reaching kingdoms, and peasants wanted security from invaders. The king acquired vast areas of land and as there was no quick communication system it was difficult for him to govern the land effectively. He gave large portions of his land (fiefs/manors) to his direct underlings (lords), who in turn paid him homage. Lords too faced similar problems so fiefs were further divided by them and given to the knights. Under the knights were the peasants, or the lower class. Nearly 90% of the people in the middle ages were peasants.

At par with the king or sometimes above him also would be the Pope (religious head) and the church leaders. They had great power over the commoners and were an active member of politics and government. The peasants believed that the harder they served the church, the more money they paid to the church; their after-life would be that much better. The church also paid the king for using the land. This type of symbiosis between the church and the king