**Social Issues and Education**

**Social Class and Status**

**Social class** refers to **a group of people with similar levels of wealth**, **influence**, and **status.**

"Class" is a subject of analysis for [sociologists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_sociologists), [political scientists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_scientist), [anthropologists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthropologists) and [social historians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_history). However, there is not a consensus on a definition of "class". The term 'class' has a wide range of sometimes conflicting meanings. In common terms, "social class" is usually synonymous with "socio-economic class", defined as "people having the same social, economic, cultural, political or educational status", e.g., "the working class"; "an emerging professional class".However, **academics distinguish social class** and **socioeconomic status**, with the former referring to **one's relatively stable socio-cultural background** and **the latter referring to one's current social and economic situation and consequently being more changeable over time**.

There are no precise measurements of what determines social class in society. [Karl Marx](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Marx) thought "class" was defined by one's relationship to the means of production (their relations of production). His simple understandings of classes in modern capitalist society are:

1. proletariat,(;j{xf/f) those who work but do not own the means of production; and the
2. [bourgeoisie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bourgeoisie), those who invest and live off of the surplus generated by the proletariat's operation of the [means of production](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Means_of_production).

[Max Weber](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Weber) formulated a [three-component theory of stratification](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three-component_theory_of_stratification) that saw social class as emerging from an interplay between "class", "status" and "power". Weber believed that class position was determined by a person's relationship to the means of production, while **status or "Stand**" emerged from honor or prestige.

Weber derived many of his key concepts on social stratification by examining the social structure of many countries. He noted that (contrary to Marx's theories,) stratification was based on more than simply ownership of [capital](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_(economics)). Weber pointed out that some members of the aristocracy lack economic wealth yet might nevertheless have political power. Likewise in Europe, many wealthy Jewish families lacked prestige and honor because they were considered members of a "pariah group".

* Class: A person's economic position in a society. Weber differs from Marx in that he does not see this as the supreme factor in stratification. Weber noted how managers of corporations or industries control firms they do not own.
* Status: A person's prestige, social honor or popularity in a society. Weber noted that political power was not rooted in capital value solely, but also in one's status. Poets and saints, for example, can possess immense influence on society with often little economic worth.
* Power: A person's ability to get their way despite the resistance of others. For example, individuals in state jobs, such as an employee of the [Federal Bureau of Investigation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Bureau_of_Investigation), or a member of the [United States Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Congress), may hold little property or status, but they still hold immense power.

### Common three-stratum model

Today, concepts of social class often assume three general categories: a very wealthy and powerful upper class that owns and controls the means of production; a middle class of professional workers, [small business](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Small_business) owners and low-level [managers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Managers); and a lower class, who rely on low-paying [wage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wage) jobs for their livelihood and often experience [poverty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty).

#### Upper class

A symbolic image of three orders of feudal society in Europe prior to the [French Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution), which shows the rural third estate carrying the clergy and the nobility

The upper class is the social class composed of those who are [rich](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_inequality), well-born, powerful, or a combination of those. They usually use the greatest political power. In some countries, wealth alone is sufficient to allow entry into the upper class. In others, only people who are born or marry into certain aristocratic bloodlines are considered members of the upper class and those who gain great wealth through commercial activity are looked down upon by the aristocracy as [*nouveau riche*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nouveau_riche).

The upper class is generally contained within the richest one or two percent of the population. Members of the upper class are often born into it and are distinguished by immense wealth which is passed from generation to generation in the form of estates.

#### Middle class

The middle class is the most contested of the three categories, the broad group of people in contemporary society who fall socio-economically between the lower and upper classes.One example of the contest of this term is that in the United States "middle class" is applied very broadly and includes people who would elsewhere be considered [working class](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Working_class). Middle-class workers are sometimes called "[white-collar workers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-collar_worker)".

#### Lower class

In the United States the lowest stratum of the working class, the [underclass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Underclass), often lives in urban areas with low-quality [civil services](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_services)

Lower class (occasionally described as working class) are those employed in low-paying [wage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wage) jobs with very little economic security. The term "lower class" also refers to persons with low income.

The working class is sometimes separated into those who are employed but lacking financial security (the "[working poor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Working_poor)") and an [underclass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Underclass)—those who are long-term [unemployed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unemployment) and/or [homeless](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homelessness), especially those receiving [welfare](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Welfare) from the [state](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_(polity)). The latter is analogous to the Marxist term "[lumpenproletariat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lumpenproletariat)".[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_class#cite_note-Brown-2009-953-25) Members of the working class are sometimes called [blue-collar workers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue-collar_worker).

### Education

A person's social class has a significant impact on their educational opportunities. Not only are upper-class parents able to send their children to exclusive schools that are perceived to be better, but in many places state-supported schools for children of the upper class are of a much higher quality than those the state provides for children of the lower classes. This lack of good schools is one factor that perpetuates the class divide across generations.

In 1977, British [cultural theorist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_theorist) [Paul Willis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Willis_(cultural_theorist)) published a study titled "Learning to Labour" in which he investigated the connection between social class and education. In his study, he found that a group of working-class schoolchildren had developed a dislike towards the acquisition of knowledge as being outside their class and therefore undesirable, enabling their presence in the working class.

**Status group**

The German [sociologist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociologist) [Max Weber](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Weber) formulated a [three-component theory of stratification](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three-component_theory_of_stratification) that defines a **status group** (also **status class** and [**status estate**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estates_of_the_realm)) as a group of people who, within a [society](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Society), can be differentiated on the basis of **non-economic qualities such as**[**honour**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honour)**,**[**prestige**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reputation)**,**[**ethnicity**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnicity)**,**[**race**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_(human_categorization))**and**[**religion**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion). Weber said that status groups emerge from "**the house of honor**", and that such status-honor stands in contrast with:

* [social class](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_class), based on [economically](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic) determined relationship in the house of the marketplace
* [political party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_party), based on [affiliations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_party) in the [political domain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics), or the house of power

According to Weber, **status groups** feature in a wide variety of social stratifications which both popular discourse and the academic literature commonly refer to. These include categorization by [race](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_(human_categorization)), [ethnicity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnicity), [caste](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caste), professional groups, neighborhood groups, nationalities, and so forth.

**Gender and education**

Gender is one of the issues in the world. It is important to understand and distinguish between **sex** (biological differences) and **gender** (a social construct, determined by social norms, culture, attitudes, values, tradition, beliefs, practices and which refers to roles, responsibilities, identities or other qualities attributed to people because they are men or women). Gender norms refer to attitudes about what is appropriate or not for women and men in terms of behaviour, language, practice, education, profession, etc. They are produced and reproduced, including through social institutions (e.g. in families and schools, through textbooks, teaching practices, division of labour, etc.). **Gender roles are learnt and thus can be challenged and changed**. **Gender identity refers to the individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the sex determined at birth or with the social expectations of that sex**. Many people face harassment (irritation), stigma (Shame) and exclusion in the expression of their gender identity, for example through dress, speech and mannerisms, is different from what others might expect.

**Gender equality** in education is the **ultimate goal**. It is achieved when female and male learners have equal access to learning opportunities. **Gender equality** in any field of life, including education, can be achieved only when **all types of discrimination are eliminated and equal conditions**, treatment and opportunities are provided to both girls and boys, women and men.

Education can play a significant role to achieve wider gender equality by promoting new patterns of beliefs and attitudes, and by **avoiding the reproduction or reinforcement of social inequalities**. **The education system must be sensitive to the physical, psychological and social differences between male and female learners**, but should **value and respect both equally and provide equal opportunities to all learners.**

There is a tendency to equate **gender equality with gender parity and gender equity**. However a clear distinction needs to be made among these terms. Gender parity in education (an indicator of the ratio of girls to boys): gender parity is reached **when there is equal representation and participation of male and female learners in education**. It is a useful indicator but by itself does not measure gender equality. The gender parity index (GPI) of the EFA Global Monitoring Report measures the ratio of female-to - male value of a given indicator. A value between 0.97 - 1.03 indicates that gender parity was reached.

**Gender equity in education** (conditions or means to achieve equality, but not the end result): special treatment/action taken to **reverse** the historical and social disadvantages that prevent female and male learners from **accessing and benefiting from education on equal grounds**. For example, equity measures can favour girls in order to empower them and help them overcome disadvantages of chronic discrimination and catch up with boys. Equity measures, also referred to as **‘positive discrimination’ or ‘affirmative action’**, are not necessarily ‘**fair’**, but are implemented **to ensure fairness and equality** of outcome. For example, **providing scholarships or stipends for girls is considered as an incentive for increasing their access to education.**

**Gender analysis**: a diagnosis of the differences between women’s and men’s conditions, needs, access to and control of resources or other benefits. It begins by collecting and analyzing sex-disaggregated statistics and information about the targeted population in order to know who does what (division of labour); who has what (access to and control over resources, services, decision-making, e.g. access to education); what the socio-economic context is (how structural factors – demographic, economic, political, legal, institutional – as well as culture, religion, attitudes, etc. affect access and control of resources or decision-making); and what gender considerations are relevant (at all stages of education, from planning to monitoring and evaluation).

**Gender mainstreaming**: this involves systematically integrating a gender equality perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of interventions in order to ensure that girls and women, boys and men equally benefit from these interventions and that gender equality is being promoted.

**Gender-specific programming**: programmes designed to even out gender imbalances by targeting a specific group of persons of the same gender (or gender identity).  The UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) seeks to promote gender equality through both gender mainstreaming and gender-specific programming.

**Ethnicity and Education**

Ethnicity is a word used in sociology to describe the culture that you belong to. Everyone has an ethnicity. Janajati (Ethnic Groups /Nationalities) is also called a group or nationality as defined by the National Committee for Development of Nationalities (1996) is as follows:

* A distinct collective identity ·
* Own language, religion, tradition, culture and civilization
* own traditional egalitarian social structure
* Traditional homeland or geographical area ·
* Written or oral history ·
* Having “ we-feeling”;
* Have had no decisive role in politics and government in modern Nepal;
* Who declare themselves as Janajati

Nationality (Janajati) is that community which has its own mother tongue and traditional culture and yet do not fall under the conventional four fold Varna of Hindu or Hindu hierarchical caste structure. A Janajati group has the following characteristics

**There are 125 caste/ethnic groups reported in the census 2011. Chhetri is the largest caste/ethnic groups having 16.6% (4,398,053) of the total population followed by Brahman-Hill (12.2% ; 3,226,903).” —**[***Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS***](http://cbs.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/National%20Report.pdf)**).**

Historically, many of these Janajati groups used to occupy a particular habitat or territory, and thus many of them claim that they are the true “ First Settlers” (*Adivasi*) of Nepal. Like the caste Hindus, the Janajati can also be divided into two distinct regional groups: **Hill Janajati** and **Tarai Janajati**. Some of the **Hill Janajati groups are**: **Magar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Sherpa, Sunuwar, Bhote, Raji, Raute and others**. Some of the **Tarai Janajati groups are: Tharu, Dhimal, Gangain, Satar/Santhal, Dahngar/Jhangar, Koche, Meche** and others.

Political scientists Joshi and Rose broadly classify the Nepalese population into three major ethnic groups in terms of their origin: **Indo-Nepalese**, **Tibeto-Nepalese**, and **indigenous Nepalese**. In the case of the first two groups, the direction if their migration and Nepal's landscape appeared to have led to their vertical distribution; most ethnic groups were found at particular altitude. The first group, comprising those of Indo- Nepalese origin, inhabited the more fertile lower hills, river valleys, and Tarai plains. The second major group consisted of communities of Tibeto-Mongol origin occupying the higher hills from the west to the east. The third and much smaller group comprised a number of ethnic communities, such as the Tharus and the Dhimals of the Tarai; they may be remnants of indigenous communities whose habitation predates the advent of Indo-Nepalese and Tibeto-Mongol elements.

**Caste System (***jati*) **in Nepal and Education**

The caste system refers to the [social stratification](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_stratification) of people into ranked groups defined by **descent and occupation**. People are grouped as caste on the basis of purity. Usually the caste system is described as a more than 2,000-year-old Hindu tradition geographically originating from early civilizations on the Indian subcontinent. This system divides people into four larger caste categories

1. *Brahmins* (priests and teachers),
2. *Kshatriyas* (rulers and soldiers),
3. *Vaisyas* (merchants and traders), and
4. *Shudras* (laborers and artisans).

A fifth category falls outside these larger categories and consists of those known as "untouchables" or Dalits as they call themselves (“broken people”). The casteless group have earned their status “untouchable” from the tasks and labours they inherit which are often too pollute to grant them inclusion in the traditional caste system. In performing these labours they become physically untouchable by the other castes and expelled from certain parts of everyday social life. Basically **the caste system is a pyramid and Dalits are at the lower end**. **Discrimination is often based on housing, work and access to public spaces**. There are examples of **Dalits being denied access to public services such as deep wells, water taps, health care and education**. Segregation in housing, schools and cremation grounds, occupational restrictions, prohibition of ownership and access to land, bonded labour, forced prostitution and manual hunt are other examples of discrimination in the everyday life of Dalits.

Social stratification in is in caste, ethnicity and religion. It is also reflected in educational attainment. Majority of dalits children leave school. These inequalities have been a cause of concern to both the government and civil society. The government has put in place strong, affirmative action policies to redress many of the historical injustices. Some of these have received strong public support but others, particularly those regarding **reservation of seats in colleges and universities, dalit scholarships, free education to the dalits and so on. However, the programs are not found so effective.**

**Language and Education**

Language is one of the most challenging issues in education. It is more challenging especially in a multilingual country -ax'eflifs d'n's\_ like Nepal where children from different indigenous tribal groups representing more than 123 languages.

There has been a long debate in the context of Nepal on whether the language of small communities should be included in the school curriculum in addition to the language of nation.

Many scholars have claimed that teaching in mother tongue in the **early grades improve children's ability to learn better than second or foreign language**. But, some countries have chosen for one language of instruction - lzIf0fsf] dfWod\_ . Others have chosen to use national or local language an important place in schooling.

Since the Panchayat period (1960-1990), various ethnic groups have raised dissatisfaction on the issue of language. They have **demanded active state support for the development** of **their own individual languages** and **their use as the medium of instruction** in school especially up to primary level. Their dissatisfaction is to the only use of Nepali in **civil services and courts**. So, they are **demanding for recognition of minority languages** as the language of official communication. The constitution has also declared different languages as national languages of Nepal.

Some scholars have argued that the **official use of mother tongues** ensures better access to education and serves as recognition of ethnic identity. Accordingly, activists argue that **indigenous languages should be introduced at least as ‘elective’ subjects in education**. Others claim that the concept of **regional languages** should be developed. Many recent reports have pointed out that the use of mother **tongue bridges the gap between school and community**.

In terms of linguistic roots - efiffsf] pTkltsf] cfwf/df\_, Nepali, Tharu, Maithili, and Bhojpuri belonged to the Indo-European family - ef/f]k]nL\_. The mother tongues of the Tibeto-Nepalese (Tibeto-Burman) family -ef]6 ad]{nL kl/jf/\_ include Newari, Limbu, Gurung,Dhimal, Rai, and Magar . Nepali is the largest linguistic community in Nepal. If the Maithili- and Bhojpuri-speaking populations of the Tarai were included, more than 75 percent of the population belongs to the Indo-Nepalese ethnic group.