

**CBSE Class-12 Sociology Test Paper-01**  
**Social Inequality and Exclusion**

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**General Instruction:**

- Question 1-5 carries two marks each.
  - Question 6-8 carries four marks each.
  - Question 9-10 carries six marks each.
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1. What is social about social inequality?
2. Define 'social inequality'.
3. What are social resources?
4. Social resources can be divided into how many forms of capital?
5. How do different social groups look at social stratification or inequality?
6. How do social resources creates inequality?
7. Differentiate between prejudices and discrimination.
8. What kind of reactions would be produced from groups that experience prolonged discrimination or insulting behaviour?
9. Describe the key principles that help to explain social stratification.
10. Explain how caste system enforces practices of discrimination.

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1. Social Inequality is social because they are not about individuals but about groups. Second, they are social in the sense that they are not economic, although there is usually a strong link between social and economic inequality. Third, they are systematic and structured as there is a definite pattern to social inequalities.
2. Patterns of unequal access to social resources are commonly called social inequality. Some social inequality reflects innate differences between individuals for example, their varying abilities and efforts. Someone may be endowed with exceptional intelligence or talent, or may have worked very hard to achieve their wealth and status. However, by and large, social inequality is not the outcome of innate or 'natural' differences between people, but is produced by the society in which they live.
3. In every society, some people have a greater share of valued resources – money, property, education, health, and power – than others. These are referred to as social resources.
4. Social resources can be divided into three forms of capital – economic capital in the form of material assets and income; cultural capital such as educational qualifications and status; and social capital in the form of networks of contacts and social associations.
5. Not everyone thinks of a system of inequality as legitimate. Typically, people with the greatest social privileges express the strongest support for systems of stratification such as caste and race. Those who have experienced the exploitation and humiliation of being at the bottom of the hierarchy are most likely to challenge it.
6. In every society, some people have a greater share of valued resources – money, property, education, health, and power – than others. These social resources can be divided into three forms of capital that is economic, cultural and social.  
Economic capital is in the form of material assets and income; cultural capital is such as educational qualifications and status; and social capital in the form of networks of contacts and social associations. Often, these three forms of capital overlap and one can be converted into the other.  
For example, a person from a well-off family (economic capital) can afford expensive higher education, and so can acquire cultural or educational capital. Someone with influential relatives and friends (social capital) may – through access to good advice,

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recommendations or information – manage to get a well-paid job. Thus, these social resources create inequalities.

7. Prejudice describes attitudes and opinions. On the other hand, discrimination refers to actual behaviour towards another group or individual.

Discrimination can be seen in practices that disqualify members of one group from opportunities open to others, as when a person is refused a job because of their gender or religion. Discrimination can be very hard to prove because it may not be open or explicitly stated. Discriminatory behaviour or practices may be presented as motivated by other, more justifiable, reasons rather than prejudice. For example, the person who is refused a job because of their caste may be told that they were less qualified than others, and that the selection was done purely on merit

8. Prolonged experience of discriminatory or insulting behaviour can often produce a reaction on the part of the excluded who then stop trying for inclusion. For example, 'upper' caste Hindu communities have often denied entry into temples for the 'lower' castes and specially the Dalits.

After decades of such treatment, the Dalits may build their own temple, or convert to another religion like Buddhism, Christianity or Islam. After they do this, they may no longer desire to be included in the Hindu temple or religious events. But this does not mean that social exclusion is not being practiced.

9. The term social stratification refers to a system by which categories of people in a society are ranked in a hierarchy. There are three key principles that help explain social stratification:

- i. Social stratification is a characteristic of society, not simply a function of individual differences. Social stratification is a society-wide system that unequally distributes social resources among categories of people. In more technologically advanced societies where people produce a surplus over and above their basic needs, however, social resources are unequally distributed to various social categories regardless of people's innate individual abilities.
- ii. Social stratification persists over generations. It is closely linked to the family and to the inheritance of social resources from one generation to the next. A person's social position is ascribed. That is, children assume the social positions of their parents. Within the caste system, birth dictates occupational opportunities. A Dalit is likely to be confined to traditional occupations such as agricultural labour, scavenging, or leather work,

with little chance of being able to get high-paying white-collar or professional work. The ascribed aspect of social inequality is reinforced by the practice of endogamy. That is, marriage is usually restricted to members of the same caste, ruling out the potential for blurring caste lines through inter-marriage.

- iii. Social stratification is supported by patterns of belief, or ideology. No system of social stratification is likely to persist over generations unless it is widely viewed as being either fair or inevitable. The caste system, for example, is justified in terms of the opposition of purity and pollution, with the Brahmins designated as the most superior and Dalits as the most inferior by virtue of their birth and occupation.

- 10. The caste system is a distinct Indian social institution that legitimises and enforces practices of discrimination against people born into particular castes. These practices of discrimination are humiliating, exclusionary and exploitative.

Historically, the caste system classified people by their occupation and status. Every caste was associated with an occupation, which meant that persons born into a particular caste were also 'born into' the occupation associated with their caste – they had no choice.

Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, each caste also had a specific place in the hierarchy of social status, so that, roughly speaking, not only were occupational categories ranked by social status, but there could be a further ranking within each broad occupational category.

In strict scriptural terms, social and economic status was supposed to be sharply separated. For example, the ritually highest castes – the Brahmins – were not supposed to amass wealth, and were subordinated to the secular power of kings and rulers belonging to the Kshatriya castes.

On the other hand, despite having the highest secular status and power, the king was subordinated to the Brahmin in the ritual-religious sphere.