

Social Classes in Urban India:

In the urban areas social classes comprise principally. (i) Capitalists (commercial and industrial), (ii) Professional classes, (iii) Petty traders and shopkeepers and (iv) Working.

1. Commercial and Industrial Class:

During British rule there was the growth of a class of merchants engaged in export -import business. Thus, there came into being a commercial middle class invested in the country. Subsequently, rich commercial middle class invested their savings in the form of capital in large -scale manufactured goods and modern industries. Indian society thus, included in its composition such new groups as mill owners mine owners etc. Economically and socially this class turned out to be the strongest class India.

After independence, the major fields like agriculture, industry and trade were left to the private individuals/The creation of infrastructure and establishment of heavy industries were taken of by the State sector .This type of economy led to a phenomenal rise in the number of industries owned and controlled by the capitalists .It also led to the rise of commercial classes. There is heavy concentration of assets, resources and income in a few business houses such as the Tatas, Birlas, Dalmias, and a few others.

2. Professional Classes:

During British rule .there came into being an expanding professional class Such social categories were linked up with modern industry, agriculture, commerce, finance, administration, press and other fields of social life. The professional classes comprised lawyers ,doctors , teachers , managers and others working in the mode n commercial and other enterprises, engineers, technologists agricultural scientists and so Rapid industrialization and urbanization in post-independent India has opened the way for large-scale employment opportunities in industries trade and commerce ,construction transport service etc.

Similarly, the State has created a massive institutional set-up comprising a complex bureaucratic structure throughout the length and breadth of the country. Bureaucrats, management executives, technocrats, doctors, lawyers, teachers and journalists etc, have grown considerably in size and scale ever since independence 'But this class hardly constitutes a homogeneous category. Within this non-proprietary class of non-manual workers, a deep hierarchy exists. There are some high paid cadres at the top and low paid at the bottom .They differ in their style of life as well .In view of these they have not crystallised into a well -defined middle class.

3. Petty Traders, Shopkeepers and Unorganized Workers:

There has also been in existence in urban areas a class of petty traders and shopkeepers. These classes have developed with the growth of modern cities and towns. They constitute the link between the producers of goods and commodities and the mass of consumers. They make their living on the profit margin of the process on which they buy and sell their goods. "Like all other classes, this class has grown in large-scale in post-independent India. The unprecedented growth of the cities has stimulated the growth of this class. The growing urban population creates demands for various kinds of needs and services. Petty shop-keeping and trading caters to these needs of the urban population.

Besides these spheres of activities urbanisation also offers opportunities for employment in the organised and unorganised sector of the economy. The bulk of rural migrants lacks educational qualification and hence the organised sector is closed to them. They fall back upon the unorganised sector of economy. They work in small-scale production units or crafts, industry or manual service occupations. They get low wages and also are deprived of the benefits of the organised labour force.

This class also constitutes an amorphous category. It comprises on the one hand, self-employed petty shop-keepers, traders, vendor, hawkers and on the other; semi-skilled and unskilled workers in the informal sectors.

4. The Working Class:

This was another class which emerged during British rule in India. This was the modern working class which was the direct result of modern industries, railways and plantations. This Indian Working class was formed predominantly out of the pauperised peasants and ruined artisans.

The working class has grown in volume in post-independent India. They have also been distributed in different parts and different sectors of the industry. Thus, the working class has become much more heterogeneous. This diversity in the working class has given rise to a complex set of relations among the different sectors. In the post-independent India, the Government's attitude towards the working class has become favourable. Several Acts were passed granting some facilities to the workers. Trade union movements have taken place in independent India. Yet considerable division exists among the trade unions in terms of control, sector and region of the industries.