UNIT 2 TOPICS:

Social Inequality

• Definition of/concepts:
  - social inequality
  - stratification
  - power
  - wealth
  - prestige
  - ascribed status
  - achieved status
  - life chances
  - gender
  - ethnicity
  - social exclusion
  - absolute poverty
  - relative poverty

• Types of Stratification (division of society into different levels) based on:
  - social class
  - gender
  - ethnicity
  - age
  - closed systems of stratification e.g. caste system
  - open systems of stratification e.g. class system
  - examples of differences in life chances within each type of division,
    e.g. between male and female within gender divisions;
    related to education, employment, housing, income,
    life expectancy, gender roles within the family;
- changes AND the causes of the changes e.g.
  Equal Pay Act 1970, Sex Discrimination Act 1975,
  Equal Opportunities Commission, related to gender issues;

(The Equal Opportunities Commission later merged with
The Commission for Racial Equality to form)

The Equality and Human Rights Commission to tackle
sexism, racism, and discrimination,

Race Relations Act, and Commission for Racial Equality
related to race/ethnicity issues.

Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006, to tackle
Discrimination in employment and training.

- Functionalist view of social class;
- Marxist view of social class;
- Weber’s view of social class;

**Social Class:**
- how it can be measured e.g. The NS-SEC class scale i.e.
  The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification based on
  occupations;
- problems in trying to measure social class;
- importance of social class on – LIFE CHANCES;
- changes AND causes of the changes to social classes, e.g.
  changes in the occupational structure, skilled manual jobs have decreased and
  there had been a growth in professional and managerial jobs, but this has now
  slowed down.

**Income and Wealth:**
- definition for income, and wealth;
- importance of income and wealth on LIFE CHANCES;
- how income and wealth are distributed between the social
  classes within Britain.
• **Social Mobility**
  - definition of social mobility;
  - inter-generational, and intra-generational social mobility;
  - problems in trying to measure social mobility – long-range, short-range, self-recruitment;
  - influences on social mobility e.g. changes to the occupational structure;
  - routes to social mobility e.g. educational achievement;
  - barriers to social mobility, *e.g.* glass ceiling.

• **Poverty**
  - what is poverty? - absolute poverty, relative poverty
  - government’s definition/measurement of poverty
  - measurements of poverty – related to:
    - income levels,
    - a lack of items seen as necessities by the majority of the population
      - subjective measure, where people consider themselves to be poor.
  - social exclusion
  - the different social groups likely to experience poverty;
  - the life cycle of poverty;
  - explanations of poverty: - The culture of poverty;
    - The cycle of deprivation;
    - Welfare dependency and the ‘underclass’;
    - The Marxist Approach;
    - Unemployment and the inadequacies of the Welfare state;

**Social Control and Deviance**

• **Definition of/concepts:**
  - crime;
  - deviance;
  - social order – lack of chaos, smooth functioning of society;
  - social control - maintaining order;
  - formal social control - (e.g. police enforcement, police caution, verbal warning/reprimand, community service, fines, probation, ASBO, prison
  - informal social control – (e.g. family, peer groups,)
- Consensus (Functionalist) view of social order – based on agreement;
- Conflict (Marxist) view of social order – the ruling class impose their views on others;

- **Statistics on crime:**
  - Types of statistics -
    - Official statistics (from police records, courts etc.);
    - Victim Survey (e.g. BCS);
    - Self-report Studies.
  - Strength and weakness of the different types of crime statistics;
    - Problems of - identifying crime, reporting, and recording crime, policing methods.

- **Social characteristics and crime** – how crime is related to:
  - age,
  - Gender,
  - Ethnicity,
  - Area.

- **Sociological explanations** for why crime is committed:
  - Inadequate socialisation within the family
  - peer group pressure and sub-cultures
  - *relative deprivation* – feeling poorly off compared to others
  - Marxists – *materialism* - capitalist society valuing material possessions
    - consumerism – wanting more and better goods
  - the *opportunity structure* - the types of legal and illegal opportunities available
  - stereotyping
  - Labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy
• Gender and Crime – explanation for the differences:
  - different gender socialisation
  - different opportunity to commit crime
  - different social control of behaviour and activities
  - chivalry thesis – the police and courts maybe easier on females;
  - the statistics on male and female crime, are not accurate.

• Social Class and crime – explanations for the differences:
  - different socialisation – different norms and values
  - material deprivation
  - relative deprivation
  - anomie – feeling of frustration due to lack of opportunities
  - educational underachievement leading to – unemployment,
    - poor job opportunity,
    - low income.

• White Collar Crime – is committed by middle class people in the course of their jobs
  - occupational crime – this is carried out by individual’s in work and ranges from
    minor theft of property to large scale fraud;
  - corporate crime – carried out by executives to increase profit and can include
    such activities as selling harmful products;
  - computer crime – using computer to commit crimes during the course of their job;
  - professional crime – carried out as lifetime career, such as drug running.

• Crime and the Mass Media – the effect of how the media presents crime;
  - exaggeration and distortion may create a moral panic;
  - stereotypical presentation, may create ‘folk devils’ e.g. ALL young people
    wearing a hoodie are troublemakers;
  - deviancy amplification may occur as others are encouraged by the media reports
    to behave in a deviant/criminal way.
Mass Media

• Definition of/concepts:
  - mass media
  - traditional media
  - new media
  - electronic media
  - press
  - broadcasting
  - digital technology
  - interactivity
  - convergence
  - internet
  - quality newspaper
  - middle market
  - mass market
  - hypodermic syringe approach
  - users and gratification approach
  - decoding approach
  - audience
  - socialisation
  - social identities
  - norm referencing
  - stereotyping
  - political socialisation
  - pluralist approach
  - conflict approach
  - power
  - agenda setting
  - democracy
  - deviancy amplification

• What are the Mass Media:
  - Types of media - traditional media
    - new media
    - electronic media
    - press
    - broadcasting.
- **Developments** in the media and what it means for the consumers
  - digitalization
  - interactivity
  - convergence
  - internet.

- **Effect of the Mass Media on their Audiences according to:**
  - hypodermic syringe approach
  - users and gratification approach
  - decoding approach

- **The Role of the Mass Media in the Socialisation process:**
  - as an agency of socialisation provide **powerful sources of information and knowledge** about the world, life and relationships;
  - play an important part in the development of our **identities**;
  - provides **‘norm referencing’** for outlining boundaries of acceptable behaviour;
  - during **political socialisation**, providing political values, political beliefs and political preferences.

- **Press Ownership and the Content of the Press:**
  - **patterns** of press ownership – the concentration of press ownership;
  - the **pluralist approach** to press ownership, i.e. a range of views and interests exist in society;
  - the **conflict approach** to press ownership – the view that there is a conflict of interest between different groups in society, and that the **owners are a minority group** and are wealthy and powerful, with a lot of influence;
  - **agenda setting** by the mass media which focus attention on particular issues and topics.
  - **norm referencing** by the media, which outline the **boundaries of acceptable behaviour**;
    and relate these in positive and negative ways to different groups in society;
  - positive and negative images of different groups in society are created;
  - the media have the power to shape public opinion.
• **Other factors that affect how News is Selected and Presented:**
  - **news values** i.e. what is considered ‘newsworthy’;
  - the **profit motive** i.e. whether the newspapers are likely to achieve a large circulation, and make a lot of money;
  - whether **advertisers** agree with the newspaper’s views on particular issues, otherwise they may withdraw their business;
  - **legal constraints** on content to avoid ‘libel’ for example;
  - **state/government restrictions**, for example in times war or for national security reasons;
  - restrictions placed by **Ofcom**, (British Office of Communication) which deals with complaints about the content of the media, and The **Press Complaints Commission**, which deal with complaints about the editorial content of newspapers and magazines.

• **Representations of different social groups within the Mass Media:**
  - provides **‘norm referencing’** for outlining boundaries of what is considered acceptable and is not acceptable;
  - provides **positive and negative images** of different social groups, such as gender, ethnicity, and social class;
  - may encourage **stereotyping** – distorted or exaggerated images of social groups, and **labelling**;
  - may **not represent realistic images** of different social groups.

• **How the Mass Media may influence the distribution of Power and Democracy:**
  - concentrated ownership and control of the mass media may limit the distribution of power and the sharing of power; the **conflict view** as above;
  - the **pluralist approach** to press ownership, i.e. a range of views and interests exist in society and this may help to spread the distribution of power and influence in society, as above;
  - the **internet is seen as increasing the distribution of power and influence** in society as people can **create content on the internet**;
  - the **digital divide** may **restrict the distribution of power and influence** in society, as not all groups in society have access to the internet.
  - see ‘Press Ownership and the Content of the Press’ above.
The Mass Media and Crime – the effect of how the media presents crime;
- exaggeration and distortion may create a moral panic;
- stereotypical presentation, may create ‘folk devils’ e.g. ALL young people wearing a hoodie are troublemakers;
- deviancy amplification may occur as others are encouraged by the media reports to behave in a deviant/criminal way.

Social Issues related to the Mass Media:
- the affect of media exposure and violence –
  - The hypodermic-syringe approach – 1963 research by Bandura with nursery school children suggested that there was a link;
  - Gauntlett 2001, suggests that there are problems with the research into the effect of the mass media on violence; Gauntlett suggest that violent people should be studied;
  - studies of comparing non-offending young people with offending young people, found that offending young people were less exposed to violence, which disagrees with the earlier study.
  - Gauntlett points out that studies which actually interview those involved in violence, fail to show a strong connection between screen violence and real-life violence.
  - Suggest that the causes of violence and crime are more likely to be found in poverty, unemployment et.
REMINDERS

- Essay Question, at the end of each Topic:

  You need to indicate - the extent of, or how far sociologists agree/disagree, and then to give reasons for your answer.

  You will also need to give the arguments For and Against.

- You need to look through the SAMPLE/previous GCSE Sociology Exam Papers, which are on the website: www.aqa.org.uk

- If there are any CONCERNS then you need to see your Sociology Teacher.