



Journal of Interdisciplinary Cycle Research ISSN:0022-1945 (IMPACT FACTOR-6.2)

An UGC-CARE Approved Group – II Journal (Scopus Indexed Till 1993)

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Origins of Caste System in India

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Abstract

In ancient India there developed a social system in which people were divided into separate communities. Though with time, many things have changed then did the caste system. But still, it continues to play an important role in the major events of life like marriage and religious worship. In India there are many places where shudras are still not allowed to enter the temple or do any kind of puja and they don't have the equal status. The class structure becomes problematic when it's used for ranking the society also as when it results in unequal access to natural also as man-made resources.

Key Words- Caste, India, Social, Society, Hindu

Caste is an important feature of Indian society. It defines the social, economic and political relationship of an individual based on factors like hierarchy, commensality, restriction on marriage, foods and hereditary occupation. It is one of the main realities of the Indian social life. Nobody can ignore this reality. Caste System has no basis in Hindu Religion and is a product of Hindu traditional law and the weakness of the central political authority during much of India's history.¹ It is a system of social stratification² in India which has pre-modern origins was transformed by British Raj³ and is today the basis of reservation in India. It consists of two different concepts, Varna and Jati, which may be regarded as different levels of analysis of this system.⁴

Within the age of Smritis and Sutras, the society had been divided into different castes. They had surrounded difficult and quick rules with respect to occupations, nourishment, conduct and marriage. The Sudra was the foremost debased man. The Brahmin was given the most elevated put in society. The Brahmin was at the best of all Varnas. The Varna Vyavastha was at the climax amid this age.

There are numerous hypotheses relating to the root of caste system within the nation. Whereas some of these speculations are verifiable, a few are devout or natural. There's no all-around acknowledged hypothesis on caste system.

Going by the ancient Hindu book, the 'Rig Veda,' human body was made by 'Purush' by wrecking himself. The diverse castes or varnas have been made from distinctive parts of his body. It is said that the Brahmins were made from his head, Kshatriyas made from his hands, Vaishias from his thighs and his feet made Sudras. There is another hypothesis relating to the root of the caste system that states castes begun from the diverse body parts of 'Brahma', the Hindu god alluded to as the 'Creator of the World.' Going by this hypothesis, inter-caste relational unions, blend of blood or contact of individuals of distinctive races is respected as a shocking crime.

Historically, it is accepted that the caste system started in India around 1500 B.C amid the entry of Aryans within the nation. It is accepted that the Aryans, who had reasonable skin, came from northern Asia and southern Europe that differentiated with the inborn locals of India. They begun prevailing locales all over north India and the local people were driven south towards wildernesses of mountains in northern portion of the nation at the same time. Aryans taken after a particular social requesting called Varna Vyavastha which inevitably come about in four progressive divisions of the society.

The present caste system is the product of a long verifiable advancement. Its roots can be followed back to the Vedic Varna Vyavastha. It isn't that the caste system had created by itself. The Varna Vyavastha is the root of present caste system. The caste system was born within the frame of Varnas, in spite of the fact that at the same time, it was eagerly restricted from time to time. Shockingly, there showed up a few such circumstances as continuously made a difference to proceed and survive it.

The caste gadget exceptionally a complete part affected the financial shape interior the Indian village. The village ended up basically a meals-presenting unit, in which each possess family of the create or benefit caste have ended up related with one or more noteworthy of the arrive proudly owning farmer-caste circle of relatives. W.H. Wiser in his Hindu Jajmani contraption recommends the commonality of relationship in a village organize essentially based at the trade of items and administrations among interesting castes. Interior the village that More shrewd considered, he situated that 'there have been twenty-four castes settled thru starting—priest and educator, minstrel and geologist, bookkeeper, goldsmith, flower vendor vegetable producer, rice producer, timber specialist, ironworker, hair stylist, waterbearer, shepherd, grain parcher, seamster, potter, change-man, oil-presser, washing machine-guy, mat-maker, leather-based specialist, sweeper and chess pool cleanser, Mohammedan poor person, Mohammedan glass bangle provider, Mohammedan cotton-carder, and Mohammedan dancing woman.'. Each man or lady had a set financial and social acknowledgment. Even the beggar, as an occurrence, had a extreme and quick notoriety. Giving aid to the hobo adjusted into taken into thought as a devout duty in arrange that it may be requested as of legitimate and each ended up related to others in hired-organization dating. Fundamentally, the indistinguishable individual who changed into an organization in a single relationship changed into the enlisted in each distinctive. It can be seen from the over posting of caste contrasts that the web of money related adjust and assurance that gotten to be provided thru a individual's individual caste and thru those connections the person gotten through his or her occupation turn out to be crucial to town remain. The caste contraption is what drives those

connections and individual's connections are one of the thought processes the caste instrument remains intaglio.

Some great social reformers of 'Sant Samaja' like Kabir, Ravidasa, Dadu, Mira, Dhanna, raised their voice against the caste system, social evils and dogmatic beliefs, but they could not succeed. The roots of casteism were so deep that the voice of saints could not uproot them. The castes which evolved in the Buddhist age, became more rigid during the Muslim rule. Besides them, numerous other castes were also developed in that age.⁵

British government passed a few Acts in arrange to bring socio-economic changes in India. A few of them are, 'The Caste Disabilities Removal Act1850', 'the Widow Remarriage Act-1856', and 'the Special Marriage Act, 1872'. Through these acts, government gave a blow to the caste system. However, a few researchers have contended that, these measures were taken for authoritative reason and not to abolish the caste system.⁶

In this regard, Ghurye (1961) writes that, "most of the activities of the British Government were dictated by prudence of administration and not by a desire to reduce the rigidity of caste".⁷

In present the caste system has been changing. In basic changes, there has been a sharp decrease within the matchless quality of the Brahmins in society. Within the past, the Brahmin involved the highest position within the caste progression. But nowadays resulting upon the method of modernization the dominance of the Brahmins has been consigned to the foundation. He does not appreciate the same social status which he once utilized to.

Changes in the caste hierarchy. The caste system is now not a clearly differentiated system of hierarchically-ordered caste bunches. As a result of certain components such as word related broadening, movement to urban ranges, mechanization of farming, boundaries between caste bunches are tending to obscure or break down.

In functional changes, alter within the obsession of status. In a caste society, birth was taken as the elite premise of social status. But within the changing social situation, birth not constitutes the premise of social distinction. Criteria such as a riches, capacity instruction, effectiveness etc. have ended up the determinants of social status.

Changes in marriage confinements, alter within the life style. Within the past each caste had its claim life fashion. It was the contrasts within the styles of life that made the individuals of distinctive castes show up unmistakable from one another, change in associate caste relations. Casteism has expanded. It has influenced political issues and political decisions.

Due to urbanization and globalization the views of Indian middle class is changing towards caste system. Nowadays the urban individuals are not as unbending in watching the rules of caste system. Spread of instruction as well has contributed to their changing viewpoint, but on the opposite the country individuals are not prepared to alter their sees effortlessly. They are still the daze adherents of the age ancient caste system.

When the British began to modernize their reign, people began to question their unwavering belief in karma and saw its fruit of action as unreal, untouchable, and the caste system stood out as a social institution that needed to be removed as quickly as possible. Reformers of the social order Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, and other spiritual luminaries, political leaders, and human rights activists Pioneers like Dr. B.R Ambedkar acknowledged that removing the caste system and its repercussions was essential. The elimination of evils was crucial for national salvation. Independent India's Constitution likewise banned caste discrimination and parliaments have approved affirmative action. Identity discrimination has been masked by urbanization and capitalism, which has created new opportunities for Dalits. However, this age-old kind of discrimination, which is fostered by rivalry for livelihoods at the bottom of the social ladder, is still alive and well. The poor and weak are still being crucified by the pyramid.⁸

Professor M.N. Srinivas, India's best-known sociologist, has famously held to the opinion that caste hierarchy has been breaking down under "the impact of new ideas of democracy, equality and individual self-respect. While caste as a system is dead or dying, individual castes are thriving"⁹. But this seems to be more a hope of what should happen rather than an analysis of what is actually happening. Chandra Bhan Prasad, a leading Dalit intellectual, has highlighted that few of the government's programmes to transform a caste-ridden society have succeeded. He concludes that "the enduring salience of caste itself" is the greatest paradox of Indian society.¹⁰

Conclusion

With the spread of urbanization and growing secular education, impact of caste has diminished. This has happened particularly in cities where inter-caste relational unions and individuals of distinctive castes living side-by-side in social orders have gotten to be common. However, in spite of the developing changes the caste identity still holds a lot of significance within the society. The final title of a person unequivocally shows the caste to which a person belongs. Caste-related viciousness has too been seen by the nation after independence. Only the political parties cannot be faulted for this, the partiality lies within the minds of the citizens of the nation. The nation still battles with the issue of the caste system. A part of work ought to be wiped out arrange to evacuate the evils of the caste system from the nation. The laws and acts can as it were given protection, but the change in perception and attitude has to be brought by the society.

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