

## **Caste System Of India: Historical Roots And Its Socio-Political Implications**

**Muhammad Sajid Khan**

*Assistant Professor*

*Pakistan Studies*

*Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad*

*sajidkhan@aiou.edu.pk*

**Mehak**

*Lecturer*

*Department of Humanities*

*COMSATS, Islamabad*

*Ms.mehak@comsats.edu.pk*

**Mansoor Ahmad**

*Assistant Professor*

*Department of History*

*Government College University Faisalabad*

*mansoorahmed@gcuf.edu.pk*

### **Abstract**

*In India, the Caste System is viewed as a rigid system of classification, which entails that the social rank of an individual is responsible for what he or she is born into. There are some restrictions on socializing with the individuals from other social positions. The history of caste system is closely linked to one of India's most observed religions, Hinduism, has undergone many changes in the Buddhist revolution and during English rule. Caste System is a categorization of individuals into four gradational categories termed varnas. They are segregated on the basis of their professions and it decides their approach to wealth, authority, and stature. According to the caste system one becomes a member of a certain caste by being born into one. Then, they get the suitable job or work consistent with their jati. The preservation of this inherited expertise and classified status of professions is claimed to be done by an*

*intricate cultural system that governs the environment of socialization among jatis.*

*A significant moderation of the rules concerning the principles of castes has been observed after the Independence in 1947. Exchanges and interactions between upper and middle castes were seen but the lesser castes remained separated from others. While discrimination and ranking on the basis of caste was still present, wealth and authority were not as much linked to castes. People living in urban areas were now less affected by the caste system compared to rural people, as it was not a major part of their daily lives, but its importance still fluctuates according to social rank and profession. In the urban areas, middle class professionals do not discuss caste overtly and it is of no importance, apart from when it is a matter of marital provisions. Not with standing, some adjustments are being made with cogitations in terms of income, education, employment, religious convictions and language. Even though racial discrimination has been banned in India, it still lives in society today. This study is an attempt to explore the socio-political implications of caste system on Indian politics.*

**Keywords:** Caste System, Indian Politics, Polarization, Hinduism,

### **Introduction**

The word caste is Portuguese in origin, it normally used to refer to what in India is called jati, which determined by inheritance of birth and occupation. The caste system in India has substantially been one of the key features where Indians are informally divided by race, religion, area, ethnicity, sex, and language. While this kind of segregation with some other occurs everywhere, it turns into grave issue where one or more of these features intersect and turn out to be the only foundation for orderly statuses and unfair access to treasured resources such as wealth, salary, authority and respect. Brahmans, typically clerics and intellectuals, are supreme. Then comes Kshatriyas, who govern and protect society. Next are Vaishyas,

or dealers/traders, followed by Shudras, who serves as manual workers, farmers, artisans, and domestic helpers. Lower than the Shudras are viewed as untouchables. These people are considered outcastes so they do tasks that are seen as impure and tainted, like stripping skin of dead animals. These *varnas* are further quartered into specific sub castes named *jatis*. Every *jati* is made up of a lot that secures a living mainly from a particular job. There are some restrictions on socializing with the individuals from other social positions (Sekhon, 2000, p.39). The history of caste system is closely linked to one of India's most observed religions, Hinduism, and has undergone many changes in the Buddhist revolution and during English rule. This paper will study different features of the caste system linked to social order, history, and consequences in India today. Caste in Indian context is a religious and social discrimination in Hindu society.

The institution of caste emerged as a social institution on the basis of division of labor as an equivalent of medieval guilds. It was originally only a distinction based on profession. The caste identity or bond between peasant families involved in general agriculture. While the people with same specialized professions also belonged to the same caste bond. "Caste is class on a primitive level of production." Caste generally understood as the institution of ranked, hereditary, endogamous, occupation groups. But later religious sanctity was provided by Brahmans to strengthen their hegemony and superiority. The first scale food production was started in Indus Valley in 9000-1750 B.C. later on it expanded to east for 1800 kilometer into the Gangetic Basin. This real expansion in next thousand years till 790 B.C. required new techniques of production supplemented by a new social organization 'caste'. In northern India it replaced older northern caste system which developed as a 'class structure from within the tribe.' The Brahmans took the seat of priests; write Puranas while the savage tribal chiefs claimed themselves as kings and nobles of tribe. Brahmans, the most elevated of four *varnas* of Hindu social class. The king in

ancient society was an absolute ruler, with the exception that he was not the master of the Brahman and could not take his wealth. In the stage of feudalism caste performed administrative function, primary producers engaged in production without excessive use of force.

Aryans at the time of arrival in India were divided in three social classes, the warriors, the priests, and the common people. In earliest *Veda* caste difference was between light skinned Aryans and their darker enemies and there was no Brahman caste as such with a monopoly of the priesthood. Land ownership was taken by a tribal group within the caste. This tribe maintained his exclusive identity through some rules and regulations, entry for strangers restricted due to the land ownership, and violators of tribal regulations severely punished by social boycott and declaring them out caste. "A person expelled by the group had literally no place in society" they were called *chandal* or untouchables. The only form of protest possible for disarmed peasantry was make refusal to cultivate their overtaxed land. Caste division and Brahmin's monopoly of religious interpretation kept the country superstitious, helpless in the face of foreign aggression. Although in early Indian society the institution of caste system evolved for harmonious and smooth working of society as one unit but with different assigned tasks to different groups. But in course of time caste became more ramified and rigid due to the vested interests of dominating classes it was given a religious tinge, or a divine order of universe. The caste system not existed in the first, in the Vayu purana or Krita age. The principles of caste were further codified and elaborated in the Manavadharmasastra or Manusmriti by great mythical sage Manu in first century AD. While according to Irfan Habib, "The period from the rise of Buddhism (c 500 BC) to the Gupta age (further fifth century AD) may, then be supposed to be the period of formation caste system and its supporting ideology. Four or five centuries of peaceful residence in a peaceful climate in the fertile basin enabled the Hindus to found civilized kingdoms, to cultivate

philosophy science and arts to develop their religious and social institutions, which divided them in social classes “castes”. Later on Brahma established divisions among men according to their works. The Ramayana in its present shape is the work of later ages. The common belief among the Hindus is that the “Brahmans proceeded from the mouth of Brahma; the Kshatriyas from his arms; the Vaishyas from his thighs; and the Sudras from his feet.”

Alberuni also highlighted caste divisions in Hindu society and called them Varna i.e. colour and Jataka i.e. birth. he also highlighted the distinctive reigns of their birth and moral qualities assigned to each Varna. In India the caste group would not normally take cooked from or with other castes, nor intermarry with them. The dominating position of Brahmans had derived naturally enough from their priestly function, guardianship of *dharmā* and their grasp of the colander for regulation of agriculture operations. They played influential role in ‘universalizing’ the caste system with in India and made “the caste system and Brahmanism inseparable. Japan’s bushido code defined a hierarchy of warriors, commoners, merchants and untouchables.” Although this Japan’s code had some similar four folded varna scheme, but is not so rigid exploitative in nature and without racial discrimination.

The advent of Islam in India brought fundamental changes in social stratification, and attracted the caste people towards Islam with promise of equality but also deprived the upper classes the social, political and economic leverage, even the Brahmins have to redefine their role in changed circumstances, with the priestly assignments also took agriculture through hired labor. Quite a few took the study of Persian and acquired high official position, so the process of adoption started in changed circumstances. Muslim rulers accommodated the existing elite and provided avenues along with new Muslim elite mainly of foreign origin, while the masses were attracted with the message of Islam. The caste system was remained a system of class exploitation in medieval India. The ruling

classes either belong to India or not exploited the system to capture and consolidate their position of power. The medieval Indian society was highly caste ridden and members of high castes committed all sorts of atrocities on the member of the lower castes. Caste principle frequently used a mean to exclude, disempowered and subjugated others. The caste divisions fragmented the society at great length; this deep-rooted division facilitated the conquerors and invaders at great length. The socially deprived class were less concerned about the change of their ruler or masters, they had little stake and interest in prevailing power structure. This attitude of indifference with state depoliticized majority of masses, and sometimes their resentment and deprivation manifested in their response to new rulers, even they welcomed in some cases, and a new wave of expectation emerged but without result. The new ruling elite preserved the caste system, because it divided the natives, fragmented the society; the Indo-Muslim regime had protected this system 'to generate larger revenues from the village and lower the wage costs in the cities. Sometimes they hard pressed the Brahman and Kashtriya classes, while sometimes accommodated and provided some avenues in power structure. There was intense competition for power between this upper class which was further divided on different patterns.

The new ruling elite in first place largely comprised of new settlers from foreign land, even new products and new kinds of services introduced in India, the Muslim rulers adopted and transmitted new techniques, but main recruitment was made by their central and West Asian backgrounds. The pressure of new circumstances had resulted in slave trade and slave labor. The numbers of slave in the sultan's period were very high (50,000 under Alauddin Khilji and 180,000 under Feroz Tughlaq). The slaves entered in different trades and skills, they were core of Muslim artisan and laboring communities. The new converts from India also joined new trades, and new professions. But there was little upward social mobility for these classes. The

menial caste duplicated themselves as *kamin* communities among Muslims, not untouchable but still kept separate and held in contempt. In India invading elite had preserved their separate identity, cultural coherence, superiority and purity of their language, culture and race. They preserved their separate identity as superior identity in comparison to local identity. Although, they settled in India but their origin was matter of pride for them. So, the conquerors and invaders not only facilitated by the caste divisions but even preserved these divisions to consolidate their rule and extract benefits. Caste division was encouraged and used systematically even by the British to keep India divided.

The ruling elite preserved their exclusive identity and failed to develop a social base for their political power. There was no empathy existed between higher authorities and subject nations. The state and empire depend on quality of imperial house and ability to exercise force to control and rule the country. But when their power declined or diminished new groups from within or outside can get benefits of these social fragmentations and sub-fragmentations and caste divisions are the most important aspect of social life in India.

### **The basis of Caste Structure and its Features**

It is quite difficult to define the word 'caste'. Risley describes the as 'a set or group of families with a shared name; holding a shared ancestry from legendary forefathers, earthly or celestial; who claim to have or follow the similar inherited profession; and looked upon by those who have the ability to suggest a belief as to creating a standardized and united community' (Hutton, 1963, p.47). Caste system in India, is a stratified system of dividing people into 4 different graded castes called varna. This classification is based upon their profession and decides their access to achieve authority, wealth and influence. The headship in the community is always given to the ruling castes. The top tier castes are observed to be of higher rank than the lower ones (Smith, 1994, p.43). Generally, priests and

intellectuals (Brahmans), are supreme. The writer of the book 'Classifying the Universe', B. K. Smith describes the Brahmans as:

The Brahmins are basically described as the most important (like the set god made first and foremost), through the information of Veda, and with authority this caste adheres to the process of sacrifice. These aspects validate the higher social status of this caste in respect to others: they are superior as they are above than anyone else, and they hold to stand out from the balances of power that controls socialization of others as they hold better knowledge and ownership of the Supreme 'weapons', sacrificial methods. (Smith, 1994, p. 48) However, Brahmans are further divided into different degrees of sub-castes, named *jatis*. They are endogamic, which means a Brahman can not only marry any other Brahman, but marry a girl from the same sub-caste (Hutton, 1963, p.47). Every *jati* is made up of a group that earns a living mainly from a particular work. People born into a specific *jati* to become its adherents and then get the right job, specific to the *jati*. This division within Brahmans indicates social rank, including wealth, social supremacy, and soft skills. In recent times, financial race and education prevails, and Brahmans lodge this place in both.

Next to Brahmans are Kshatriyas, who are mostly politicians and militias. This caste governed and mostly worked together with the Brahmins because they ruled their state. Kshatriya is defined by bodily strength and fighting prowess (Smith, p.48). Though Brahmans and Kshatriyas both declared themselves higher than the ordinary people, Brahmans did not stall to assert their class as better and higher than the Kshatriyas. Conforming to the Vedas, the judgement behind this is that the Brahmans are seen as independent, while Kshatriyas depend on them (Smith, 1994, p.42).

Then comes Vaishyas, who are mostly traders and merchants. Vaishya's responsibility was to make sure the welfare of the society through cultivation, cattle farming and buying and



selling. As compared to the ruling castes, Vaishyas were regarded and supposed to be weaker, and they were subjected to relentless exploitation and novice. Vaishyas were deprived of a high rank in the society, though they were financially powerful because of their commercial control, thus they started hating the noble castes. They showed this resentment by supporting sects that were against the Brahmans dating back to the sixth century BC, such as Buddhism and Jainism. These religions challenged caste based social stratifications and discriminations and criticized its exploitative aspects. Buddhism was more human centric religion, which preached equality and love among human beings. Next are Shudras, mainly they work as a laborer, farmer, artisan, and helper. The Shudras were considered to have no superior skills and were thought to be only able to serve as servants to the other three higher castes. The Shudras never had any entitlement or advantages, and they also championed the anti-Brahmanical movement that emerged. The new religious creeds including Islam were well received among the lower castes, they converted in greater numbers. In certain cases, they also welcomed new political powers, invaders in the false hopes of deliverance from their sufferings.

Lastly, there are people who are looked at as 'untouchables.' These people used to engage in activities that were viewed as filthy and impure, like rummaging and removing skin from the dead animals and were treated as social pariahs. The law records of Hindus emphasized that there was no fifth Varna, and this excuse was used in order to refuse the tribal Indians admittance (Velassery, 2005, p.8). Hence, they were not considered to be classified. The caste encompasses three aspects: retaliation, pecking order, and inherited skills. Some rules and directives of the caste system are must to follow by the respective caste members to steer clear of being rejected by their caste or, as believed in Hinduism, born deprived in the later life. Intermarriage and professional restrictions are the two most significant aspects of the caste system in India. All castes

and sub-castes adherents must marry in their own community or caste. If anyone dares to violate this ruling, he/she gets exclusion from the community and caste. Talking about work, each caste has its own specific occupation that its adherents must adhere to. Therefore, all castes follow fixed traditions and clearly defined standards of interactions under the caste system.

The 4<sup>th</sup> theory is the spirit of cleanliness and uncleanness. Purity is regarded as one of the most vital aspects of Hinduism, and it divides people into groups. Untouchability was therefore a form of indifferentism, a scheme that turned sacred only when being involved into a clean-unclean complexed environment (Velssasery, 2005, p.8). Thus, the belief that privileged castes were purer and virtuous, whereas inferior castes were considered impure and unclean (Pyakurel).

The financial structure of the rural India was greatly affected by the caste system. The rural setup was actually a catering unit, where all lower caste families were connected to different upper caste families. This economic structure was called Jajmani. William. H. Wiser, in his 'The Hindu Jajmani System' demonstrates the interdependency of relationship in the rural society contingent on the trade of economic consumption among separate castes (Velassery, 2005, p.7). He realized that '24 different castes are there, only to determine by birth'. Respectively, every person had an already set financial and social position. For instance, surprisingly the beggar also had a set status. This classification confirms that the network of financial sustainability and safety offered by an individuals' specific caste and through relationships that one earns through work are important in rural life. These affairs are pushed by caste system and they are one of grounds why caste system remains pristine.

### **Historical Background and Origins**

There are different suppositions behind the origin of the caste system in India. According to the religious propositions Rig Veda, an ancient Hindu collection of hymns, Purush, the first

man, smashed himself in order to form a society for people and that the various bodily organs formed 4 distinct Varnas. Brahmins came from the head, Kshatriyas came from the fists, Vaishya from femur, and Shudras from the feet. The order of the Varnas is decided by the order of the various organs out of which the Varna was formed. The Brahmans, for instance, emanated from Purush's head, are thought to be intellectuals and represent the intelligence. In a similar manner, Kshatriyas, thought to be combatants, were derived from arms, representing power. One more religious proposition holds that Brahma who is considered to be a world's creator, according to Hinduism, created Varnas from his organs.

Though, factually it is held that caste system started when Aryans came to India in 1500 BC. Aryans had light complexion as compared to the original Indian natives because they belonged from southern-Europe and northern Asia. Initially, the only interaction they had was with Dravidians. They were the only other culture whose records were considered reliable regarding the origins of the caste system, but once the cultural transcripts were submitted, they were already heavily loaded by Indo-Aryan culture (Ghurye, 1969, p.63). Regrettably, Aryans ignored the indigenous tradition and culture entirely and started controlling territories throughout North India. Simultaneously, the native people were forced to the south of the mountain forests of northern India. The Aryans had a system of social order called *Varna Vyavastha*, which was subjected on four ranked divisions of roles in a society. The ranking was in a descending order of status: religious and didactic roles, martial and political roles, financial roles, and low-status roles or jobs (Velassery, 2005, p.2). The Aryans systematized the society into 3 groups. Rajayana was the first group embracing combatants, followed by Brahmans, who were mainly intellectuals and priests. Rajayana and Brahmans both challenged each other and fought for political control within their society. Ultimately, Brahmans got the control of the Aryan community. The third group was called Vaishyas and it

was comprised of peasants and craftspeople. The Aryans occupied the native people and enslaved them. In due course, Vaishyas turned out to be the community's proprietors and tradesmen and natives became the farmers and artisans. Among the 3 groups of Aryan and the pariahs were Shudras, simple laborers of the community. The Shudras was further divided into two groups: where one group consisted of the natives cowed by the Aryans, and another one embraced Aryans and natives both. Aryans excluded Shudras from performing any religious practice. From the very beginning, Aryans ordered Shudras to refrain from practicing the religious prayers or rites they founded (Ghurye, 1969, p.172). Most of the factors that distinguish the 'society of castes', were because of the efforts of people who supported *Brahmanic* culture to eliminate natives and Shudras from any religious or communal accord altogether (Ghurye, 1969, p.172).

Many people from the less privileged castes converted to Buddhism, in the 6th century, due to the oppression by the higher-castes. In fact, Buddhism appeared as a response towards the oppression of the Hindu community. It not only focuses on community, but also on the people, hence breaking off religion and the concerns of the authority. Though Buddhism views this life as agony/misery and rebirth as a regeneration of the misery, there is somehow a possible freedom (Essortment). Buddha was Kshatriya himself, yet he was against the sectarian system. Buddhism completely rejected the sectarian system, and Buddha even scoffed at the intellectuals and priests who considered themselves better than the others. The Buddha disapproved the religious foundation of the caste system, and accepted individuals from all the races, including pariahs, into his circle. (Malalasekera and Jayatilleke).

With the coming of the British comes change in the variability of the caste system. Britishers came with their conventional governing system, and because they were Christians, they had little empathy for Hindu practicalities (Ghurye, 1969, p.270). In

the early years of the East India Company, entitlements and traditions of the castes were appreciated, but British law courts started opposing the idea of prejudice towards the humble castes (Alavi, 1998, p.5). Some long-established caste-related works were rendered unfeasible due to the large importation of industrial goods from the metropolitan area. As a result, many artisans had to recourse to agriculture and farming. Therefore, not only did jobs and professions reform, but the social state of affairs among castes were transformed. The caste system was standing on three supports — inherited skills, religious ranking, and shared disgust — which British authorities completely destabilized (Bouglé, 1971, p.82).

### **Religious conviction, Cultural values, and Caste**

One of the key aspects of the social structure of Indian society is its classification of castes. This division of caste performs an important role in the actual process of socialization and in ideal system of standards and morals. People from each caste is supposed to act in a certain way and must have different aims and standards (Béteille, 1965, p.45).

Hinduism is ‘basically a social order like religion, From its inception caste system has been its social structure, and this is now recognized as Hinduism’ (Smith, 1994, p.9). The caste system was streamlined India for different reasons, in the early times. One reason was the Vedic validation. Purushu Sukta in Rigveda’s 10<sup>th</sup> Mandala pronounces how come the classification of caste came to be: after different bodily parts of Purusha, a Cosmogonic Soul, during the great immolation made to the gods (Jayarama V). Another validation comes from the concept of Karma. The main principle of Karma is that the current state of one’s soul, for instance, uncertainty or tranquility, is grounded on the past choices one made and that what one is completely depends on his/her past actions, and the basic implications of the caste system is ‘the acceptance of karma and reincarnation by which, an individual’s status in the society today is justly guided by the ethical actions of the

previous life' (Smith, 1994, p.10). As one of the key principles of Hinduism is that the effects of one's previous actions decide his/her current status, rebirth helps in stopping people from rebelling against this system of racial segregation. Aryans firstly initiated the concept of rebirth to defend their oppression over the natives and to prevent them from rebelling against their atrocities. The concept of rebirth reinforces coercion in two ways. Firstly, it defends prejudice, and distorts the prospects of growth from the current life to the afterlife. For Brahmins, rebirth gives reasons as why they are entitled to a higher status. For the untouchables, rebirth confirms wherefore they have to endure sufferings because of their low birthright. For them to evade the birth in a lower caste in the future life, they should live a dignified life here without deviating the caste system.

Aforesaid, many persecuted Indians became members of the movements that were against Brahmins, just to take the initiative against the prejudiced practices they encountered. Surprisingly, the main motive to embrace Buddhism in the 1950s under the headship of B.R. Ambedkar was racial discrimination, the predicament of the persecuted untouchables and caste system (Sekhon, 2000, p.45). Embracing Buddhism came across as the only way to be truly free from all the discriminations held by racial segregation. The term Dalit was stemmed from here; the so-called untouchables used to call themselves as the persecuted individuals, and Dalit is used to describe honor in their society along with opposition to mistreatment.

It is quite sad that though Varnas' initial aim was not to form social group, it has somehow changed into stressing this notion of caste system. Varnas are associated to Gunas-based human actions and aspirations, but people took Varnas as a caste and consider them as the same thing. The Varna was made by God, and the caste was made by man; a social institution that can be adapted and revised conforming to the additional requirements of the culture or society (Lahiri, 2005). The initial aim of the

Varna was not the immanent caste nor it was established on this origin; rather it was intended to get people join only those areas of activities they could actually do (Lahiri, 2005). This system of Varna raised on the foundations of Guna besides karma and extraneous to birth (Lahiri, 2005).

### **Political Movements against the Caste System**

Several movements and constitutional policies transpired before and after liberation to defeat and try to end the disparities and biases that are fused with the caste system. In the times of national movement, Mahatma Gandhi started to call the untouchables as “Harijans”, which means the ‘people of the divine God’ with the aim of inspiring the society to change their attitude with the people of inferior castes. Nevertheless, a lot of people from the lower-castes, claim the term as a condescending one. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British rule introduced The Census for India and during 1935, “the British rule presented a record of four hundred so-called groups of untouchables, also numerous ethnic groups, who would be granted extra rights in the country so as to control prejudice and bias. The groups showed in the record were placed and named as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Nevertheless, in the 1970s, most of the influential members of these groups began calling themselves ‘Dalits’. In the middle of the nineteenth century, an anti-caste movement started which was led by Dalits with Jyoti-rao Phule. He began this movement in order to elevate education and the rights of women, Shudras, and Dalits. Nonetheless, later in the 1910s, these influential Dalits began to focus on secession from Hinduism and started demanding a separate constituency for themselves. However, as a privileged member of the National Congress, Mahatma Gandhi sought to endorse the inclusion of Dalits moderately into a renewed Hinduism.

One more Dalit movement which was quite eminent in the years between 1920s-1930s was under B.R. Ambedkar. He fought for Dalit rights before and after the independence of

India. Ambedkar and Gandhi both supported the elimination of racial discrimination, but they did not agree on how to deal with it. Gandhi was of the belief that “untouchability is a matter of morality that can be resolved by kindness and changing the tune of high-ranking Hindus”. But Ambedkar alleged that ‘subjugation of the Dalits was mainly financial and dogmatic, and may perhaps be controlled by restoring social structure by lawful, radical, and educational methods’. In the year 1956, Ambedkar convinced nearly 6,000,000 Dalits to embrace Buddhism ‘in order to get away with the social humiliation of impunity attached to the caste system in Hinduism’. In 1970's, Dalit Panthers movement sprang up amongst the new Dalit generation accompanied by some other civil movements. This movement voiced the resentment and bitterness of the Dalits on the non-fulfillment of the promises and policies that would end brutality against them by the hands of privileged Hindus in different rural and urban areas of India (Sekhon, 2000, p.49).

Three categories of people are singled out as suitable for privileged positions that lay aside seats in the parliament, in civil services, in state-owned businesses, and in government-run academic institutes, with regards to the total number of people in their areas. They are assured health assistance, as well as a share and are lawfully guarded from bigotry (like financial obligation or debts, enforced labor, and defilement). The primary group is called Scheduled Castes, which contains communities that are viewed as impure (Daniel). Then comes Scheduled Tribes, where communities that veer against the principles of caste system and chose to live in the woods, jungles and mountains, far away from the large populace, falls. The third group is called Other Backward Class, that take in Shudra Varna, non-Hindu converts, as well as itinerant tribes and people who survive on crimes. Nevertheless, it is still unknown that on what basis the Other Backward Classes are classified and there is a constant dissent on whether individuals should be given this position on account of their social group or financial standards. The issue is that social group and financial



status have been strongly linked back in the day, and today also, discrimination on the basis of caste deters financial development for the members of inferior caste.

During 1960s, the process of reserving seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes started, and separate-states were to decide which ones to be recognized as Other Backward Classes so in the year 1978, a statement by Mandal Commission decided that caste was the major causal aspect to social and financial restraint. Several seats were held in reserve in government organizations for these classes. Mandal Commission suggested to reserve 27% of the positions for Other Backward Classes, with more than 15% for Scheduled Castes and 7% for Scheduled Tribes. Sadly, the implementation of these policies was not executed because of the fear of widespread disapproval, but then in the year 1990, government of Janata Dal 'tried to implement the commendations partially, hat arouse large scale conflicts and disapproval from literati, influential and new generation of the higher and middle castes.

### **India Today**

The correspondence among different castes have now become moderate. There is more sharing of food among castes in local eateries where segregation is not possible to do. Another major shift occurred in India, where pursuits related to professions among men changed. In the past, many men did not deviate from their chosen professions, like metalworking and ceramics. Many people have now started new jobs that are not linked to their caste, like administration, teaching and marketing and services. In rural areas, authority and wealth are no longer related with caste like before, and proprietorship is very different and expanded. Similarly, the concept that cleanliness and impurity are instigated by people from lower castes has lessened considerably. However, this diminution is restricted mostly in public, while during formal events, cleansing rituals associated with castes are still maintained. Endogamy marriages are still practiced into families, but they are not as

strong as they used to be. The social position of women is still attached to the status of men, nevertheless education and acknowledgment of women's equality are now known all over India.

SCs, STs, and OBCs have now an intensive representation in designated bureaus with a secure local backing. Electoral politics now have them as an integral part as they have formed strong political parties in numerous constituencies. These underprivileged groups of the society have formed individuals who made room for themselves in public offices and at all stages of educational institutions.

Regrettably, only few people of the inferior castes have reaped benefits from these privileged schemes. While the embracement of the inferior caste population is growing, an apparent resentment and vehemence has been observed on the people of lower castes in several regions of India. For instance, in 1994, in some areas of the state of Bihar, high-ranking landlords made an independent militia named Ranvir Sena to “guard” themselves from the lower classes. Though it was illegal, Ranvir Sena had executed annihilations of twenty Dalits in initial days of 1999. Resentment is also stated by people who favored the elimination of preserved government jobs and in institutes of methodical education, especially those who traditionally belonged to a respected caste but economically underprivileged. Individual accomplishments, excellence, and financial status are also still strongly controlled by castes. In recent years due to the rise of Hindutva ideology under Narendra Modi led BJP’s government the situation of minorities gets worsened. (S. Babar,2003). The Hindu extremist and radical groups not only attacked on religious minorities; the low caste groups also faced vandalism and harsh treatments by caste Hindus. The social and communal polarization deeply divided Indian polity. (Pathi Krutika 2024)

## **Conclusion**

The caste system in India has helped in forming and molding the occupations and duties along with the ideals of Indian social order. For centuries, religion kept on perpetuating this system of segregation, that started with the Aryans and cleared the long way for unfortunate discernment, segregation, viciousness, and discrimination. Hinduism was at the heart of the complex web of purity-impurity, and the daily lives and principles of the people living in India was majorly influenced by it. The people of India are still in a control of class-consciousness though it's been 77 years now till India got its independence. Factually, India has lived as a nation for thousands of years with exclusive groups separated by creed, language and caste. Labor was assigned and from birth, each had his or her own allocated role, and inheritance of occupation was the law that contributed in the economic and social life of the city and the countryside. Switching the allotted occupation or caste was forbidden, and a person quitting the work of his ancestors to go after a new path was hardly seen. It is clear that caste remained an integral part of the subtleties of social and political relations in India. Nevertheless, the interconnection of castes and inherited occupation is less visible today, and very few restrictions have been noticed regarding social-interaction between different classes, specifically in cities. Today's India is progressing from the exclusive systems to a state of revolution and advancement distinguished by the statement of the human essence regardless of any race or class. Many organizations that encounter the inequalities related with racial segregation have invigorated Indian people to develop greater personalities and be courteous to the members of different classes and castes. Many people from the lesser castes have benefited greatly from the fractional abolition of the caste system, and all praise to India for the ongoing efforts to end this segregation on the basis of caste in its culture. However, it is important to consider the significance of how ranks related to castes have influenced the standards of living and adaptability in India in the current times.

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