

University of Ladakh

Department of Sociology

Semester III

Title: Indian Society: Structure and Change

Syllabus

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UNIT 1 Unit-1 Conceptualizing Indian Society

(a) Evolution of Indian Society

Evolution of Indian society

Indian society is very old, complex, plural and it has a long history. It is composed of different religious groups, racial groups and groups having cultural differences. In the long span of Indian history various groups from different parts of the world entered into India with their own socio-cultural and racial features. The best example is Indus valley civilization

In the later stage the Indo-Aryans came and they had interaction with earlier inhabitants of the land. They had their own socio-cultural pattern of living. They considered themselves as superior. They developed norms and customs for different social groups with their own category and for the outsiders. That was the phase when Varna's originated.

The Indo-Aryans were divided into different groups: Brahmins (Priests), Kshyatriyas (Kings and warriors) Vaishyas (trade and commerce) Sudras (Servicing group/those who serve these three categories). It is believed that sudras were outside of the Indo-Aryan group. Perhaps this category emerged due to the union of Indo—Aryans and the inhabitants of the land.

There was also another category, which is the fifth category of the society. Their status was different in the society and they were allotted polluting occupations.

Gradually, two things happened:

- (a) Each Varna has been divided into a number of Jatis or castes with hierarchy
- (b) From time to time new types of Jatis were added into the system.

It is believed that Indian social system is rigid in its nature. In some respect it is true but there are also exceptions. For example, Viswamitra, a kshyatriya king was leading a life of Brahmin. He also composed many Vedic hymns. So, he was considered as a saint. Veda Vyasa who composed the great epic Mahabharata is from a lower caste. Hinduism was also divided into so many sects and cults.

Christianity and Islam both influenced Indian social system. Not only both the religious groups influenced Indian social system but both were influenced by the prevailing social conditions. So, they acquired some special characteristics in the Indian setting.

Islam influenced Indian social system in the medieval period. Y. Singh in his book "Modernisation of Indian Tradition" has analysed the impact of Islam on Indian society in three stages:

- (i) During the Islamic rule (1206-1818)

(ii) During the British rule (18th 19th and 1st part of 20th century)

(iii) During Indian freedom movement.

In the beginning, during the Islamic rule, some Muslim rulers adopted the policy of destroying Hindu temples. The aim was to spread Islamic religion. But later on, they followed a policy of religious tolerance. Some of the Muslims accepted Hindu way of life and some of the Hindus accepted Islam way of life. Philosophers tried to find out common grounds of both the religions.

Such type of attempts opened the door for cultural synthesis of traditions of Hindus and Muslims. Cultural co-existence of both the communities was possible because of cultural exchange. Sufism greatly helped in this context. Hindus were influenced by the principles of Sufism. The main principles of Sufism had similarities with Hinduism such as giving emphasis on morality, self sacrifice, consideration of material phenomena as transitory etc.

All these principles attracted Hindus. Prof. Y. Singh has pointed out that some of the rulers from both the religions tried to synthesize good qualities of both the religions into one. For example, Akbar introduced a new synthetic cult called 'Din-e-Illahi' which means 'Divine Faith'. It was the combination of Hinduism, Islam, Jainism and Zorastorianism. Dara Singh, a Hindu king took attempts to blend Upanishad with Islam.

At that time Hindus and Muslims realized that it was essential to live peacefully to maintain peace and order in the society. Many Hindus were attracted towards Muslim saints and became their disciples. Amir Khusru introduced Hindu Philosophy in Islam. Muslim poets and writers expressed their ideas in Hindi.

In the British period the congenial atmosphere between these two communities changed to a great extent. Among the Muslim leaders two things happened: Firstly, they began to lose their status and power. Secondly, they lost their strength and self- confidence. So, they left their liberal attitude towards Hindus and Hinduism. They accepted the principles of orthodoxy and revivalism. Islam got highly politicised. Politico-cultural conflict between Hindus and Muslims created a situation in which the end result was division of India and the creation of a new separate Islamic nation (Pakistan).

Indian society was influenced by Islamic religion in various ways. Caste system became too rigid. Strict caste rules were observed to save Hindus from being converted into Islam. Prior to the arrival of the Muslims there was no Purdah system in the Hindu society. But after Muslim conquest, women were compelled to observe purdah and their movement was restricted. Sati system, child marriage, institution of slavery etc. were introduced.

There was a change in the method of recreation. Hindus accepted gambling and drinking from Muslim. Likewise, Indian art and architecture, dance and music were influenced by Islamic culture. On the

whole, there was blending of cultural values and style of life of both Hindus and Muslims. Missionary activities started with the advent of Portuguese. When Britishers expanded their territory in India, the missionaries got full opportunity to express their activities. The main objective of missionary activities was to convert Hindus into Christians. Conversion led to deculturation.

They established their schools and educational institutions all over India. But the aim was the propagation of western culture and Christianity. The converted Christians were alienated from their own culture and heritage. This caused resentment in the society. But their sense of service and dedication attracted people. They influenced religion, music, festivals etc. of Hindus.

The Britishers influenced Indian society and culture to a much larger extent. It covered almost all the spheres of life. Mainly, it covers three areas.

Firstly, the behavioral aspect like food pattern, eating pattern, dress, hair style etc.

Secondly, the knowledge aspect such as science and technology, art and literature etc.

Lastly, the value aspect like humanitarianism, equalitarianism, secularism etc.

On the whole the result was the breakdown of hierarchical and holistic social structure. There was also change in value structure. Society was more open, liberal and emphasis was given on equality. Humanistic value was given importance by taking attempts to abolish sati system, human sacrifice etc.

The Britishers introduced new legal and administrative system. The new political concepts like 'Rights', 'Duties', 'Liberty', 'Freedom', etc. were introduced. It widened the horizon of knowledge of Indian society. Indian society had taken steps for generating new impulses for bringing social reform and transformation.

The reformers were from different parts of India and they covered two to three centuries from 12th century A.D. Bhakti movement started to fight against social inequality like rigid caste system and untouchability. It was mainly started by Vaishnava and Shaivya saints. Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj etc. emerged to bring changes in the cultural practices and values of Hinduism. Some of the reformers tried to understand Hindu culture and religion.

Their slogan was 'Go Back to Vedas'. Reformers like Dayananda Saraswati advocated that Vedas were the store house of all knowledge. But some other reformers wanted to bring a synthesis between new cultural norms and values with the traditional norms and values.

All the reformers opposed inhuman practices like sati system, child marriage, untouchability etc. and they favored inter-caste marriage, widow remarriage, female education etc. Then India's freedom movement started to make India free from foreign rule. At last, India emerged as an independent largest democratic country.

Section B

Composition of Indian Society – Linguistic and Religion and Geographical

Religious Composition:

Almost all the religious groups of the world are found in India. Indian culture has the potentiality to accommodate different religions. There are eight major religious communities in India Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Zoroastrians and Tribes. Each religion has its own sects with their principles.

(a) Hinduism:

Majority of Indians are Hindus. From 1991 census it is evident that Hindu population is more than 86% in India. Hinduism includes elements from three groups i.e., Indo-Aryan, Dravidian and pre-Dravidian. Hinduism has a number of sects such as Sakta, Shaivya, Baishnab etc. But all these sects have some of the common beliefs like immortality of soul, rebirth, transmigration of soul etc.

(b) Islam:

It is the religion of the Muslims. It was originated in Arabic country. By the end of 12th century A.D, Islam entered India through the Muslim rulers. In the beginning Muslim rulers tried to convert Indians forcefully. But gradually they changed their attitude. They wanted to keep good relationship with Hindus. But at the time of British period again the situation was changed. Partition of India was the product of changed situation. After-partition there was a decline in the Muslim population in India. According to 1991 census the Muslim population comprises of 11.35% of the total population of the country.

(c) Christianity:

Christians are scattered all over India. But they are mainly concentrated in Kerala. Nearly one fourth of the state population is coming under Christianity. At present they form 2.43 per cent of the total population of India.

(d) Sikhism:

Guru Nanak is the founder of Sikhism. It was the period of 16th century A.D. It was originated from a religious movement called Bhakti movement. Originally they are a part of Hinduism. They are concentrated in Punjab and Haryana. They constitute 1.96 per cent of total population.

(e) Buddhism:

It was 6th century B.C when Buddhism was originated. Gautama Buddha is the originator. Buddhism spread inside and outside India due to royal patronage. Less than 1 per cent Buddhists lives in India.

(f) Jainism:

It was also originated in 6th century B.C. Lord Mahavir was the founder of Jainism. Jains are closer to Hindus. They believe in idol worship and they maintain caste distinction. They constitute less than 0.5% of Indian population.

(g) Zoroastrianism:

In the 7th century A.D. Farsis came India from Parsia. They came India to avoid forceful conversion to Islam. They worship fire.

(h) Animism:

It is the religion of Tribal. They worship ghost and soul. They also worshipped rock, river, hill etc.

Conclusion Religious boundaries are very clearly drawn in India. Each religious group has its own principles and norms, because of which religious diversity is prominent in India.

Linguistic groups:

George Grierson in his writing “Linguistic Survey of India” found that India has more than 175 languages and more than 500 dialects. Majority of languages are spoken in Northern part of India. All the Indian languages have been classified into different linguistic families. They are not equally distributed all over India.

All these Indian languages can be grouped under four different families:

1. The Indo-Aryan
2. The Dravidian
3. The Austric
4. The Sino-Tibetan

1. The Indo-Aryan:

A number of languages and dialects are coming under Indo-Aryan speech family. Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Assamese, Bengali, Oriya, Gujarati, Marathi and Kashmiri languages are included under this group. Hindi is the most important language of all the languages. Majority of Indians use Hindi as their

language. It is also recognized as the national language by our Constitution. The written form of Hindi is Devnagari.

Urdu language is used by the people who are living in and around Delhi. They use Persian script for writing. Urdu has similarity with Hindi in spoken form but differs in script. Assam people use Assamese language. Bengali is used by the people of West Bengal. Oriya is the mother tongues of Orissa. Gujarati is spoken by the people of Gujarat and Marathi by the people Maharashtra. Kashmiri is spoken by the people of Kashmir.

2. Dravidian language:

It includes four languages, i.e., Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. Telugu is the language of Andhra Pradesh. Tamil is used by the people of Tamil Nadu, Kannad and Malayalam are used by Karnataka and Kerala.

3. Austric languages:

Most of the languages and dialects used by the different tribal groups of Central India like Santal, Munda, Oraon, Ho, Birhor, Kharia etc. come under this group.

4. Sino-Tibetan languages:

The languages and dialects which are used by the North-Eastern tribal people like Aka, Dafla, Padam, RangamaNaga Angami Naga etc., coming under Sino-Tibetan language group.

Geographical Composition:

Geographical location of a country determines the availability of the country's resources like rainfall and water. It also influences nature of soil, range and density of forest. These in turn determine flora and fauna, which balance the ecology, climate and crops. Territory of India is expanded from Kashmir to Cape Comorian and from Gujarat to Assam.

This vast territory includes several geographical regions:

- (i) The mountain belt stretching from North West (now Pakistan) to the north east.
- (ii) The Ganga-Yamuna plain.
- (iii) The region beyond the Vindyas and Satpura.

In India, the vast geographical region has various diversities like high mountains and low plains, areas of freezing chill and frost in northern side and tropical heat in the south, places of high rainfall like in Charapunji and the dry lands of Rajasthan. The territorial and climatic diversities influence the cultural pattern of the community of those areas. Of course, with all these diversities, these people have developed a sense of unity, because of which we find continuity of our culture.

2 Indian Social Institutions

SECTION A

Family structure in India

Family is one of the most important primary groups in society. It is a small social group consisting ordinarily of a father, mother, and one or more children. Family in India has remained a vital institution. Despite several wide-ranging changes in Indian society, because of synthesis between collectivism and individualism, the Hindu family continues to be joint, partly structurally and mainly functionally. It has not disintegrated into individual families like the western countries. Several studies on family have revealed that industrialization, urbanization, education and migration have not necessarily resulted into nuclearisation of family in India.

Definitions of family:

According to Iravati Karve, "A joint family is a group of people who generally live under one roof, who eat food cooked at one hearth, who hold property in common and who participate in common worship and are related to each other as some particular type of kindred."

In the words of C.B. Memoria, "The fundamental principle of the Hindu joint family is the tie of sapindaship without which it is impossible to form a joint family."

According to Henry Maine, "The Hindu joint family is a group constituted of known ancestors and adopted sons and relatives related to these sons through marriage."

According to I.P. Desai, "We call that household a joint family which has greater generation depth than individual family and the members of which are related to one another by property, income and mutual rights and obligations."

Characteristics of Joint Family

1. **Large Size:** A single family consists of only the husband, wife and their children. But a joint family consists of parents, children, grand children and other near relatives along with their women. It is a group of which several basic families live together at one and the same time.
2. **Joint Property:** In a joint family, the ownership, production and consumption of wealth takes place on a joint basis. It is a cooperative institution, similar to a joint stock company, in which there is joint property. The head of the family is like a trustee who manages the property of the family for the material and spiritual welfare of the family members. The total earnings of all the family members are pooled together.
3. **Common Residence:** The members of joint family usually live under the same roof. They may also live in separate houses in close proximity to one another. They eat the same food and wear the same type of clothes.

4. **Cooperative Organization:** The basis of joint family system is cooperation. A joint family consists of a large number of members and if they do not cooperate with one another it is not possible to maintain the organization and structure of the joint family.

5. **Common Religion:** Generally the members of a joint family believe in the same religion and worship similar deities. They perform jointly the religious rites and duties. They celebrate all the festivals and social functions jointly. They also hold themselves jointly accountable for participating in social ceremonies like marriage, death and other occasions of family sorrows and rejoicing. They all share the family burden together.

6. **A Productive Unit:** This feature of joint family is found among agricultural families. All the members work at one and the same field. They do the sowing and harvesting of the crops together. Even in the case of artisan classes, all the members of a joint family do one and the same function.

7. **Mutual Rights and Obligations:** The rights and obligations of the members of joint family are the same. None except the head of the family has special privileges. Every member of the family has equal obligations if one female member works in the kitchen, the other does the laundry work, and the third one looks after the children. There is rotation of duties as well.

Functions of Joint Family System:

1. Ensures Economic security of the family.

2. **Division of Labour:** It secures the advantages of the division of labour. Every member in the family is given work according to his abilities.

4. **Opportunity for Leisure:** It provides opportunities for leisure to the members. The female members divide the household work and finish it within a little time spending the rest of it in leisure.

5. **Social Insurance:** In the joint family the orphans find a comfortable asylum instead of being thrown out. Similarly, widows are assured of their proper living for whom remarriage in India is unthinkable. The joint family acts as a social insurance company for the old, sick and incapacitated.

6. **Social Virtues:** It fosters great virtues like sacrifice, affection, cooperation, spirit of selfishness. All members learn to obey family rules and respect their elders.

Disintegration of Joint Family:

1. **Industrialization:** The joint family system is most suited to agricultural families. India today is on the way to industrialization. With the establishment of new factories in urban areas workers from the villages move to the cities which breaks the joint family.

2. **Extension of communications and transport:** Because of the improvements in the means of communication and transport, family members have become mobile in search of jobs etc.; it is no longer necessary for men to stay with the family. Now they move out to cities and take up any other occupation.

3. **Decline of agriculture and village trades:** The joint family system in India flourished in ancient times when agriculture and trade in the villages were in a sound position. With the migration of people from

the villages to the cities, the Hindu joint family system breaks down. Besides, the decline of agriculture and cottage industry, there are other causes as well which induce people to move to the city. In the villages, there are fewer facilities for entertainment and recreation, less opportunities for employment for the educated and inadequate opportunities for the education of children. A gentleman so called finds little attraction to stay on in the village.

4. Impact of the west: India has been greatly influenced in her social outlook by western thought and ideology. The modern laws relating to marriage and divorce have been enacted on western pattern. The impact of West is felt in the domain of education, polity, legislature, bureaucracy and judiciary.

5. New social legislations: The joint family system in India has been influenced by a series of new social legislations like Civil Marriage Act (1872). Hindu Marriage Act (1955), and Hindu Succession Act (1956). The Civil Marriage Act enabled the adult boys and girls to marry against the wishes of their parents. The Hindu Marriage Act enabled the women to seek divorce under certain conditions. The Hindu Succession Act gave the right of equal inheritance to women. All these acts have influenced the solidarity of the joint family and relationships between brothers and sisters, parents and children and husbands and wives.

6. Enlightenment of women: The increasing enlightenment due to education and employment has made women empowered. They are not ready to accept things uncritically. They refuse to accept inequality, exploitation and subordination in the family on irrational grounds. Conflicts in the family are endemic.

7. Over population: India has witnessed a phenomenal growth of population, which has led to a tremendous pressure on land. As a result of this pressure, the land holdings of many families have become un-economical and many farmers have joined the ranks of landless labourers. The situation in the villages has come to such a pass that agriculture no longer provides employment to the ever-increasing number of people depending on it.

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7. Over population: India has witnessed a phenomenal growth of population, which has led to a tremendous pressure on land. As a result of this pressure, the land holdings of many families have become un-economical and many farmers have joined the ranks of landless labourers. The situation in the villages has come to such a pass that agriculture no longer provides employment to the ever-increasing number of people depending on it.

The causes of its disintegration are mainly social. The Indian people still keep intact the family attachment and live their traditional morality. Hindu sentiments are even today in favour of joint family. Even in cases where family property, has got divided and income of the family members is not pooled, the constituent householders consider themselves duty bound to participate in ceremonial celebrations like marriage, birthday and religious functions. Such participation keeps the joint family feelings alive. The thinkers who criticize the system have not been able to appreciate it properly. Compromise and mutual adjustment are the keynotes of the Indian Joint Family System.

Marriage System in India

Every society regulates the sexual behavior of its members. Some sort of regulation is necessary, if the children born of such sexual unions are to be well cared for and properly trained. Therefore, in every society we come across norms governing “what persons, under what conditions and in what manner, may establish a marriage relationship; what they will be expected to do once they are married and how they may dissolve this relationship and under what conditions.” This complex of norms constitutes the institution of marriage.

Westermarck defines marriage as “A relation of one or more men to one or more women, which is recognized by custom or law and involves certain rights and duties both in the case of the parties entering the union and in the case of children born of it.”

Therefore, marriage, as is clear from the above definition, implies much more than a mere regulation of sexual behaviour of the members of a society. It involves rights and duties of various kinds of the parties to the union and of the offspring born of it. As such, marriage has a reference to the structure and function of the family.

Hindu marriage as a Religious Sacrament: Hindu marriage, ‘Vivah’ (vi + vah), literally means the ceremony of ‘carrying away’ the bride to the house of the groom. But, since long it has come to refer to the whole ceremony or wedlock.

R.N.Sharma defines Hindu marriage as “A religious sacrament in which a man and a woman are bound in permanent relationship for physical, social and spiritual purpose of dharma, procreation and sexual pleasure.” The aims of Hindu marriage are said to be dharma, praja (progeny) and rati (sexual pleasure). Sex is given third place in regard to the functions of marriage. Dharma is the first aim of marriage. Procreation is given the second place. Marriage also aims at begetting a son to save the father from going to hell. On the marriage the sacred fire is enkindled to offer panchamahayagyas. A man with his wife is supposed to offer puja throughout his life. Thus, marriage is primarily for the fulfillment of duties, his dharma.

Forms of Hindu Marriage:

Hindu scriptures mention eight forms of marriage on the basis of the method of consecrating a marriage union. They are: Brahma, Daiva, Arsha, Prajapatya, Asura, Gandharva, Rakshasa and Paisacha forms of marriage.

Types of marriage among the Hindus:

Basically, there can only be two types of marriage, namely monogamy and polygamy. In Hindu society both the types of marriage were found to exist.

Polygamy: It is a type of marriage in which a man or a woman is allowed to marry more than one wife or husband at the same time. Polygamy is of two types, such as, polygyny and polyandry.

Polygyny:

It is a type of marriage in which a man is allowed to marry more than one wife at a time. This pattern of marriage persisted in Hindu society since Vedic times. In fact, it was regarded as one of the natural forms of marriage. Polygyny was mainly practiced by kings and other well-to-do members of the society. As such, it was a socially approved form of marriage, though largely confined to the upper strata of the society. But, it was never regarded as an ideal form of marriage. All the Hindu law givers discouraged its practice. For example, Apastambha remarks that a man should not marry a second wife, if his wife is willing and able to perform religious rites and bears a son for him. Manu says that ‘a barren wife may be superseded in the eighth year’.

Polyandry:

K. M. Kapadia describes “polyandry as a form of union in which a woman has more than one husband at a time in which brothers share a wife or wives in common”. A classic example of this type of marriage in Hindu society is that of Draupadi marrying the five Pandava brothers.

Rules of mate selection in marriage: In Hindu society, there are two kinds of rules regulating the selection of mates in marriage. They are endogamy and exogamy.

Endogamy: Endogamy is the rule that forbids the members of a group to marry from outside it. The most general forms of endogamy in Hindu society are: (1) Varna endogamy (2) Caste endogamy and (3) sub caste endogamy.

1. Varna Endogamy: Varna endogamy prescribes marriages between members of the same varna. Marriages between members of the same varna were regarded as proper and ideal. Although marriages between varnas in the form of hypergamy and hypogamy were allowed in the past, they were never considered desirable. Therefore, as per this rule, a Hindu must select his partner in life from his own varna.

2. Caste Endogamy: Caste endogamy is the rule that prohibits the members of a caste to marry outside their own caste. Each of the varnas consists a number of castes or jatis. As a result of this rule, even the members of the same varna are not eligible to marry one another, if they do not, at the same time, belong to the same caste. Until recently, violation of this rule was viewed with a grave concern and the usual punishment for it was not less than ex-communication from the caste. Even now, the rule, though legally abolished, is effective in Hindu society.

Exogamy:

While the endogamous rules prescribe marriages within the group, exogamic rules prescribe such marriages. Some of the generally followed exogamic rules in Hindu society are

(1) Gotra Exogamy (2) Pravara Exogamy and (3) Sapinda Exogamy.

1. Gotra Exogamy: Gotra exogamy forbids marriages between members of the same gotra.

2. Pravara Exogamy: Pravara exogamy is the rule that forbids marriages between members belonging to the same pravara. Pravara refers to a series of ‘rishi’ ancestors whom a Brahmin invokes at the sacrifice to Agni. This rule, therefore, is applicable only to Brahmins.

3. Sapinda Exogamy: This rule prohibits marriages between 'sapindas'. Sapindas are those who are related to one another, in ascending or descending order, by four generations through mother's side and by six generations through father's side.

The Muslim Marriage:

In the Muslim social system, marriage is governed basically by 'Shariat', the Muslim personal law. The norms and injunctions of Shariat are widely followed, despite regional differences in subsidiary customs in respect of Muslim marriage. The Muslim marriage is considered as a very happy occasion of pomp and joy. It is performed in accordance with the socio-economic status of the family. In pre-Islam society, the prevalent form of marriage was polygamy.

Meaning of Muslim Marriage: Marriage among the Muslims is considered more a social rather than religious institution known as 'Nikah' in Muslim law; marriage is purely a civil contract. According to Mohammad, "marriage is civil contract upon the completion of which by proposal and acceptance all the rights and obligations which it creates arise immediately and simultaneously." D.F.Mulla says, "marriage (Nikah) is defined to be a contract which as for its objects the procreation and legislation of children."

K.M.Kapadia says, in Islam, "Marriage is said to be a contract signed by two parties, one for each side." According to Mohammedan law, marriage is an unconditional contract made between two persons of opposite sexes for mutual enjoyment, procreation and legislation of children.

Forms Muslim of Marriage: Free consent of the parties is necessary. There must be proposal and acceptance of one meeting in the presence of two male witnesses or one male and two female witnesses. The consent must be stated in express words. An agent may be appointed to make the contract.

Caste system in India

Birth determines the caste. Mostly developed in ancient times but is still present in India. It is a particular characteristic of Indian society & without understanding the caste system Indian Society is not fully understood. The word caste comes from 'Casta' a portugese word & it means difference in birth a race.

Definition of Caste System

According to **Mazumdar & Madan** – 'Caste is a closed class' i.e. class refers to people based on property, business, occupation i.e. one can't change his own caste system by can change the class system & can be a member of many classes at the same time. You belong to a caste by birth & can't change it later & one has is follow the set rules & regulations & gets punishment on their violation & one can even be thrown out of his caste. i.e. If one dares to go out of his caste, he can never return. In class one may change it with effort like in a illiterate class one can became literate & therefore go over to the literate class i.e. caste is hereditary in nature & once born in a caste one can't change it.

According to **Herbert Kisley** – "Class is a collection of families or group of families bearing a common name which usually denotes or is associated with specific occupation, claiming descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine, professing to follow the same heredity callings & regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogenous communities."

According to **Charles Coole** – "When a class is somewhat strictly hereditary, we may call it a caste."

Ketekar – in his book "History of caste in India" –'Caste is a social group having two characteristics (a) membership is confined to those who are born of members & includes all persons no born (b) the members are forbidden by an inexorable social law to marry outside the group."

E. Blunt - "Caste is an endogamous group bearing a common name, membership of which is hereditary, imposing on its members certain restrictions in the matter of social intercourse, either following a common traditional occupation a claiming a common origin & generally regarded as forming a single homogenous community.

Characteristics of the Caste System

1. Based on birth, or birth is the determinant factor of caste system. Once born in a caste he has to remain the same. Status, position prestige is fixed according to his caste. i.e. A scribed. The castes are divided into sub-caste.
2. Endogamy & exogamy – In a caste syst. There is restriction on marriage. Westermarck- "Restriction on marriage Endogamy & Exogamy are the essence of the caste system. "Endogamy their one's own caste or sub-caste. Exogamy –same caste but not same clean i.e. Gotra.
3. Social Hierarchy is found in caste syst. Brahmin is high & sudra have the inferior position & prestige. Prof. Bhurey – Sanskritisation in this the lower caste people can initiate the upper caste. De-Sanskritisation – Upper caste can initiate the lower caste.
4. Occupational restriction & hereditary occupation – your occupation is fixed by your caste. A black smith son will always be a black smith.
5. Economic disparity – The higher caste people are generally economically better off & the lower caste people work harder & yet they get little benefit i.e. they are poorer.

Caste according Prof. Ghuray,

1. **Segmental division of society** i.e. society is divided into diff. castes. Earlier there were four but now over 3000 & work education etc, are associated with it. Role, prestige etc, is fixed according to his caste. Every caste has moral obligation. All people are morally obliged to their own castes & sub-castes i.e. there are certain rules & regulations which one has to follow & are punished if they don't. They are not so much to that society or community but more to his caste.
2. **Social Hierarchy** – In caste system, Hierarchy is found & the Brahmin are it the highest level & the Indra's are the lowest and therefore are the untouchables & even unseables. Sanskritisation is Ghuray's concept – i.e. this can initiate the higher caste & therefore change their position.
3. **Restriction on food** – In the caste system there is restriction in the food too. The members of the higher caste can't take food from the lower caste. **Kalahari**- fruits can be eaten by the higher caste from anyone & nothing will happen. **Pakka Khana** – from the Kshtriya & Vaishya. Tried in ghee etc. **Kachna Bhajan** – rice or Kheer – This can be taken only from his own caste. All these are the 3 types of food & this is in ref. to the Brahmin, the highest class. There is no restriction in water too. Only the kahar can give them water & they can drink from no other caste generally the maids are Ramani Kahar, & because of this they feel somewhat proud cause they are not so backward so that their touched food may not be eaten.

4. **Restriction regarding marriage & social inter course** – One should not marry within one's own clan. There is restriction even in social relationship & Bihari may marry a Bihari only & a Bengali a Bengali only.
5. **Occupational Restriction** – In a caste syst. There is hereditary in occupation.

Brief theories of caste

1. **Traditional Theory** – Vedas, mainly Rig Veda, Maha Bharat, Geeta, Upanishad, Manu Smuriti. It says caste system originated from the of body Bramha i.e. from the month came Brahmin, Keshahiya, arms, Vaishyas – thighs & Shudras from feet. And the place was given to the hierarchy of organs in the body. Varma, status & position is fixed according to this. Therefore 1st come Brahmins then Kshatriyas then Vaishayas & last Sudras. The month for preaching, learn, ceremonial performance, the arms – protections, thighs – to cultivate or business feet – helps the whole body therefore the duty of the Sundras is to serve all the others.
2. **Religious theory given by Hocart' C.S.** Originated due to religious factor a due to performance of various religious rites. In India religion plays an important place. Everything is based on this religion. He gave – pure work i.e. to perform religious work. Those who do Yagya they are Brahmins, the ones who gather flower – messages – impure work – those who sacrificed the low caste (Dasas).
3. **Political theory** – Abbe Dubois, - C.S. originated due to the supremacy of Brahmins – the Brahmanism, theory. To maintain their superiority diff. castes & sub-castes came into being Ghuray – 'Caste is the Brahmin child of the Indo-Arjun culture, cradled in the Ganges & Yamuna & then transferred in other parts of the country'.
4. **Occupational Theory by Nesfield** is based on occupation. The hierarchy is according to occupation. The higher the occupation the higher the position & status in societies. If the according is considered good in a place that caste is high but it may necessarily be higher in another place.

