5.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- define caste and describe its features;
- discuss the theoretical approaches to the understanding of caste;
- describe Jajmani system and its association with caste system;
- discuss major changes and the elements of continuity in the caste system;
- explain caste system’s influence on Indian political system; and
- discuss the measures taken to reduce caste discrimination.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Caste is a system of social stratification. It lies at the root of Indian social structure. It involves ranking according to birth and determines one’s occupation, marriage and social relationships. There is a prescribed set of norms, values and sanctions which govern social behaviour within caste.

Sociologists have defined caste (locally referred to as “jati”) as ‘hereditary, endogamous group, which is usually localised. It has a traditional association with an occupation and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes. Relations between castes are governed, among other things, by the concepts of pollution and purity, and general maximum commensality that occurs within the caste” (Srinivas 1962). This is the definition of the ideal form of caste system.
In reality, however, there are variations in the structure and functioning of caste system.

It is imperative to make a distinction between the theoretical formulation of caste system and its existential reality. Theoretically, caste stratification of the Indian society has its origin in the Varna system. This system literally means colour which was prevalent during the Vedic period. According to this doctrine of colour, the Hindu society was divided into four main Varnas: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. A fifth category of untouchables lie outside the fold of the varna scheme. This was mainly based on division of labour and occupation. Members of each varna performed different functions like the priestly function rulers, fighters, traders and servile. The varna system is important because it provides an all-India macro structural scheme within which innumerable variations of castes are found. A varna may include different castes which may be divided into different sub-castes.

The concept of Varna is generally traced to the Purusha Sukta Verse system of the Rig Varna Veda. It said that Varna system originated by the sacrifice of the primeval being or Purusha. After the sacrifice, the Brahma emerged from the mouth, the Kshatriya from arms, the Vaishya from thighs, and the Sudra from the feet. Thus, the four Varnas that emerged were considered to have a divine origin.

5.2 FEATURES OF CASTE SYSTEM

Ghurye (1962) an eminent sociologist, identified six features of caste system. These six features are:

5.2.1 Segmental Division of Society

The Hindu society is divided into different castes. Caste membership is determined by birth and not by selection and accomplishments. Hence, caste status is termed as being ascribed (by birth).

5.2.2 Hierarchy

Caste system has a specific scheme of social preference in which they are arranged in a social and ritual hierarchy. A sense of high and low, superiority and inferiority is associated with this gradation or ranking. The Brahmans are placed at the top of the hierarchy and are regarded as ritually pure or supreme. The untouchables, considered most impure, are at the lowest rung of the hierarchy. In between are the Kshatriyas, followed by the Vaishya. Thus, castes occupy a specific status in the overall framework of caste hierarchy.

5.2.3 Restrictions on Feeding and Social Interaction

Rules are laid down which govern the exchange of food which is also called commensality and social interaction between different castes. There are restrictions on the kind of food that can be eaten together, received or exchanged among castes. A Brahmin will accept “pakka” food, i.e., food prepared in ‘ghee’ from any community but he cannot accept ‘kachcha’ food i.e food prepared in water at the hands of other caste. Concept of pollution places severe restrictions on the extent of social interaction.
5.2.4 Civil and Religious Disabilities and Privileges of Different Sections

Each caste is considered to be more pure or impure than the other in the ritual sense of the term. The ideology of pollution and purity regulates the relationship between different castes significantly. There are several taboos practised by the superior castes to preserve their ceremonial purity. Castes considered ritually impure were subjected to manifold disabilities. For example, they were forbidden to use public roads, public well or enter Hindu temples. The shadow of some castes were considered polluting, such as, in Tamil Nadu the Shanars or Toddy-tappers had to restrict their pace away to 24 steps from a Brahmin during the earlier times.

Each caste has its own customs, traditions, practices and rituals. It has its own informal rules, regulations and procedures.

5.2.5 Restrictions on Marriage

Endogamy or marriage within one’s own caste or sub-caste is an essential feature of caste system. Generally, people get married within their own caste or sub-caste. However, there were a few exceptions. In some regions of India, the upper caste men could marry lower caste women. This kind of marriage alliance is known as hypergamy.

5.2.6 Lack of Unrestricted Choice of Occupation

Traditionally each caste was associated with an occupation. They were ranked higher and lower on the basis of ritual purity and pollution of their associated occupation. The Brahmans who occupied the uppermost rank were prescribed the duties of acquiring and teaching sacred knowledge and of performing sacrifices.

The above is a description of the essential features of caste system. However caste structure has several variations as found in its functioning in different regions of India. As a regional reality, one can see different patterns of caste-ranking, customs and behaviours, marriage rules and caste dominance.

Each caste had its own caste council or panchayat where the grievances of its caste members were heard. Caste panchayat was regulating the behaviour of the caste people according to the prescribed norms and sanctioned social behaviour. Headed by the elders of that caste, these councils had the power to excommunicate a member if he did not follow caste restrictions. They are distinct from village panchayats in that the latter, as statutory bodies, serve all villagers regardless of caste, although they operate on the same principles.

Box 5.1

Dumont is critical of those who tried to explain caste in terms of politico-economic factors where caste was seen as a system of domination and exploitation. He, for example, criticizes F.G. Bailey, who in his book on ‘Caste and the Economic Frontier’ (based on his field work in Orissa), has argued that there was a high degree of coincidence between politico-economic ranks and the ritual ranking of caste. This is a reflection of the general rule that those who achieve wealth and political power tend to rise in the ritual scheme of ranking. It is what is meant by saying that the ranking system of caste groups was validated by differential control over the productive resources of the village.
5.3 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF CASTE

Let us examine the attributional and interactional approach employed by scholars to the understanding of the caste system.

i) The attributional approach to caste analyses caste in terms of the various immutable characteristics of caste. The sociologists such as G S Ghurye, J H Hutton, using this approach, define caste system through its significant features. The above section includes the six features of caste system as described by Ghurye.

In his book ‘Caste in India’, (Hutton) held that the central feature of the caste system is endogamy. Around this fact various restrictions and taboos are built up. The interaction among various castes do not violate these restrictions placed on the various castes. Another important feature of the caste system as seen by Hutton is the taboo on taking cooked food from other than their own castes. M N Srinivas chooses to study the structure of relations arising between castes on the basis of these attributes. Thus, he introduces a dynamic aspect of caste identity.

ii) Interactional approach takes into account how castes are actually ranked with respect to one another in a local empirical context. According to Bailey caste dynamics and identity are united by the two principles of segregation and hierarchy. He feels that “Castes stand in ritual and secular hierarchy expressed in the rules of interaction”. By secular hierarchy he meant the economic and political hierarchy, rituals being part of the religious system. The ritual system overlaps the political and economic system. Bailey (1957) explained his viewpoint with reference to village Bisipara in Orissa. He has shown how the caste situation in Bisipara is changed and becomes more fluid after Independence when the Kshatriyas lost much of their land. This caused a downslide in their ritual ranking as well. There was a clearly discernable change in the interaction patterns, such as, the acceptance and non-acceptance of food from other castes.

Marriot studied the arrangement of caste ranking in ritual interaction. He confirmed that ritual hierarchy is itself linked to economic and political hierarchies. Usually economic and political ranks tend to coincide. That is to say both ritual and non-ritual hierarchies affect the ranking in the caste order though ritual hierarchies tend to play a greater role.

Dumont added a new dimension to the study of caste in an interactional perspective. According to him the local context has a role in caste ranking and identity, but this is a response to the ideology of hierarchy which extends over the entire caste system. For Dumont caste is a special type of inequality and hierarchy is the essential value underlying the caste system. It is this value that integrates Hindu society. The various aspects of the caste, says Dumont are based on the principle of opposition between the pure and impure underlying them. ‘Pure’ is superior to the ‘impure’ and has to be kept separate.
The effect of this participation on caste as an adaptive institution is clearly two fold: a conservative one on the internal social organization of caste which will tend to preserve its integrity to mobilise more effectively; and a more creative one in its external relations to other castes as they attempt to maximise their share of scarce resources to power, prestige and wealth, and evolve a “civil politics of primordial compromise”. For the very interdependence brought about by the market economy and democratic politics gives groups the power of contravailing the objectives of the others. The first effect will tend to conserve caste loyalties, the second to create broader ones. Thus Lynch concludes: “The very process of modernization itself brings forth and exacerbates the competing loyalties of citizenship and caste statutes in the struggle of a new state to become a nation.”

The theoretical position of caste in the analysis of Indian social systems is highly complex. It constitutes both a structural unit of social stratification as well as a system. The distinction between the two would depend upon the level of analysis involved. Sociologists who look across the cultural view of caste have, right from the beginning, associated it with an autonomous principle of stratification the bases of which are; institutionalized inequality, closure of social system in respect of social mobility, an elementary level of division of labour legitimized on ritual bases of reciprocity, and emphasis on quality (ritual purity or racial purity) rather than performance. In other words, caste is associated with an autonomous form of cultural system or world-view. The history of this view of caste goes far back in sociological literature (see Dubois 1906; Nesfield 1885: O’Malley 1932; Weber 1952; Kroeber 1930 etc.) and the trend still continues (see Berreman 1967; Barth 1960; Davis 1951; Myrdal 1968; etc.). The important assumption merely a variant of the principle of stratification which may be found working, not only in India, but in other societies too. An important implication of this view, as we find in the writings of Davis, A.R. Desai (1966) and Bose (1968) and others is that being a structural reality i.e. being part of the social structure caste would disappear when society in India evolves to a higher level (see Singh 1968) of industrialization. A simple understanding of the structural view of caste is that it forms an ideal type of stratification system and as such it could exist forever, either alone or in coexistence with other forms of stratification in societies. This viewpoint is held by sociologists who take a structural-functional rather than evolutionary-historical view of social stratification. (Singh, Yogendra 1997. Pp.32)

Thus a distinction can be made between sociologists who treat caste as a cultural phenomenon and those who define it as a structural phenomenon. Each of these positions has a further subvariation based on one’s view of caste: whether it is a particularistic phenomenon, Indian in substance, or whether it has universal properties. Thus four approaches emerge as logical classes once we distinguish between the two levels of theoretical formulation, that is, cultural and structural and universalistic and particularistic.

5.3.1 Caste and Class

In Indian society, caste and class as two different forms of social stratification have often been found to overlap with each other. Yogendra Singh (1997)
Interrogating Indian Society-I

mentions that in India class is often subsumed by caste. While caste is perceived as a hereditary group, a social class is a category of people who share a similar socio-economic status in relation to other segments of their community or society. Andre Beteille (1965), on the basis of his study of caste and class in Sripuram in South India found that the relation between caste and class has been a dynamic one. In the traditional system, there was greater congruence between caste and class. But the class system has gradually been dissociating itself from the caste structure. One can now achieve a variety of class positions with different degrees of probability, whatever one’s position in the caste structure may be. However, caste, class are also closely linked with the power structure which is reflected in terms of the ownership in ship of property, such as, land and political and economic standing in society.

Activity 1

From your own discussion with your family/friends make a list of characteristics which you believe to be related to caste. Discuss with other students at your study center.

5.3.2 Jajmani System

The term Jajmani System was introduced into the Indian social anthropology by William Wiser (1937) through his pioneering work, ‘The Hindu Jajmani System’. In his study of a village in Uttar Pradesh, he discovered how different castes interacted with one another in the production and exchange of goods and services. It was found that, with some variations, this system existed throughout India.

Based on the agricultural system of production and distribution of goods and services, Jajamani system is the link between the landowning high caste groups and occupational castes. It could be said that the Jajmani system is a system of distribution whereby high caste land owning families are provided services by various lower castes such as carpenter, barber, sweeper, etc.

It is a system of economic, social and ritual ties between different caste groups in the village. Under this system there are patrons and service castes. Since caste has a traditional association with an occupation, the castes are interdependent on each other for securing multiple services.

The servicing castes are called Kamins while the castes served are called Jajmans. For services rendered, the servicing castes are paid in cash or in kind (grains, fodder, clothes, animal products like milk, butter, etc.). The Rajput, Bhumihar and Jat are the Patron castes in the North and Kamma, Reddi, and Lingayat in the South. The service castes comprise barber, carpenter, blacksmith, washermen, leather-worker, etc. Relationship under Jajmani was permanent and hereditary. Oscar Lewis mentions that each caste group within a village is traditionally bound to give certain standardised services to the families of other castes. While the landowning high caste families receive services from lower castes and, in return, the members of low castes receive grains.

Jajmani system has undergone many significant changes in the past decades. In the village, not every caste participates in this system. In addition to the jajmani relation, there has always been contractual, wage labour type of ties between
the providers of goods and services and their buyers. Introduction of cash economy has also brought about changes, because payments in the jajmani system were in kind rather than in cash. New opportunities have come up in towns and cities, and many occupational castes have moved to cities to participate in these opportunities. The influence of life style, modern education, improved transport and communication has led to a decline in Jajmani system. Barter system of exchange is now almost extinct. Now payment is made in the form of cash. Broad changes in the caste system have also come in the way of the functioning of the traditional institution of Jajmani system.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Define caste and mention at least three features of caste system in India.

2) What is the meaning of attributional approach towards the understanding of caste? Use five lines to answer.

5.4 CHANGE AND CONTINUITY WITHIN Caste SYSTEM

By definition, caste system is viewed as a rigid and closed system of stratification. That is there is no movement or mobility from one caste status to the other. Social mobility is the process by which individuals or groups move, either upwards or downwards, from one social status to another in the social hierarchy. In reality, social mobility has been an important feature of caste system. This clearly means that caste system is a dynamic reality with flexibility in terms of its structure and function.

The concept of Sanskritization which is basically a process of social mobility was developed by M N Srinivas to describe the dynamic nature of the caste system. In his path-breaking study, Religion and Society among the Coorgs (1952), M N Srinivas explained caste mobility in terms of cultural emulation of the Brahmans by the local lower castes. He defined Sanskritization as “a process by which a “low” Hindu caste, or tribal or other group changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high, frequently “twice-born” caste. Generally such changes are followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that traditionally conceded to the claimant caste by the local community.” William Rowes’ study of the Noniya in Senapur village in eastern Uttar Pradesh shows the success of a middle level caste in acquiring
upward mobility through Sanskritization after achieving economic prosperity. A clear example of Sanskritization is the emulation of the practice of “twice-born castes” such as, vegetarianism by those so-called “lower castes”. This paved way for mobility to occur within caste system. However, lower castes aspiring to climb upwards in caste hierarchy have to face hostility from the higher castes.

Along with Sanskritization, the process of Westernisation has also made social mobility possible. Westernization refers to all cultural changes and institutional innovations in India as it came into political and cultural contract with the western nations especially British. It includes establishment of scientific, technological and educational institutions, rise of nationalism, new political culture and leadership in the country. Many higher castes gave up traditional customs and adopted the life style of the westerners.

The process of industrialisation and urbanisation (migration of people from villages to cities) affected caste structure to a great extent. Industrial growth provided new sources of livelihood to people and made occupational mobility possible. With new transportation facilities, there was frequent communication. People of all castes travelled together and there was no way to follow the prevalent ideology of ritual purity and pollution between castes. Taboos against food sharing started weakening when industrial workers from different castes lived and worked together.

Urbanisation and growth of cities also changed the functioning of the caste system. Kingsley Davis (1951) held that the anonymity, congestion, mobility, secularism and changeability of the city makes the operation of the caste virtually impossible. Ghurye (1961) holds that changes in the rigidities of the caste system were due to the growth of city life. M N Srinivas (1962) holds that due to the migration of Brahmans to the towns, the non-Brahmins refused to show same respect to them which they showed before, and inter-caste eating and drinking taboos were also weakened. Quite significantly, the superiority of the Brahmans has been challenged, once considered a religious dogma and was based on birth, is no more so, as it was in the past.

Besides industrialisation and urbanisation, other factors which emerged after Independence in the country significantly affected the caste system. Various political and economic policies and reforms were initiated after Independence in the country which led to several changes after Independence. The socio-religious reforms and movements, merger of some states spread of modern education, growth of modern profession, spatial mobility and the, spread of market economy accelerated the process of modernisation and development. Consequently, changes and the process of social mobility in the caste system gained momentum.

There were occupational opportunities which were ritually neutral. Entry into these new occupations were based on the technical skills imparted through modern education. When people from different castes came together in modern occupational settings and had close interaction, it gave a serious blow to the ritual, heredity and hierarchical structure and aspects of caste.

Under the caste system, endogamy was the basis of mate-selection. The members of a caste or sub-caste were forbidden by non changing social laws to marry outside the group. But at present the Special Marriage Act, 1954 and the Hindu
Marriage Act, 1955 have removed restrictions of endogamy and declared inter-caste marriages as legally valid. Of late, several factors such as impact of western philosophy, co-education, working together of males and females of different castes in the same factory or office have contributed to an increase in the cases of inter-caste marriages, love-marriages and late-marriages and live-in-relationship.

Ram Krishna Mukherjee (1958) stated that both the economic aspect (change in occupational specialization) and the social aspect (adoption of higher caste customs, giving up polluting professions, etc.) of the caste system, have vastly changed the caste system. He said that change is more specific in urban areas where rules on social interaction and, caste commensalities have relaxed and civil and religious disabilities of lower castes have been lifted. There are scholars of the viewpoint that changes are taking place gradually within the caste system but they are not disintegrative of the system as a whole. Ghurye (1961) was of the opinion that caste has shed some of its features. He said, that “caste no longer rigidly determines an individual’s occupation but continues to prescribe its norms about marriage within the caste. One still has to depend very largely on one’s caste for help at critical periods of one’s life, like marriage, birth and death.” He believed that strength of the caste system in social life is as strong today as it was earlier. Although Andre Beteille has referred to the changes taking place in the caste system in terms of its structural distance between castes, style of life, commensality and endogamy. Scholars have also said that caste has lost its traditional elements of purity and pollution and became more of an identity group. (Sharma, K)

5.4.1 Caste and Politics

The phenomenon of dominance of one caste over the other was an important factor in the maintenance of the caste system. Traditionally, economic and political dominance coincided with the ritual dominance. According to Srinivas (1966) a caste is said to be dominant when it is numerically the strongest in the village or local area and it economically and politically exercises a great influence. Such factors combine to place a particular caste group in a position of political dominance.

Sociologists have undertaken political analysis in terms of caste and traced the political development of caste through time. They have analysed the role of caste and its linkage to politics to gain political power. The system of parliamentary democracy, adult franchise, democratic decentralisation and the system of Panchayati Raj have taken politics down to the grassroots level where caste becomes a prominent variable in electoral politics. The demands of organised party system in politics have brought about a coalition of castes. The caste-based politics has promoted caste and importance of caste in politics. The caste has been the mobilizing, as well as, the unifying factor for political gains, material welfare, social status and caste alliances. (See Kothari, R. (ed.) 1970: Caste in Indian Politics, Orient Langman, New Delhi)

The modern political system is universal by the Constitution and it does not take into account the caste factor in privilege but in practice, on the ground level, caste considerations have come to occupy a predominant position in the democratic political process. The Political consciousness on caste lines is evident.
in references made to caste *sabhas* or caste associations and their role in Indian politics and political mobilization.

Rajni Kothari has examined the relationship between caste and politics. He found the factors of education, government patronage and expanding franchise have penetrated the caste system, affecting the democratic politics in the country. The Economic opportunity, administrative patronage rising consciousness, is changing social attitudes Recognition of new opportunities and the rising consciousness and aspirations have drawn caste into politics and political mobilisation.

The different parties and movements mobilise caste based status groups as resources for their political interest. Very often candidates are fielded by political parties on the basis of their caste identity. The caste provides a readymade system of mobilization and support for the organized party politics. There are various caste federations which provide an organised political platform to fight for their common course. For example, the Kshatriya Sabha of Gujarat is an illustration of an active caste federation. It consists of clusters of castes or Jatis, that functions like a caste-based political community. Thus, caste is a factor of political significance and it is closely interlinked with politics.

### 5.4.2 Measures to Prohibit Caste Discrimination

After Independence the spread of education and social reform movements played a significant role in emancipation of socially and economically backward castes and classes. It is through them and various other legal constitutional measures the discrimination based on caste and other factors was prohibited. Our Constitution is based on democratic values of equality, liberty and fraternity. It does not allow any discrimination. In order to fulfil the Constitutional mandate, several Acts were passed in the Parliament to end the exploitative and discriminatory practices against lower castes. The government of India has enacted laws to remove untouchability. It has also brought in many reforms to improve the quality of life of the weaker sections of society. Some of them are:

i) the Constitutionally guaranteed fundamental human rights;

ii) the Abolition of ‘untouchability’ in 1950;

iii) the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and

iv) the Provision of reservation in educational institutions, employment and other opportunities;

v) the establishment of the department of Social Welfare and National Commissions for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Tribes and the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955, renamed as Protection of Civil Rights Act, in 1976.

The SC & ST Act, 1989 is one of the important measures to check, deter and prevent activities against them. There is also an Act, 2013 for the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation. This Act aims to prohibit the employment of manual scavenging, the manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks without protective equipment, and the construction of unhygienic latrines. The Act seeks to rehabilitate manual scavengers and seeks to provide alternative employment to them.
The Constitution of India provides measures for protective discrimination under various articles to facilitate the process of creating an equalitarian society. The Constitution gives preferential treatment to Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes. Thus reservation was a strategy to give them a share in power, politics, services, employment and in order to uplift them socially and economically. In 1950, the Constitution provided 12.5% reservation for SCs and 5% for STs but later in 1970, it was raised to 15% for SCs and 7.5% for STs. The reservation was provided in jobs, admission to educational institutions and central and state legislative assemblies. Accordingly, all state governments enacted laws to provide reservation for the SCs and STs in services and other areas in the state. There is special provision for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) made in the Constitution of India wherein the term OBC is used for them. Article 15(4) of the Constitution refers to them as ‘socially and educationally backward classes of citizens’. Article 340, refers to them as ‘socially and educationally backward classes’. Article 16(4) refers to them only as ‘backward class of citizens’. Article 46 refers to them as educationally and economically weaker sections of the people’. These are several provisions laid down in different Articles in our Constitution for the advancement of Other Backward Classes or OBCs.

However, the issue of reservation is more complex, particularly at the all India level. The ground reality has shown many of the measures are not effective in improving the condition of the poor and deprived. The issue of criteria of reservation is, therefore, raised again, and again. There is the need for its assessment and policy formulation from time to time.

In the final analysis we observe that caste is losing the traditional functions, norms and structure because of the changes that have taken place in society but caste still exists. It is acquiring new ‘avatar to suit the changed environment, condition and mind-sets.

The caste is modifying itself but is still persisting, particularly in the rural areas. In urban areas, caste is persisting in the form of complex networks of interest and class groups. However caste as a dynamic reality of Indian society has undergone many changes and yet there are elements of continuity. The caste system as an identity group exists as a unique social institution of Indian society.

Check Your Progress II

1) Discuss briefly how caste system has changed in contemporary India. Use about 10 lines to answer the question

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Interrogating Indian Society-I

2) How does Indian Constitution helps protect the lower castes from discrimination? Use about 10 lines to answer this question.

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5.5 LET US SUM UP

We have explained briefly the characteristics of caste and its history. It is associated with hierarchy and existed in rural areas in the form of Jajmani system. In addition to hierarchy, caste system is characterized by segmental division of labour i.e. occupation, restrictions on commensality which is eating ‘kachcha’ or ‘pucca’ food together and social interaction, civil and religious disabilities, privileges of different sections, restrictions on marriage and the choice of occupations. The changes and the continuity within the caste system have been explained. The relationship of caste and politics has also been explained with special reference to the role of caste in the institution of Panchayati Raj. In the last part, measures to prohibit caste discrimination taken by the government during the framing of our Constitution are explained. In conclusion, the present status of the system of caste, changes and continuity within the system have been explained.

5.6 REFERENCES

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Ram Ahuja, Indian Social System, Rawat Publication, 1966 New Delhi. (Not authentic Source)
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5.7 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

1) Caste divides Hindu Society into different segments based on their regional caste hierarchy of Jatis and subjatis within the all India dursian of Varma (or colour). This hierarchy is ascriptive in nature i.e. one is learn into that Varna or Caste and is based on ritual purity and pollution.

2) The attributional approach to understand caste system is based on the understanding of caste is terms of various attributes; such as hierarchy,
purity and pollution occupations, etc. This approach has been used by sociologists like G.S. Ghurye.

**Check Your Progress II**

1) Caste system is considered to be a closed system of stratification; unlike class. However, sociologists have found in their studies that social mobility in terms of movement of caste groups from lower to upper rank had always been there. But; after Independence the process of Sanskritization, Westernization and Modernization along with the changes brought about by a universal political system of democracy encoded in our Constitution helped bring faster changes in society. This led to changes in caste system but yet some rigid elements, such as, identity and its links to politics still continue to shape society in India.

2) Indian Constitution through its mandate of bringing about equality, liberty and fraternity for all citizens of India protects its citizens from being discriminated through certain Constitutional measures such as:

   i) Abolition of underchaibility
   
   ii) Constitutionally guaranteed fundamental human rights.
   
   iii) Reservation of seats for SC, ST and OBCs as measures of predictive discrimination to amelorete their social and economic condition and bring about social justice and equality in society; and same others.