



Caste Formation in India.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to look at how caste formation, a structural feature of Indian society and the changes that have taken place in caste formations over time, are used by caste in today's society. The structure of Indian society is based on the caste system. But the caste system was only a product of the upper caste Brahmins of India. In fact, the upper castes enslaved the lower castes only for economic purposes. For that, they used caste as the first extreme. According to historians, the caste system in India was only part of a division of labor and was never caste-based. Because there is no mention in Manusmriti, Bhagavat Gita, Vedic and Later-Vedic literatures about a caste society that separates man from man on the basis of caste. That is why our social reformers proclaimed that caste evils should be eradicated from the society and they worked hard for it and succeeded to some extent. Thus, Independent India was able to build a casteless society as a result of the work of social reformers. But after independence we were able to see a caste politics. What we see today is that every political party is using caste as a tool for their vote bank during elections to consolidate their power. Therefore, caste politics is one of the major challenges facing India.

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1. Introduction

Social formation in India is determined on the basis of caste system. Therefore, the zeal of the caste system was rampant in Indian society. In fact, Indian casteism was only a consequence of the selfish interests of the elite groups. But historians have put forward many theories about the origin of the caste system. Let us evaluate what they are. A section of historians claim that the caste system in India came into being with the arrival of the Aryans. Swami Dayananda Saraswati puts forwarded the theory in order to validate their theory. According to Aryan theory, outsiders are Brahmins and the indigenous of India are lower caste.

However, there are differing opinions among historians as to the role of caste in social formation during the Vedic period.

That is to say, what existed in the caste society at that time was based on the trade and work of the people. Initially, certain social groups traditionally engaged in certain occupations, but this was not a caste-based social formation. But gradually some social groups emerged on the basis of the occupation. For example, a merchant named Panis mentions that trade was established in the Mediterranean region, the main emporium in Europe. Therefore, historian Kalyan Raman argues that the founders of the Polynesian trade in Africa were the Panis of India. This was followed by the emergence of large groups such as Vaniks, Baniya and Vaniya which traded in India. Social formation at that time was based on the work that people were engaged in. In the Rig Veda, it is said that people belonging to the same family took up higher

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and lower jobs. For example, Gopala, Gokula and Vraja, herdsmen were also involved in agriculture. Similarly, the Kshatriyas were engaged in border protection but were also engaged in various jobs. Another example is that Lord Krishna was born into a cowherd community but later took over the rule of Madurai and became the king of Dwaraka. Likewise, Vyas, the son of fisherman, and his grandsons Dhritarashtra and Duryodhana later inherited the Kurukshetra Empire. In addition, Guhak became the king of Srngivera kingdom, is mentioned in the Ramayana. Another reference is to the Ekalavya's skill in archery, but Brahmin Drona teacher denied education to Ekalavya only because of his innate love for his beloved student Arjuna. From such incidents we can see that casteism was not strong in the early days. Due to this, kshetriyas also acquired spiritual knowledge during the Vedic period. Vyasan, the son of a fisherman, compiled the Vedas and wrote the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. It is clear, therefore, that caste was not a barrier to learning at that time.

2. Caste Interpretation of Manu

Manusmriti is the first law book in India and its author is Manu. He categorizes people into four varnas (races) namely Brahmin, Kshetriya, Vaishya and Sudra. He also refers to the fifth color, mixed caste or Chandalas. Moreover, Brahmins should study and teach the Vedas and pass it on to others in a way that is good for the society as a whole. In his opinion God is for every person each job is assigned and they claim that they have to do it according to their ancestry.

3. Caste in Bhagavat Gita

In the Gita, color is compared to Karma. Gita also states that they must be faithful to the deeds given to them according to their past activities. Parasuraman was born a Brahmin but later practiced archery and is said to have destroyed the Kshatriyas. Here in the Gita, Lord Krishna comments that social life took the form of agriculture and animal husbandry and later evolved into higher political thoughts and lives. What is clear from this is that there was no caste in the Vedic period. Because in the 9th volume of the Rig Veda, a family member claims that I am a peot, my father is a doctor and my mother is a grinder. Of course, it is clear that in the past, people were engaged in various occupations and never deviated from the caste system.

4. Caste in Vedic and Later Vedic Period

Similarly, the Vedas and the Vedic literatures, the Smriti and the Upanishads, refer only to the division of labor and society, where no caste was given prominence. But over time, people have moved on from one job to another. Casteism was not strong in South India. The Chera, Chola and Pandya, who were the descendants of the lower caste, later established dynasties. During the Sangham period, Sudras and

Brahmins were engaged in agriculture. Evidence of this is that Manu and Yanjyavalkya mentions about the anuloma and pratiloma marriages.

But according to some historians, the caste system of the Vedic period later gave way to new religions. These are examples of Buddhist literatures Mahavamsa and Mahavamsahatika claiming Mauryan kings to be Buddhists Jainists believers. In the light of Mauryan literature, a lower caste could have become a sage or a scholar. Moreover, in Kautilya's Arthasastra, the lower castes and the upper castes mentioned a punishment. Adi Shankara then declared in his Advaita doctrine that "there is no difference between man and man and that all are one". He also declared that all human beings are symbols God. He also stated that in his opinion color is but dharma. Adi Shankara thus reclaimed the caste system in our society. After the Mughal period, a casteless society emerged and the devotional movement gained prominence. Religious reform movements began in Maharashtra in the 13th century. Namadev and Tukaram, many lower caste teachers, rose in the society. Following this, scholars from the upper castes, such as Jnaneswar and Ekanath rejected the notion of education for Brahmins only. By the 16th century, Muslim rule was established in the Deccan and northern India. But then one day the people in India is practicing casteism in a very threatening way.

5. Caste in Modern India

In the 19th century, many social reformers in India worked to eradicate castiesm. Swami Dayanda Saraswati, Swami Viveknanda, Rajaram Mohan Roy, Sri Narayana Guru, Vaikunda Swamikal, Atmaram Pandurang, Joti Rao Phule, Ayyankali and so on They challenged the immoralities of the society and educated the common people. Besides, Vivekanand and B R Ambedkar were important figures and they worked for the eradication of caste evils from Indian society. Thus our social reformers eradicated caste evils from Indian society. But the political parties that came to power in the 21st century after the monarchs are trying to remove the social reformers and bring back caste evils. Politicians today use caste in a different way, that is, they use a system to get caste votes to their party during election.

6. Conclusion

Although there are many theories about the origin of caste in India, there is still no clear understanding of caste among historians. In the early days, caste was used by the upper castes of the society to maintain their interests and to enslave the lower castes. There I no historical record that says caste should be practiced. But later our social reformers were able to eradicate to some extent the nefarious practices that separate man from man as part of various social reforms in the

society but caste zeal is being used by the present society to maintain their selfish interests. This is validated by the fact that our political parties are using caste as a tool to get votes for their party and especially to maintain their power during elections. As a result, our Indian politics is being maligned by caste. Therefore, we can build a Secular, Socialist, Democratic India only if such caste thinking changes.

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