



Differential Cultural System in Modern India –A study

Dr. Pagadala Geetha Kumari
Guest Faculty, Dept., of Economics
SPW Degree and PG College, Tirupati 517 502, Andhra Pradesh, India.

ABSTRACT

The word 'caste' owes its origin to the Spanish word 'casta' which means 'bread, race, strain or a complex of heredity qualities. The development of 4 castes in India took place from the Varnas. Society is divided into diff. castes. Earlier there were 4 but now over 3000 and work education etc, are associated with it. Role, prestige etc, is fixed according to his caste. The leaders of independent India decided that India will be democratic, socialist and secular country. In modern India the term caste is used for Jat and also for Varna. The term, caste was used by the British who ruled India until 1947. The word 'race' has been sometimes used to denote the classification of human beings on the basis of the skin's colour such as black race or white race. Culture of prejudice refers to the theory that prejudice is embedded in our culture. We grow up surrounded by images of stereotypes and casual expressions of racism and prejudice. Culture consists of all learned, normative behaviour patterns – that is all shared ways or patterns of thinking and feeling as well as doing.

KEY WORDS: Caste System, Community, Racism, Families, Illiterates, Untouchability

INTRODUCTION

The word 'caste' owes its origin to the Spanish word 'casta' which means 'bread, race, strain or a complex of heredity qualities. The Portuguese applied this term to the classes of people in India known by the name of 'Jati'. The English word caste is an adjustment of the original term. "Caste is a collection of families or group of families bearing a common name; claiming a common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine professing to follow the same hereditary calling and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community. You belong to a caste by birth and can't change it later and one has to follow the set rules and regulations and gets punishment on their violation and one can even be thrown out of his caste. 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 become literate and therefore go over to the literate class i.e. caste is hereditary in nature and once born in a caste one can't change it. The development of 4 castes in India took place from the Varnas. Varna was not strictly based on birth and one could change his Varna. It was based on "Karma theory" Parashurama became kshatriya by karma from a Brahmin Vishwamitra was a Kshatriya and became Brahmin. This is not allowed in caste system.

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. Ascribed. The castes are divided into sub-caste.



2. Endogamy and exogamy – In a caste syst. There is restriction on marriage. Westermarck- "Restriction on marriage Endogamy and 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 and sudra have the inferior position and 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 and 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 and the lower caste people work harder and yet they get little benefit i.e. they are poorer.

Segmental division of society i.e. society is divided into diff. castes. Earlier there were 4 but now over 3000 and 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 and sub-castes i.e. there are certain rules and regulations which one has to follow and are punished if they don't. They are not so much to that society or community but more to his caste.

Social Hierarchy – In caste system, Hierarchy is found and the Brahmin are it the highest level and the Indra's are the lowest and therefore are the untouchables and even unseables.

Sanskritisation is Ghuray's concept i.e. this can initiate the higher caste and therefore change their position.

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 and 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 and this is in ref. to the Brahmin, the highest class. There is no restriction in water too. Only the kahar can give them water and they can drink from no other caste generally the maids are Ramani Kahar, and because of this they feel somewhat proud cause they are not so backward so that their touched food may not be eaten.

FACTORS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CASTE

Traditional Theory – Vedas, mainly Rig Veda, Maha Bharat, Geeta, Upanishad, Manu Smuriti. It says caste system. Originated from the body Bramha, i.e. from the mouth came Brahmin, Keshahiya, arms, Vaishyas – thighs and Shudras from feet. And the place was given to the hierarchy of organs in the body. Varma, status and position is fixed according to this. Therefore 1st come Brahmins then Kshatriyas then Vaishayas and last Sudras. The month for preaching, learn, ceremonial preformation, 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.



Manu – C.S. has developed due to Auolay and pratilog.

1. 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 imp. 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).

2. Political theory – Abbe Dubois, - C.S. originated due to the supremacy of Brahmins – the Brahmanism, theory. To maintain their superiority diff. castes and sub-castes came into being Ghuray – 'Caste is the Brahmin child of the Indo-Arjun culture, cradled in the Ganges and Yamuna and then transferred in other parts of the country'.

3. The hierarchy is according to occupation. The higher the occupation the higher the position and 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. In general C.S. originated from the Varnas and then in marriage but these varnas of Anolog and sub-caste was formed.

FEATURES OF CASTE SYSTEM

1. There was a segmental division of society in which they were classified in several units called as caste. The term caste used to present race or breed of a person. There have been 2800 different castes found in India and they have their own set of norms and beliefs.

2. Hierarchy system was evolved in those times. There has been the degree of highness and lowness amongst people.

3. Endogamy can be seen as a vital feature of the caste system. Endogamy is practicing marriage function in the same caste and it has been followed in India till now up to maximum extent. For example, even if anyone wishes to marry someone of other caste and class, he/she can face a powerful opposition and sometimes it can lead to Honor Killing. Honor killing is practicing death of people in love with different castes. In UP a couple was killed brutally just to satisfy caste ego which does not permit people to marry someone from other castes.

4. Hereditary Status and Hereditary occupation are some of the basic features which can be called as an ascribed status of a person. It clearly means that caste is not something which is achieved by a man on the basis of merit. Indeed it is clearly a place which cannot be altered or switched. For example, a person born in Shudra category will do chores like cleaning toilets till his/her death. Likewise, a Brahmin's son was bound to follow the priest culture; he was not allowed to go to his career choices.

5. One of the most negative influences of the Caste system is also counted in its feature that is Food and Drinks indifference attitude by upper-class people. For example, if a Shudra prepared food and a Brahmin arrived at a temple where he is hungry. He will die of hunger but will not touch the food prepared by the lower class people.

CASTE SYSTEM IN MODERN INDIA

The leaders of independent India decided that India will be democratic, socialist and secular country. According to this



policy there is a separation between religion and state. Practicing untouchability or discriminating a person based on his caste is legally forbidden. Along with this law the government allows positive discrimination of the depressed classes of India. The Indians have also become more flexible in their caste system customs. In general the urban people in India are less strict about the caste system than the rural. In cities one can see different caste people mingling with each other, while in some rural areas there is still discrimination based on castes and sometimes also on untouchability.

In modern India the term caste is used for Jat and also for Varna. The term, caste was used by the British who ruled India until 1947. The British who wanted to rule India efficiently made lists of Indian communities. They used two terms to describe Indian communities. Castes and Tribes. These lists, which the British made, were used later on by the Indian governments to create lists of communities who were entitled for positive discrimination. This category includes in it communities who were untouchables. In modern India, untouchability exists at a very low extent. The untouchables call themselves Dalit, meaning depressed. Until the late 1980s they were called Harijan, meaning children of God. This title was given to them by Mahatma Gandhi who wanted the society to accept untouchables within them.

RACE

Race is one of those terms which are used with a variety of meanings. The Greeks classified all mankind as either Greek or

barbarian, yet none of these is a racial group. The term 'race' is sometimes used as synonymous with nationality. A nation does not necessarily consist of individuals with uniform physical characteristics. Sometimes it has been frequently confused with language, as well as with religion. The word 'race' has been sometimes used to denote the classification of human beings on the basis of the skin's colour such as black race or white race. But race cannot be equated with colour of the skin. Sometimes we use the word race in a very wide sense and speak of human race thus including all the human beings.

Race a Biological Concept

This confusion arises as results of failure to realize that race is not a sociological term but is distinctly a biological and anthropological concept. It signifies a biological category. "A race is a large biological human grouping with a number of distinctive inherited characteristics which vary within a certain range." Language and religion are cultural concepts and therefore, on their basis race a physiological concept cannot be accurately defined. Ethnic differences between men are matters of blood. They are biologically inherited along with such physical characteristics as eye, skin and hair color. By race anthropologists understand a group of individuals who possess common hereditary traits which separate them from other groups. It refers to a "subdivision of the human species, the members of which distinguish them from those of other subdivision".

Classification of Races

India is a melting pot of races. It is an ethnological museum. The ancestors of



the majority of present population have migrated to India from surrounding territories across the Himalayas. Indian population is constituted of major races of the world. We find people of different races in India.

There are seven racial types in Indian population.

1. The Turk-Iranian

These types of people are found in the Frontier Province and Beluchistan. These parts now belong to Pakistan. Turks-Iranian people are very tall and have a fair complexion. They possess dark eyes, narrow nose.

2. Indo-Aryan

This racial type is found among the Eastern Part of Punjab, Rajasthan and Kashmir. Most of the people have long heads and prominent noses. They are tall, their complexion is fair and eyes are of dark color.

3. Scytho-Dravidian

Scytho-Dravidian is a mixed racial type of Scythians and Dravidians. People, having this racial ancestry are said to be found in Saurashtra, Coorg and hilly tracts of Madhya Pradesh. It is also said that while the upper strata people are predominantly Scythian, the lower strata people are fairly dominated by Dravidian elements. They are broad headed, have a fine nose, are of medium height and their complexion is fair.

4. Aryo-Dravidian

This racial type is found in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar. They are the product of inter-marriages between the Indo-Aryans and the Dravidians.

They have long head and the complexion varies from lights brown to black.

5. The Mongol-Dravidians

In the population of Bengal and Orissa this racial type is most prominent. Bengali Brahmins and Kayasthas form the largest percentage. This racial type has come into existence as a result of intermixture of Mongolians and Dravidians while some element of Indo-Aryan race is also found. These people are generally black and round headed having medium nose and medium height.

6. The Dravidian

This racial type is found in Southern India, particularly south of M.P, Chotnagpur, Madras and Hyderabad. The Santhals of Chotnagpur represent this type. They have dark complexion, dark eyes, short stature, long head and broad nose. The Dravidian race, as mentioned by Risley, like the Aryan, is a linguistic group and not a racial group, says Majumdar. Most of the Indian anthropologists are not inclined to accept the racial classification of the Indian population presented by Risley.

7. The Negrito:

According to him the presence of Negrito race in India is a controversial issue. However, it is claimed that there is an element of Negrito race in Indian population and Negrito element is found in the blood of Andaman Islanders. Further, it is also pointed out that Negrito element is found in the blood of some South Indian tribal people like the Kadar and blood of Nagas.



CULTURE

1) Meaning of Culture

Sometimes an individual is described as "a highly cultured person", meaning thereby that the person in question has certain features such as his speech, manner, and taste for literature, music or painting which distinguish him from others. Culture, in this sense, refers to certain personal characteristics of an individual. Sometimes culture is used in popular discourse to refer to a celebration or an evening of entertainment, as when one speaks of a 'cultural show'. In this sense, culture is identified with aesthetics or the fine arts such as dance, music or drama. This is also different from the technical meaning of the word culture. Culture is used in a special sense in anthropology and sociology.

2) Characteristics of Culture

1. Learned Behaviour

Not all behaviour is learned, but most of it is learned; combing one's hair, standing in line, telling jokes, criticizing the President and going to the movie, all constitute behaviours which had to be learned. Sometimes the terms conscious learning and unconscious learning are used to distinguish the learning. For example, the ways in which a small child learns to handle a tyrannical father or a rejecting mother often affect the ways in which that child, ten or fifteen years later, handles his relationships with other people.

2. Culture is Abstract

Culture exists in the minds or habits of the members of society. Culture is the shared ways of doing and thinking. There are degrees of visibility of cultural behaviour, ranging from the regularised activities of persons to their internal

reasons for so doing. In other words, we cannot see culture as such we can only see human behaviour. This behaviour occurs in regular, patterned fashion and it is called culture.

3. Culture is a Pattern of Learned Behaviour

The definition of culture indicated that the learned behaviour of people is patterned. Each person's behaviour often depends upon some particular behaviour of someone else. The point is that, as a general rule, behaviours are somewhat integrated or organized with related behaviours of other persons.

4. Culture is the Products of Behaviour

Culture learning's are the products of behaviour. As the person behaves, there occur changes in him. He acquires the ability to swim, to feel hatred toward someone, or to sympathize with someone. They have grown out of his previous behaviours. In both ways, then, human behaviour is the result of behaviour. The experience of other people are impressed on one as he grows up, and also many of his traits and abilities have grown out of his own past behaviours.

5. Culture includes Attitudes, Values Knowledge

There is widespread error in the thinking of many people who tend to regard the ideas, attitudes, and notions which they have as "their own". It is easy to overestimate the uniqueness of one's own attitudes and ideas. When there is agreement with other people it is largely unnoticed, but when there is a disagreement or difference one is usually conscious of it. Your differences however, may also be cultural. For example,



suppose you are a Catholic and the other person a Protestant.

6. Culture is shared by the Members of Society

The patterns of learned behaviour and the results of behaviour are possessed not by one or a few person, but usually by a large proportion. Thus, many millions of persons share such behaviour patterns as Christianity, the use of automobiles, or the English language. Persons may share some part of a culture unequally. For example, as Americans do the Christian religion. To some persons Christianity is the all-important, predominating idea in life. To others it is less preoccupying / important, and to still others it is of marginal significance only.

7. Culture is a way of Life

Culture means simply the "way of life" of a people or their "design for living." Kluckhohn and Kelly define it in his sense, "A culture is a historically derived system of explicit and implicit designs for living, which tends to be shared by all or specially designed members of a group." Explicit culture refers to similarities in word and action which can be directly observed. For example, the adolescent cultural behaviour can be generalized from regularities in dress, mannerism and conversation. Implicit culture exists in abstract forms which are not quite obvious.

3) Understanding of culture critical to social work

Why is the understanding of culture critical to social work? NASW Code of Ethics Social workers challenge social injustice Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person

Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships Social workers have an ethical responsibility to clients to value cultural competence and social diversity

4) Diversity

Diversity Race is a system of social identity constructed over generations through cultural, social, economic, and political relations. Ethnicity is associated with static traditions, customs, and values that reflect a deep and enduring cultural identity, and a desire to keep that identity intact. Social class, which includes socioeconomic status or SES, documents another form of cultural inequality. Gender is what our culture symbolizes as maleness and femaleness, and is further defined by prescribed roles for men and women. Other factors: Sexual Orientation, Religion, Age, etc.

Subculture of Medical Workers

Culture is the collection of beliefs, ideas, artifacts, and other traits of a group of people. Because culture encompasses virtually everything that can be learned, it is ever-shifting, and not everyone follows the group's beliefs. Subcultures are smaller groups within the larger culture that have slightly different or additional traditions and ideas. They tend to share much in common with the larger culture and typically interact with members of the majority on a regular basis. Most people belong to at least one group that can be classified as a subculture. Large groups of friends or family members tend to form their own subcultures.



Infallible

The physicians described values and norms associated with expectations of being flawless and never committing any errors, which the physicians experienced as something of a burden. They were aware that such expectations could negatively affect physicians' willingness to have open dialogue about mistakes, slips and lapses they make, thus restricting potential learning from errors. The values and norms related to the highly competent and almost omnipotent physician appear to be present from the outset of medical training. During training, physicians are expected to push their own boundaries in order to develop and hone their skills. These expectations were predominantly expressed by the interns and residents.

CONCLUSION

Caste is a collection of families or group of families bearing a common name; claiming a common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine professing to follow the same hereditary calling and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community. The development of 4 castes in India took place from the Varnas. Hierarchy system was evolved in those times. There has been the degree of highness and lowness amongst people. . In general the urban people in India are less strict about the caste system than the rural. In cities one can see different caste people mingling with each other, while in some rural areas there is still discrimination based on castes and sometimes also on

untouchability. For many cultures, religion has always been an integral part of life.

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