

Casteism: A Plague To India's Growth

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ABSTRACT

For as long as anybody can remember, there has been a caste system in place in India. In terms of social stratification, the caste system in India is among the oldest still in use today. More than 3,000 years old, the system that separates Hindus into rigidly hierarchical groups based on their job and dharma (the Hindi word for religion, although here it means responsibility) is widely accepted. Since the beginning of time, the Indian caste system has served as a means of classifying individuals according to their social status. The Indian Caste System is seen as a closed system of stratification, meaning that a person's social standing is bound by the caste into which they were born. People from lower socioeconomic classes are restricted in their interactions and conduct. In the past, the caste system has been reworked and restructured several times. This research article examines the origins of the caste system in India, before and after independence, inequalities and social stigmatization caused by casteism, the impacts of casteism through time in India, and an overview of laws on casteism.

Keywords: Caste System, India, Hindus, Religion, Karma, Dharma, Social Status, Society and Politics, etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the midst of its economic and infrastructural advancements, India is continually reminded of its social reality, which is founded on an age-old caste system, Discrimination against a certain group of people has occurred on a few occasions throughout India's history, usually as a result of the country's long-established caste and untouchability systems. In Una, Gujarat, cow-protection gangs lynched Dalits, the most recent example. It's fascinating to learn about the historical roots of the socioeconomic stratification that has shaped Indian politics and culture.

II. CASTE SYSTEM IN INDIA

Caste is defined as 'a collection of families or groups 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 competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community' in Risley's definition (Hutton 47). There are four varnas in the Indian caste system. The two top castes rule over the lower castes and are considered to be superior to their subordinates. In order of importance, the Brahmins,

Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras make up the top four. The knowledge of the Vedas and the monopoly they have on the practise of sacrifice are what constitute the Brahmin class, which is often considered to be the first to be formed by the creator deity. As a result of their superior knowledge and sole possession of the ultimate 'weapons,' sacrificial techniques, these characteristics justify the social position of the class in relation to others: they are predominant because they are prior, and they claim to stand outside of the power relations that govern social life for others.

III. ROOTS OF CASTEISM IN INDIA AND ITS ROLE BEFORE INDEPENDENCE

People in India are socially separated by class, religion, geography, tribe, gender, and language under the Indian Caste System. Differentiation in this or other ways may be found in many communities, but when they become the primary basis for ranking and uneven access to valuable resources like money, income, power, or status, it becomes a problem. The Indian Caste System is seen as a closed system of stratification, meaning that a person's social standing is bound by the caste into which they were born. People from lower socioeconomic classes are restricted in their interactions and conduct.

According to biological theory, everything in the universe has at least one of three kinds of traits. Varieties in texture or hue are referred to as 'varnish,' because they signify a person's emotional state. Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas are the three Gunas. Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas are all different colours. These in varied proportions form the group or class of individuals from all over the globe with different temperamental characteristics (Lahiri). Characteristics associated with sattva attributes include those relating to knowledge, intellect, honesty, and kindness, amongst others. These characteristics include passion, pride, and bravery. Tamas are said to develop traits like as apathy, indifference, and a general lack of originality (Daniel). People with varying proportions of these innate characteristics end up pursuing the most suitable career path. In this view, the Sattva attributes of Brahmans are frequently passed down from generation to generation. They are calm, self-controlled, and austere in their demeanour. Purity, uprightness, and tolerance are seen as virtues in them. Brahmans have a strong desire to learn and grow in their spiritual practises (Lahiri). It is the Raja traits that the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas inherit, and the Tamas attributes that the Shudras inherit (Daniel). One's Varna is defined by their acts, their ego quality, their knowledge colour, their understanding texture, their fortitude mood, and their pleasure brightness (Lahiri).

The caste system divides the population into four distinct social classes, or varnas, based on a hierarchical ranking. A person's employment determines how much money, power, and privilege they have. It is the Brahmans, who are typically priests and academics, who hold the most prestigious positions. On to the Kshatriyas, the political lords and warriors who follow them! The Vaishyas, or businessmen, are the next group, followed by the Shudras, who work as farmers, peasants, craftsmen, and servants. The untouchables are people at the absolute bottom of the food chain. Outcasts are those who engage in dirty and polluting activities, such as scavenging and skinning dead animals. They are not included in the hierarchy of castes. After that, the varnas are further subdivided into jatis, which are specialised sub-castes. Each jati is made up of a group whose primary source of income is a certain line of work. People are indoctrinated into a certain caste from birth. They next go about finding a job that matches their jati. It is believed that a complex ceremonial system governing the nature of social interactions among the jatis is responsible for maintaining this hereditary specialty and hierarchical ranking of jobs. Brahmans have gathered and legitimized the Hindu religion's Vedic writings, which are used to justify social hierarchies and rites of passage in society. A set of guidelines were established for the pursuit of a career, the conduct of oneself in and out of the caste system, and the legality of marriage.

After the Mughal era came to an end in 1774, the British took control. Initially, the British were not opposed to the caste system, but after a short period of time, the British grew to detest their anti-caste system views. "They revolted against the social order." In spite of this, British policy of division and domination led to the hardening of caste identities. The British purchased a large number of adjustments in order to strengthen administration by introducing socio-religious reforms into the country. The unfair structures that prevailed in society were addressed by legislation such as 'The Caste Disabilities Removal Act-1850,' 'the Widow Remarriage Act-1856,' and 'the Special Marriage Act-1872.'

The entrance of the British had an impact on the flexibility of the caste system. Because they were Christians, the British had little tolerance for the Hindu institutions brought with them by the British colonialists. Caste rights and rituals were first fostered by the British East India Company, but British law courts started to question the discrimination against lesser castes. In spite of this, British policy of divide and rule led to the strengthening of caste identities. It proved catastrophic for people of various castes in India as British civilization grew, changing their attitudes about communication and 'using the same equipment (at the expense of customary aversion)'. For example, the higher castes in Bombay first protested the British government's plans to establish a water infrastructure there. That they would be sharing water with people who were both clean and impure, born again and Shudra, was beyond their comprehension. The panchayat, an elected body of village elders composed of five knowledgeable and well-respected members, was able to find a solution to this problem. For the British government to levy taxes to pay for this canalization, they said, they were making penance for the sins they would be exposed to as a result of sharing taps. Britain had a direct impact on the Hindu people as well. Importing manufactured items from the city rendered several traditional caste-linked crafts hard to produce. Many weavers were forced to go into farming as a result of this. Workers in certain communities had to give up their long-held professions because new manufacturers were opening up in their neighbourhoods. Not only were jobs altered as a result of these events, but so were relationships between the various castes. Hereditary specialty, holy hierarchy, and mutual opposition—the three foundations of the caste system—were all directly attacked by the British rule.

Social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the founder of the Brahmo, were instrumental in bringing in new social changes. The reformers' movements have raised social consciousness across the nation. The opening of new factories altered the working environment. Workers were engaged by these factories, which resulted in a significant shift in the occupations of a large number of individuals. This had a ripple effect across the caste system. 'The British government immediately weakened the three supporting pillars of the caste system—hereditary specialty, the holy hierarchy, and mutual repulsion' However, the British had various procedures that supported the caste system. For example, the British government began conducting censuses in India for administrative reasons and to learn more about the demographics of Indian society so that it could exert more control over the Indians. However, 'the colonial Government integrated caste and religion groups in the enumeration of the Indian people' from the first census in 1872. Bengali, Oriya, and other regional dialects were used to rename castes. Brahmans, Rajputs, Castes of Good Social Position and Non-Hindus or Aborigine Castes were the five castes that Census Commissioner W.C. Plowden selected to categorise in the 1881 census.' The Scheduled Caste Order, established in 1936, made it lawful to mention caste in every Indian state. Although the caste system was not abolished by these movements, the rigidity of it was much reduced. Since India gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1947, the regulations governing the caste system have been greatly loosened. Lower castes remained to dine apart from the middle and higher castes, notwithstanding an increase in sharing. Between 1954 and 1992, men's career aspirations saw a dramatic shift. By 1992, the majority of males had abandoned their caste-related careers and took up fresh ones. Despite the fact that certain caste-based discrimination and hierarchy remained, money and power were no longer closely

linked. In urban regions, caste is less of a factor than it was in rural areas, although the importance of caste varies by socioeconomic class and employment. Although caste is seldom addressed publicly among urban middle-class professionals, it does play a role when it comes to marriage arrangements. Even so, modifications are made based on a variety of factors, including a person's level of education, career, and earnings, as well as his or her religious or linguistic background¹. Despite the fact that caste-based discrimination is illegal in India, it is nonetheless practised by certain members of the society.

IV. THE INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL STIGMATISATION CAUSED DUE TO CASTEISM

The great bulk of the 260 million individuals worldwide who suffer from caste prejudice reside in South Asia. A wide range of fundamental human rights are being trampled upon. In a caste system, individuals are grouped into distinct social classes based on their status. At the bottom of the social ladder, the lower castes are regarded 'lesser human beings', 'impure' and 'polluting'. It is widely believed that they are 'untouchable,' and as a result, both in public and privately, they are subjected to what are known as 'untouchability practises.' Many 'Untouchables' - known in South Asia as Dalits – are subjected to forced and bonded labour and are compelled to undertake the most unclean, menial and dangerous occupations. "As a result of the exclusion perpetrated by both state and non-state entities, the majority of Dalits remain in abject poverty²." As time went on, it grew increasingly rigorous and established itself as an integral component of the Indian culture. Historically, the caste system has fostered a climate of discrimination and inequality among India's many ethnic groups³. The caste system leads to inequalities in society in terms of caste, creed, and religion, as stated in this statement. There was a lot of hostility between Hindus and Muslims. Fights break out between them because they see themselves as superior.

Disparagement based on one's perceived flaws is what we mean when we talk about stigmatisation. Leprosy, obesity, physical disability, and facial disfigurement are examples of overtly visible characteristics, but these characteristics may also be related to an individual's position in the society's hierarchical structure, for example, those who belong to castes (scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward classes)⁴, socioeconomic class (economically weak or poor), religion, and sexual orientation (sexual minorities). In power dynamics, caste stigma is seen as a purposeful effort by those in power to marginalise a less powerful group of individuals. When it comes to interpersonal connections, the lower castes are seen as inefficient interacting partners who aren't given any favourable consideration by the rest of society.⁵. On the contrary, they are devalued, considered as immoral, flawed, impure, and tainted in the eyes of others.

¹ MOSPI. (2014). Literacy and education. New Delhi, India: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Govt of India.

² Sivakumar, B. (2013). Half of India's Dalit population lives in 4 states. The Times of India, Chennai.

³ Borooah, V. K. (2005). Caste, inequality, and poverty in India. *Review of Development Economics*, 9(3), 399–414.

⁴ Other backward castes are divided into two groups – OBC-I and OBC-II. OBC-I, also referred to as Extremely Backward Castes (EBCs). In 1978, Karpoori Thakur, OBC leader and Chief Minister of a nonCongress government in Bihar, implemented 1971 Bihar Backward Classes Commission Report (known as Mungeri Lal Commission) which recommended affirmative action quota for OBC groups in the state civil services, other state government jobs and in universities. The term Upper OBC corresponds to the Backward Classes listed in Annexure II of the Mungerilal Commission Report on Backward classes in Bihar. The term lower OBC correspond to the Extremely Backward castes listed in Annexure I of the Mungeril Lal Commission report. These division is popularly known as Karpoori formula as it has been implemented by the then Chief Minister of Bihar, Shri Karpoori Thakur.

⁵ Herek, G. M. (2009). Hate crimes and stigma-related experiences among sexual minority adults in the United States: Prevalence estimates from a national probability sample. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, preprint. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260508316477>

Indian society's stigmatisation of certain castes stems from ancient mythological and religious texts, such as Manusmriti, which categorised people into groups based on their occupations or duties in society, and then their families. Brahmins, on the other hand, were seen as having a stronger connection to higher learning. They had the greatest position of authority in society as priests. During wartime, the kshatriyas were the soldiers tasked with defending civilization. The Vaishyas were the merchants of the business elite. Shudras were the lowest-ranking members of the caste system. "Their primary function was as manual scavengers, rag pickers, and other cleaning personnel." They were seen as unclean and filthy. As a result of these disparities, a greater amount of power was concentrated in the hands of individuals at the top of the caste system.

People in the upper echelons were able to enjoy a disproportionate amount of authority and advantages, compared to those in lower echelons, because of this social imbalance. This ascription of belonging to a lower caste made the society stigmatize them as an impure, dirty, devalued, unfit interacting member and hence restrained them from accessing the mainstream socio-economic rights, facilities, powers, and privileges otherwise enjoyed by the rest of the society. Being a socially constructed phenomenon, the effects of stigmatization are highly mediated by the particular social contexts in which it manifests itself. In Indian society, the stigmatized castes are subjected to certain types of stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination⁶. The discrimination could take many forms like exclusion, marginalization, atrocities, abuse, and inaccessibility to certain rights otherwise enjoyed by the rest of the society including lack of education, political power, housing facilities, and health services⁷. The presence of these practices only during the older times is a myth. Researchers have identified the still prevalent caste related ill practices in overt and subtle forms in the various spheres and dimensions of social relations and interactions⁸. Those from the lower castes, referred to as Untouchables/Dalits (now called Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes), were denied the right to education, non-traditional roles, social interactions with people outside of their caste, and any say in decision-making about the issues that prevailed as a result of the concentration of power among the upper castes. When referring to a group or community in Indian society, 'Dalit' is used to describe someone who has been shattered or split apart. An untouchable is a member of society who has suffered at the hands of the higher castes due to their perceived inferiority. The findings of Tripathy et al (2016)⁹, Officially, India's Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are the country's most disadvantaged social groups.

Only a small percentage of Dalits have been able to move up the ladder to more prestigious positions, with the majority of them still working in low-level professions. Investigation of the exclusion of Dalits from private sector employment by Jodhka and Newman (2007)¹⁰. It was found that this is due to the ingrained assumptions and preconceived notions among the private sector organizations about their historical past and background.

⁶ Sinha, C. (2020). Dalit leadership, collective pride and struggle for social change among educated Dalits: Contesting the legitimacy of social class mobility approach. *Contemporary Voice of Dalit*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2455328X19898411>

⁷ Singh, K., Rai, A., & Yadav, J. (2009 eds.). *Dalit literature: Challenges and potentialities*. Labrador, Canada: Creative Books.

⁸ Sooryamoorthy, R. (2006). Caste systems. In T. M. Leonard (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of the developing world* (Vol. 1, pp. 252–256). Routledge/Taylor and Francis.

⁹ Tripathy, J., Thakur, J., Jeet, G., Chawla, S., Jain, S., & Prasad, R. (2016). Urban rural differences in diet, physical activity and obesity in India: Are we witnessing the great Indian equalization? Results from a cross-sectional STEPS survey. *BioMed Central Public Health*, 16(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-016-3489-8>

¹⁰ Jodhka, S. S., & Newman, K. S. (2007). In the name of globalization: Meritocracy, productivity, and the hidden language of caste. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42(41), 4125-4132. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40276546>

V. THE EFFECTS OF CASTEISM OVER TIME IN INDIA.

Over the course of centuries, caste boundaries became stronger and stronger until reformers in colonial India began to speak out. Jyoti Rao Phule questioned the unfair social structure that had left millions of people destitute, uneducated, and illiterate in the nineteenth century. He was not alone. Equal rights and education for lower-class citizens was a cause he championed throughout his lifetime. Early twentieth-century Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was instrumental in organising the downtrodden for political action. The British had established a list of 'scheduled castes,' which is still in use today, by codifying classes based on profession and putting the oppressed castes on the list. After Mahatma Gandhi used the phrase 'children of God' to describe the Untouchables, BR Ambedkar obtained special British political representation for the Harijans. In his role as India's first Law Minister, he made sure that social equality became a fundamental principle of the country's constitution.

The caste system's importance in Indian culture has waned since independence, but it hasn't completely disappeared. Caste discrimination in public locations, including as offices, marketplaces, and places of worship, has been significantly curtailed thanks to the legislation; nonetheless, public attitudes and biases about private affairs, like as marriage and family life, have not been eliminated. There has been a discussion on meritocracy and 'forward-looking' mentality since the establishment of government educational institutions and employment for individuals from oppressed classes, which has helped to break down conventional boundaries of profession and bring such people into the mainstream.

The underdevelopment of Bihar has figured conspicuously in post-colonial talk in India, with the emphasis solely on the inferior, smothered classes. A significant part of the conversation has been around the mistreatment of lower castes by upper castes, the battle of the extremely poor, and the predicament of women in a solidly settled in male controlled society. However, there is one more part of society in Bihar whose existential reality demands that we question the advantageous hypothetical suppositions that underlie any talk on social justice and advancement. This segment - individuals of lower middle class yet upper rank foundation - has been disregarded by researchers just as politicians. In the event that researchers believe their battle to be too customary to ever be archived in their theories, politicians consider this segment to be something like a pawn to be utilized in the 'forward versus in reverse' political battle. Nobody needs to discuss their regular, conventional battles.

Bihar has the third-biggest number of child workers in the country. In spite of the fact that there have been various legislations and plans to resolve the issue, they couldn't give an enduring arrangement. The need of great importance is to take a gander at the inseparable connection among position and the children who structure the labor force, and to devise arrangements appropriately. Because of outrageous poverty and discrimination, Dalit children in Bihar represent the biggest segment of child workers in the state, and are among the most taken advantage of also¹¹. The 2011 Census brings up that a faltering 51% of SCs and 56% of STs live underneath the poverty line in the state (World Bank Group 2016)¹². The imbued thoughts of debasement and unapproachability in the state further confuse the ordinary discrimination of the communities by the upper castes, yet in addition by the non-SC/ST communities. This denies them the admittance to essential conveniences and denies them of employment open doors. The Dalit children who

¹¹ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (2017): National Family Health Survey-4, Bihar, Government of India, <http://rchiips.org/nfhs/NFHS-4Reports/Bihar.pdf>

¹² World Bank Group (2016): "Bihar Social Inclusion," <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/376521468185928955/pdf/105843-BRI-P157572-PUBLIC-Bihar-Social.pdf>

come to government schools are additionally victimized¹³, because of the profoundly dug in rank framework¹⁴.

The brutal pressure between the castes to the side, rank discrimination regularly takes more inconspicuous structures and here too upper standing people from the lower middle-class frequently end up as casualties. In a one-two punch, upper-position people from the lower middle-class are viewed as excessively special for reservation and different advantages planned for in reverse areas. Simultaneously, they are closed out from roads for up assembly by their failure to get to fund and loans from banks since they are too powerless financially. The pattern of twofold disavowal extends and propagates the wretchedness of this part. Disappointed by the absence of viable response, they need to bear the unobtrusive discrimination working at different levels against them. This is especially intense with regards to benefiting government largesse planned for people from monetarily in reverse areas. The triumph of the rainbow alliance in the as of late finished up get together political decision has prompted affirmations that a course of base up empowerment is going on in Bihar. Nothing could be further from reality. The contention for power was between upper-standing landed decision classes and a tip top in reverse station union equipped with agrarian and mercantile capital, which left no space for the poor and the marginalized¹⁵.

Because of an incomplete translation of ancient writings and epics, India's caste system has been in place for a long time. As a result, widespread oppression and inherited privileges have developed and persist to this day. Such archaic behaviours must be remedied in a more effective and non-discriminatory manner, so as not to exacerbate social disparity.

VI. FAMOUS CASE STUDIES RELATED TO CASTEISM IN INDIA

The judiciary came to share these views on national unity, equality and reservations. In *Balaji v. Mysore*, 1962¹⁶, According to the Supreme Court, poverty, rather than a sense of belonging to a particular group, was the key indicator of a person's social and educational deprivation. The harm had already been done, notwithstanding the fact that the court did not explicitly condemn the use of caste identification to identify the beneficiaries of quota or reservation systems. When the Congress-led central government took power, it boldly proclaimed in parliament that it supported the economic standard, inspiring other states to adopt it as their own policy directive as well.

Of course, the court sanction of the emergence of OBC politics overrode this reasoning. The political and legal triumph of Mandal brought the notion of constitutional equality in line with the vocabulary of social justice and inclusion, which is predicated on the sharing of state authority with historically and socially disadvantaged groups. Indra Sawhney's landmark lawsuit¹⁷, the Supreme Court held that exclusively 'economic criteria' were unconstitutional since the category of 'poor' did not reflect 'social backwardness'. For the court, 'social backwardness' meant extreme marginalisation in terms of social status – primarily in the form of caste. Justice P. Sawant made it clear that a purely economic criterion would allow the higher

¹³ Zhang, X Sheldon et al (2018): "Victims without Voice: Measuring Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Indian State of Bihar," San Diego State University and Praxis Institute for Participatory Practices

¹⁴ Bihar Mahadalit Vikas Mission (nd): *List of Mahadalits*, <http://mahadalitmission.org/BMVM-about-us-list.php>.

¹⁵ Adamson, P. C., Krupp, K., Niranjankumar, B., Freeman, A. H., Khan, M., & Madhivanan, P. (2012). Are marginalized women being left behind? A population-based study of institutional births in rural India. Biscayne Bay Campu, South Florida: Department of Epidemiology, Florida International University.

¹⁶ <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/599701/>

¹⁷ <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1363234/>

ups in the hierarchy of social status to monopolise state power – something that the reservation scheme was meant to counter.

In recent years, there have been demands from several communities to be recognised as OBCs - in 2016 there were violent protests by the Jat community¹⁸ in Haryana and the Patel community led huge protests in Gujarat in 2015¹⁹ demanding access to caste quotas. Both groups are wealthy and politically powerful, yet they insist on caste quotas because they claim a huge proportion of their members are impoverished and suffering. Some believe that the caste system would have been extinguished long ago if politicians had not kept the flames burning. Many castes still vote as a bloc during elections, and politicians take use of this to gain an advantage in the polls. Affirmative action, initially intended as a short-term measure to better the lives of underprivileged groups, has now become a long-term political strategy for many leaders.

VII. OVERVIEW ON LAWS ON CASTEISM

The constitution of independent India forbade caste-based discrimination, and in an effort to right historical wrongs and level the playing field for the historically disadvantaged, the authorities announced quotas in government jobs and educational institutions for the lowest castes and tribes in 1950. One of the most significant changes to the Indian caste system was that a new category known as OBCs (Other Backward Classes) was added in 1989.

As secular education and urbanisation have grown, the effect of caste has decreased, particularly in cities where multiple castes coexist and inter-caste marriages are becoming more widespread. After social reform movements, many individuals in southern states and in Bihar, a northern state, started going by a single name. Though the caste system has evolved, the importance of a person's last name in conveying their status remains high.

Only those from the poorer portions of society should be given a seat at the table. Reservation was extended to everyone in a caste, which created an uneven playing field for the top and middle classes. In order to get a reservation, you have to be a member of a certain caste. Radical action is required by the government in order to keep out the creamy layer from policymaking. "Patels in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu reservation Brahmins are two recent instances of how the creamy layer has used policy to further its own interests." In the case of Ashok Kumar Thakur v. Union of India, Justice Ravindran said that when more individuals aim for backwardness rather than forwardness, the country as a whole stagnates. Neither the policy nor its effects can be judged as good or bad since it is terrible if an unworthy candidate gains a seat at the expense of a deserving one, but good if a deserving one benefits from it. What's the best course of action for the policy? Because everyone's perspective differs, it's only fair to advise that the government make judgments that benefit the less fortunate while discouraging individuals from abusing the reservation policy; if they are competent, they should stand up and stop abusing the program's loophole.

A. Should Reservation Be Based on Caste or Economic Difficulties?²⁰

Currently, caste-based reservations exist in India. Scheduled Tribes (ST), Scheduled Castes (SC) & Other Backward Classes (OBC) are given a certain proportion of seats in education and employment. There is no reservation at all for the Other Castes (OC) (Except in Maharashtra, where Marathas got reservation recently).

¹⁸ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-35627819>

¹⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-34070712>

²⁰ <https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/should-reservations-be-based-on-economic-status/>

A large number of individuals object to caste-based quota and want it to be based on economic condition, not caste.²¹

We have a reservation system in place that accounts for about half of the population, with an extra 10% reserved for the poorer members of the higher castes. We're stumped as to why the concept of a reservation was first created. Lower castes were brought up to level with the higher castes via this system, with hopes that one day we would all be on equal footing in terms of social and economic standing. Now, after over 70 years, I believe it's time for some changes to this system. The government must make sure that the quota it gives to the poorest members of society truly helps them, regardless of their caste. They need to set a minimum income level that would qualify for such reservations. As long as the parameters for reservation are caste-based, India will continue to be caste-based, it will not bridge the gap between the affluent and the poor, and a merit-based economy will never be achieved.²²

To put things in perspective, consider how China and India were both at the same economic level in the 1990s before China's rapid economic growth made it the Asian superpower focused on innovation, better infrastructure, and becoming a manufacturing hub, while India is still debating between Mandir and Masjid as a religious symbol. We might learn a lot from the Chinese government's vast investments in infrastructure and education, both of which emphasise individual merit. Even the government employees were chosen on merit and pushed to implement economic changes that boosted social standing. '

In light of the above, the Indian government enacted the 124th Amendment, which included a 10% reserve for those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. But even if the Amendment was a step in the right direction, it still had its own set of obstacles. The additional 10% reserve went over and above the existing 50% allocation for those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Because of this, reservation rates in states like Tamil Nadu increased to as high as 65%. Only if the State backs him up by giving possibilities for advancement can someone from an economically disadvantaged background achieve the same success as those from more affluent backgrounds. Because of this, individuals who are socially and economically disadvantaged and so unable to compete openly must be granted priority seating. Economic reservation must be properly implemented in order to assist improve the nation's economy and eliminate poverty, as well as give possibilities for the economically backward class of people, who are actually oppressed in today's society. For the sake of the greater good, no one is entitled to suffer (reservations). It's time for caste-based reservation systems to be overhauled. There is no need to make reservations depending on one's financial situation. Removing persons who don't need the reservation advantages would guarantee that the reservation benefits are only available to those who really need them. People's efforts, such as willingly giving up their reservation, also make a significant difference. Reservations may eventually become a thing of the past using this method. It's a thorny topic. To alleviate poverty and unemployment in a nation like India, the poorer parts of society must be given financial help or reservation²³. However, caste-based reservations may lead to many disputes, like as the ones we're seeing right now, which is detrimental to our growth. People with lower incomes should be able to obtain the services they need, but income-based reservation has the potential to create a more unequal society in the long run. Living conditions in India are steadily changing, and the government should take the brave step of offering solely financial help depending on income level in order to cultivate the skills necessary to seize the chances available.

²¹ <https://thewire.in/politics/despise-its-ressurrection-economic-criterion-remains-an-inadequate-determiner-of-reservations>

²² <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/viewfrommykaleodoscopic/economic-based-reservation-in-india-1692/>

²³ <https://www.epw.in/engage/article/caste-or-economic-status-what-should-we>

VIII. CONCLUSION

Indian culture today is moving away from its closed institutions and toward a condition of change and advancement typified by the claim that the human spirit is universally recognised, no matter one's caste or religious affiliation. As a result, the number of people belonging to the OBC, the scheduled castes, and the scheduled tribes is increasing in government and in the election process. Throughout India, they've formed reputable political parties and run for office alongside the upper castes. Today, it is easier to see interactions between persons of diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds. As a result, many members of these marginalized groups have found their way into government posts and educational institutions at all levels. Since independence, many individuals have gotten the respect and recognition they deserve because of the partial removal of the caste system. Indian society is changing as a result of the advancement of education, technology, and modernisation. Although circumstances for the lower castes have improved, India still has a long way to go to eradicate the ills of the caste system. It is admirable that India is making an attempt to eliminate social inequity. In order to eliminate caste-based prejudice from every part of the country, however, we must work harder on this problem.

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