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## SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN INDIA: CHANGING TRENDS

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### ABSTRACT:

Contemporary social sciences show a strong interest in studying power and domination in postcolonial societies. Elite research has become crucial to understand the changes in the political and economic development in countries such as India. These changes can be located within social structures and the globalization of elites of elites. This article is an attempt to make sense of the ongoing transformations occurring in the field of power in India and emphasized the middle-and upper-class families in urban areas were undergoing a dramatic transformation because the younger generation is questioning power issues, traditional roles, hierarchical relationships, obligations, loyalty, and differences for kinsmen and elderly. The present paper shows how the structure of Indian society has changed overtime This paper views the basic social units



of joint family, caste, and village not as structural isolates but as intimately connected with one another and with other social units through social and cultural networks of various kinds that incorporate the social units into the complex structure of Indian civilization. And it traces the changing relations of politics, economics, law, and language to the caste system. This process cumulatively leads to structural modernization of society. Changes in family structure through death, birth and marriage this study analyzes the concrete changes in Indian social structure from early ages to modern India.

**KEYWORDS:** Globalization, Industrialization, Urbanization, Institutionalization, Migration.

### INTRODUCTION

Recent theoretical and methodological innovations in the anthropological analysis of South Asian societies have introduced distinctive modifications in the study of Indian social structure and social change. The basic social units of joint family, caste, and village not as structural isolates but as intimately connected with one another and with other social units through social and cultural networks of various kinds that incorporate the social units into

the complex structure of Indian civilization. Within this broadened concept-ion of social structure, these studies trace the changing relations of politics, economics, law, and language to the caste system.

### Social Structure

Social structure is often treated together with the concept of social change, which deals with the forces that change the social structure and the organization of society. These are some of the major elements of a social structure. The structure of society refers to the way society is organized. Society is organized into different parts: institutions, social groups, statuses,

and roles.

### What is a Structural Change?

A structural change is an economic condition that occurs when an industry or market changes how it functions or operates. A structural change will shift the parameters of an entity, which can be represented by significant changes in time series data.

### Definition of Social Structure

"The internal

institutionalized relationships built up by the persons living within a group such as family or community especially with regard to the hierarchical organizational of status and to the rules and principles regulating behavior. Social organization of society constituting an integral whole.”

“Social structure, in sociology, the distinctive, stable arrangement of institutions whereby human beings in a society interact and live together. Social structure is often treated together with the concept of social change, which deals with the forces that change the social structure and the organization of society.”

### **Social Structure in India** **The Hindu Caste System**

The Hindu sacred texts were written during the times of some of the earliest invasions or migrations into India. Over time, Hindus have come to make up the majority of the population. Hinduism has strict rules about social structure, called as caste system. India is a country with diverse cultures. Customs and traditions vary from region to region.

**Caste System** - The social structure is based upon the caste system. The society is divided into four major castes- the Brahmins, Kashtriyas, Vaisyas and the Sudras. The Brahmins are the priests and are considered to be the uppermost caste. The Kshatriyas are the warriors, Vaisyas are the business class, the merchants and the Sudras are the working class.

**Family** - The family as a unit is given much importance. Divorces as a rule are not very common or appreciated. Couples prefer adjusting rather than breaking up a marriage. Since children are given much importance, divorces are generally shunned. The family system nurtures the well-being of the children.

**Women** - Historically, women have played a significant role in the social and political structure of India. In the ancient times, women enjoyed much freedom, but with advent of the Muslims the purdah system came into vogue in the northern part of India. In many regions, women remain very submissive, although with the improved education levels, women have become more assertive.

**Men** - In the Indian society, a man is considered to be the bread-earner and shoulders the responsibility of the family. He is very dominating by nature and prefers to rule over his women.

**Patriarchal setup** - India is mostly a patriarchal set-up, with the father having control over the family unit. The man controls the reins of the family unit. He is the head of the family. The eldest male member has much say in the matters of the family.

**Matriarchal setup** - In Kerala, in the south of India, the woman of the house is the dominant force. She decides the issues of the family.

**Marriage** - This is an important social obligation which most Indians adhere to. It is given much importance by society. Marriages are generally arranged,

**Birth** - This is an occasion for rejoicing. Ceremonies and rituals are held to celebrate the occasion. The birth of male child is looked up to. In some areas, the birth of a girl is looked down upon.

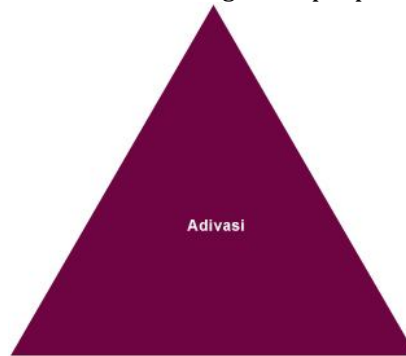
**Death** - This is also an important occasion in the family system. Death is considered to be inevitable. Ceremonies are held on this occasion and even after the death of a person, yearly rituals are held in remembrance of them.

### Three Stages of Transition in Structure of the Indian Society

In ancient times from centuries as per hindu caste system only brahmins allowed to perform puja at temples and pursue studies and chanting mantras, vedhas, Upanishads remaining three castes are made to follow the orders of brahmins. When bruisers came to India there was paradigm shift taken place in India all castes people are allowed to continue education. After the independence as per the constitution the besides with this common educations all castes people getting read Vedas ,chanting mantras and holding the profession of pourohityam in all temples change can be observed in food habits and dressing, languages. This three stages change has been taken place in Indian society.

### The Structure of Indian Society Over Time

This below picture shows how the structure of Indian society has changed over time. It examines the impact of different periods of history on the social status of different groups in Indian society. It particularly examines the status of the indigenous peoples of India, the Adivasi.



### The Indigenous People of India

The indigenous people of India for a people to be recognised as indigenous, they need to be the first people to have inhabited an area and to have maintained some continuity of culture over time. This means that through any waves of invasion or colonisation, they are still recognisable as a culturally distinct group. In India, there is more disagreement about who is indigenous. People have been migrating in and out of, as well as around, India for thousands of years, making it difficult to establish who was there 'first'. Many hundreds of groups of indigenous peoples, known as 'Scheduled Tribes' or 'Adivasi', today are formally recognised in the Indian constitution, but this doesn't mean that everyone agrees on who is indigenous. However, these groups have a shared history in terms of their status in Indian society. There is no place made for adivasis in hindu scriptures adivasis called as vanavasis or janajathis in all hindhu holy books and Indian sociologists different kinds of interpretations has been made over the origin of adivasis and so called hindhu caste system which is designed by manu adivasis were not placed in that list.

### The Hindu Caste System

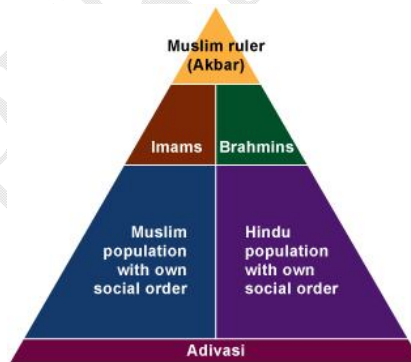
The Hindu sacred texts were written during the times of some of the earliest invasions or migrations into India. Over time, Hindus have come to make up the majority of the population. Hinduism has strict rules about social structure called a caste system. At the top of this system are the Brahmin, temple priests who are the connection between people and the gods. They perform religious rites and rituals and invoke the gods on behalf of others in society. Next are the Kshatriya, the rulers and warriors. They are responsible for offering gifts and sacrifices to gods via Brahmins to protect the people. After them comes the Vaishya, the merchants and farmers. Beneath them are the Shudras, the unskilled labour classes. It is their duty to serve the three higher classes. At the bottom (or below) the system are the untouchables. They are seen as unclean and perform the unclean tasks in society. They are not allowed to mix with the other classes, living on the fringe of society, excluded from education, religious temples and so on. Because the Adivasi sat outside the caste system, they effectively sat below

it. This places them on an equal or even lower social rung than the untouchables. Adivasis are called as Janajathis and they have their own culture which relates to Hinduism.



**Muslim India**

Although Hindus have been a majority of the population in India for many hundreds of years, they have not always been the rulers. Indian land has long been rich and fertile, attracting foreign invaders. During this time, the social hierarchy according to the Hindu caste system was maintained within the Hindu population this created a social pyramid with the Muslim rulers and religious leaders (called imams) at the top. They were followed by other Muslims. Beneath the Muslims came the rest of the Indian population. In reality, the attempts at creating equality were short-lived. Other changes made by akbar upset many hindhus and muslims .subsequent muslim rulers were not as enthusiastic about equality between the two religions, and discrimination against hindhus continued Emperor Akbar, a Muslim Mughal ruler from 1592 to 1605, wanted to create an India with greater equality between different religious groups. He attempted to remove some aspects of discrimination against Hindus in Indian society. He envisaged an India where major religious groups could work together (also including Christianity and Buddhism). This would create a social pyramid where leaders from different religions were equal and the social hierarchies of the groups would exist side by side.



**Christianity in India**

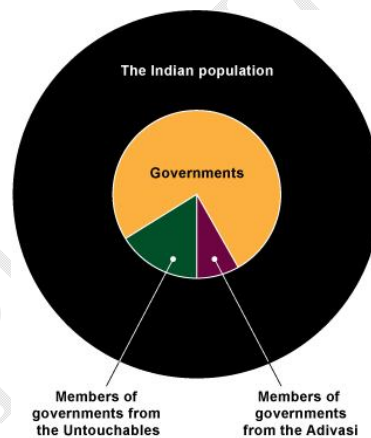
Caste discrimination is the main reason for Christianity in India and people who are not allowed to temples and education, using civic facilities has found equality and freedom in Christianity turned toward to Christianity is India's second-largest minority religion after Islam, with approximately 28 million followers, constituting 2.3 percent of India's population. According to Indian tradition, the Christian faith was introduced to India by Thomas the Apostle, who supposedly reached the Malabar Coast (Kerala) in 52 AD. It is made up of people from different church denominations. The State of Kerala is home to the Saint Thomas Christian community, an ancient body of Christians, who are divided into several different churches and traditions. Church runs thousands of educational institutions and hospitals which have contributed significantly to the development of the nation.

### India under the British

India under the British social hierarchy in India was closely modeled on the social order back in Britain. At the very top was the King or Queen of England. On Indian soil the monarch was represented by a Governor. The next in line were the senior government officials, followed by the senior military officers. Next were the wealthy merchants and bankers. After this were the artisans, servants and the lower military ranks. This level included some Indians and those people of mixed British and Indian ancestry. In a sense, this social structure mirrored the levels of the Hindu caste system. However from the British perspective, the majority of Indians sat beneath this hierarchy with little distinction among groups. Over time, a gradually increasing number of Indians were able access the higher social levels, because they had been educated in British schools. The evils like Untouchability and child marriages, education for women, education for lower castes, and entering dalits into the temples had been got abolished and the food habits ,dressing ,languages are getting changed.

### Democratic India

Democratic India Since independence in 1947, India has been a democracy. A democracy is built on an assumption of equality of all people. For India's democracy to reflect this assumption, the caste system has been made illegal. This means that discrimination against the Untouchables and Adivasi, such as bans on entering temples or marrying people from higher castes have been abolished. In a democracy, the people in positions of power, such as members of the government, senior bureaucrats and owners of large businesses, are drawn from the entire population. Social change is difficult, particularly when trying to change thousands of years of discrimination, so there is still evidence of the old system.



### Changes in Social Structure and Modernization in India:

Modernization implies some typical forms of changes in the social structure of societies. Changes in family structure through death, birth and marriage, large-scale migration due to war or epidemic, rise and fall of pre-industrial cities and commercial centers owing to the changes in the political power and the trade routes, etc.they functionally remained static or 'fused'. Even the change can found in many forms the constitution does not permit the practice of untouchability and those practicing it can be persecuted. Now of course, with growing urbanization, the caste system is becoming obsolete

### CONCLUSION

The country has been facing a drastic change in social structure. The gap between rich and poor is widening. The introduction of new technologies is fast reaching to even remote areas, and villages. The professions which are ascribed from ancestors to individual are approaching to an end and transformed all individual irrespective caste Indian village is facing dramatic changes in its social

structure. As T.V, internet, mobile facilities reaching remote villages the boundary between rural and urban areas is extending this study Attempts to review the social structure from ancient day to present democratic India

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