DIPLOMA IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

DRD-01

Rural Social Institutions

Block

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DIPLOMA IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Unit – 1

Marriage

Learning Objectives:

After completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- *define marriage within the framework of universal social institution.*
- *differentiate between types of marriage.*
- *know the characteristics of marriage .*
- *understand various forms of marriage.*

Structure:

1.1.   Introduction:

This is the first unit of the course, "Rural Social Institutions". The purpose of this unit is to acquaint you with the concept of marriage, which is an integral part of social institution. Marriage and family are two aspects of the same social reality i.e. the bio-psychic and social instincts of man. Marriage is one of the most ancient, important, universal and indispensable social institution which has been in existence since the inception of human civilization.

As an institution, marriage is designed to satisfy the biological needs especially the sexual needs of the individual in a legal, customary, culturally defined and socially approved manner .It also admits men and women to initiate family life and fixes certain rights and duties in respect of children born of their union. As a stable social institution it binds two opposite sexes and allows them to live as husband

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and wife. It also confers on them social legitimation to have sexual relations and have children.

The institutionalized form of sex relations is called **marriage**. But the term marriage or **vivaha** is a combination of two terms i.e. **'Vi'** and **'Vaha'** which means the ceremony of carrying away the bride to the house of bridegroom. In some society it is considered as a religious sacrament whereas in other society it is a social contract.

1.2. Definition of Marriage:

Different scholars and sociologist have tried to define it. They differ from each other.

(1) According to Encyclopedia Britannica, "Marriage is a physical, legal and moral union between man and woman in complete community life for the establishment of a family."

(2) According to Malinowski, "Marriage is a contract for the production and maintenance of children."

(3) Edward Westermarck in his famous book 'History of human marriage' defined, "Marriage is a relation of one or more men to one or more women which is recognized by customs or law and involves certain rights and duties both in case of parties entering into the union and in the case of children born of it."

(4) According to H.M. Johnson, "Marriage is a stable relationship in which a man and a woman are socially permitted without loss of standing in community to have children."

(5) According to Lowie, "Marriage is a relatively permanent bond between permissible mates."

(6) According to Horton and Hunt, "Marriage is the approved social pattern whereby two or more persons establish a family."

(7) According to Hoebel, "The complexes of social norms that define and control the relations of a mated pair to each other their kinsmen, their offspring and their society at large."

Thus from the above analysis it is concluded that marriage is both a biological, psychological, cultural and social affair. Marriage is a special type of relationship between permissible mates involving certain rights and obligations. That is why Lundberg is right when he opines that "Marriage consists of the rules and regulations which define the rights, duties and privileges of husband and wife with respect to each other."

"Ring - Ceremony" – The preliminary stage of the bonding called "Marriage"

1.3. Characteristics of Marriage:
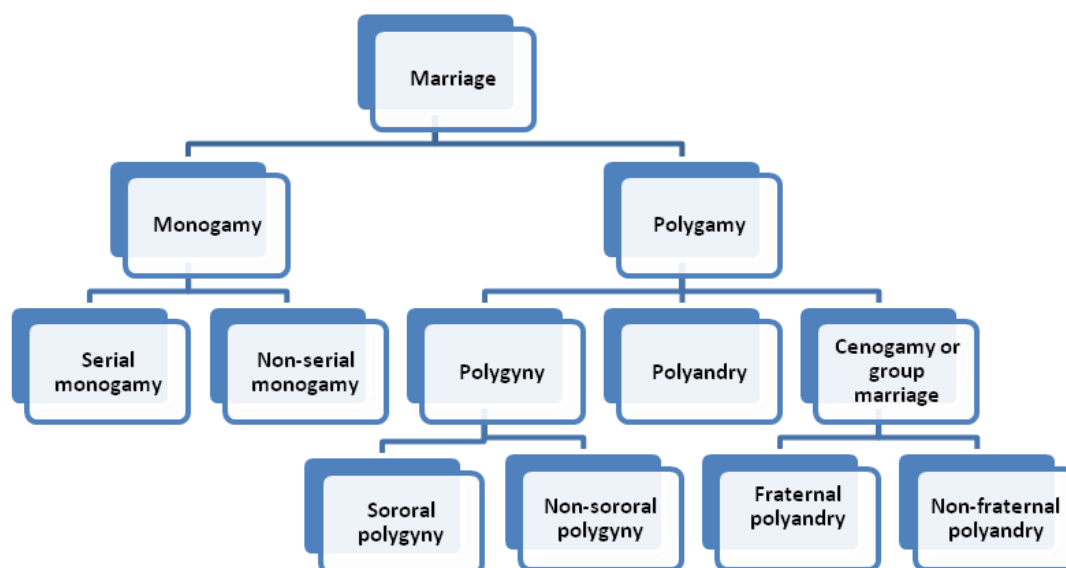
Marriage may have the following characteristics:
(1) Marriage is a universal social institution. It is found in almost all societies and at all stages of development.
(2) Marriage is a permanent bond between husband and wife. It is designed to fulfill the social, psychological, biological and religious aims.
(3) Marriage is a specific relationship between two individuals of opposite sex and based on mutual rights and obligations. Relationship is enduring.
(4) Marriage requires social approval. The relationship between men and women must have social approval. Without which marriage is not valid.
(5) Marriage establishes family. Family helps in providing facilities for the procreation and upbringing of children.
(6) Marriage creates mutual obligations between husband and wife. The couples fulfill their mutual obligations on the basis of customs or rules.
(7) Marriage is always associated with some civil and religious ceremony. This social and religious ceremony provides validity to marriage. Though modern marriage performed in courts still it requires certain religious or customary practices.
(8) Marriage regulates sex relationship according to prescribed customs and laws.
(9) Marriage has certain symbols like ring, vermillion, special cloths, and special sign before the house etc.

1.4. Forms or Types of Marriage:

As a universal social institution, marriage is found to exist in all societies and at all stages of development. Types or forms of marriage vary from society to society. Types or forms of marriage in different communities, societies and cultural groups differ according to their customs, practices and systems of thought. However, there are several types of marriage which is classified on different basis.

1.5. On the basis of number of mates:

On the basis of number of mates, marriage may be classified into two types such as Monogamy and Polygamy. Let us describe it through the following diagram.

1.5.1. Monogamy:

Monogamy is an ideal, widespread and rational type of marriage. It is found in all civilized societies. Monogamy refers to a marriage of one man with one woman at a time. This type of marriage is normally unbreakable in nature. It continues till death. Today the principle of monogamy i.e. one husband and one wife is being bonded and emphasized throughout the world. Monogamy is of two types such as serial Monogamy and non-serial Monogamy.

(i) Serial Monogamy:
In serial Monogamous marriage the possibility of remarriage exists in case of divorce or death. Inspite of his remarriage he remains to be monogamous.
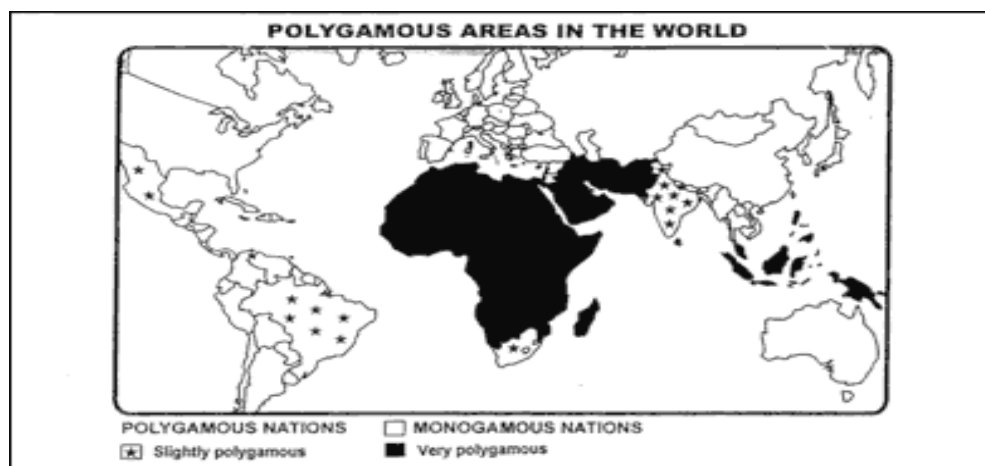
(ii) Non-serial Monogamy:
In case of non-serial monogamy the question of remarriage does not arise by either of the couple. Here a spouse has the same single spouse throughout his life.

However, Monogamy is an ideal or best form of marriage because of its different advantages which are as follows:

(1) It is suitable for all society and for all levels of people.
(2) It provides better sex satisfaction to both husband and wife.
(3) It promotes better understanding between the spouses.
(4) It minimizes jealousy, hatred and quarrels in the family.
(5) It upholds gender equality and provides equal status to men and women.
(6) It provides stable sex-life and stable family life.
(7) Children are taken proper care by parents.
(8) It facilitates easy rules of inheritance and succession.
Because of the above advantages, monogamy is considered as the best form of marriage and is practiced everywhere.

1.5.2. Polygamy:

Polygamy is a type of marriage in which there is plurality of partners. It allows a man to marry more than one woman or a woman to marry more than one man at a time. Polygamy is of three types such as polygyny, polyandry and cenogamy or group marriage.

Source : www.polygamystop.org

(i) Polygyny:

Polygyny is a type of marriage in which a man marries more than one wife at a time. In this type of marriage each wife has her separate household and the husband visits them in turn. It was a preferred form of marriage in ancient Indian society. But now it was not in practice among majority of population.

But it is now found among few tribals such as Naga, Gond and Baiga. Economic and political cause was mainly responsible for polygyny. Besides man's taste for variety, enforced celibacy, barrenness of women, more women population etc. are some of the cause of polygyny. Polygyny is further divided into two types such as sororal polygyny and non- sororal polygyny.

(a) Sororal Polygyny:

Sororal polygyny is often called as sororate. The term sororate comes from the Latin word 'sorer' which means sister. Accordingly it refers to a marriage practice in which a man marries the sisters of his wife at a time or after the death of his wife.

(b) Non-sororal Polygyny:

It is just opposite of the sororal polygyny, when a man marries several women at a time who are not necessarily sister to each other it is known as non-sororal polygyny.

(ii) Polyandry:

Polyandry is a very rare type of marriage in present day. In this type of marriage a woman marries several men at a time. In the words of K.M. Kapadia, "Polyandry is a form of union in which a woman has more than one husband at a time or in which brothers share a wife or wives in common. At present it is found among some of the tribes like Toda and Pulayas, Muthuvans and Mannans in Kerala.
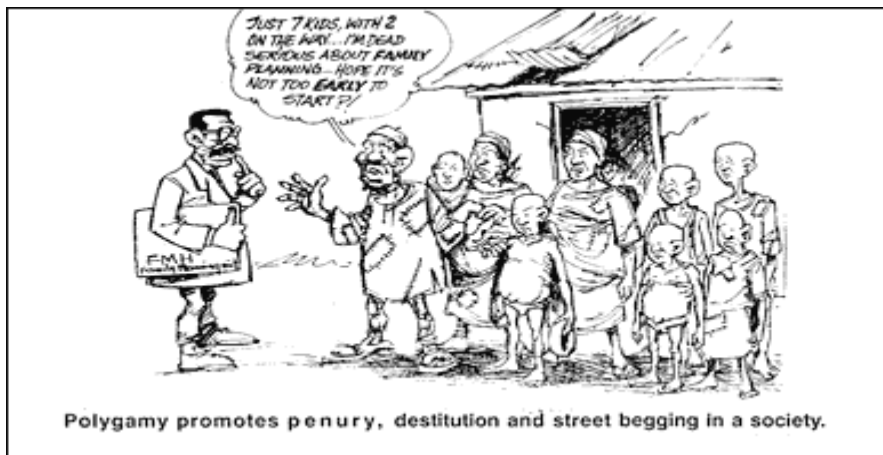
Polyandry is divided into two types such as fraternal polyandry and non-fraternal polyandry.

(a)Fraternal Polyandry:
When several brothers share a common wife it is called as fraternal polyandry. Draupadi's marriage to Pandavas is fine example of fraternal polyandry. The determination of father is associated with some rituals. At present time this type of marriage is practised by some tribals.

(b) Non-fraternal Polyandry:
It is just opposite of fraternal polyandry. In this type of marriage husbands of a woman is not necessarily brother to each other. In this type of marriage, wife goes to spend some time with each of her husband. So long as a woman lives with one of her husbands, the others have no claim on her. This mainly happens due to scarcity of women.
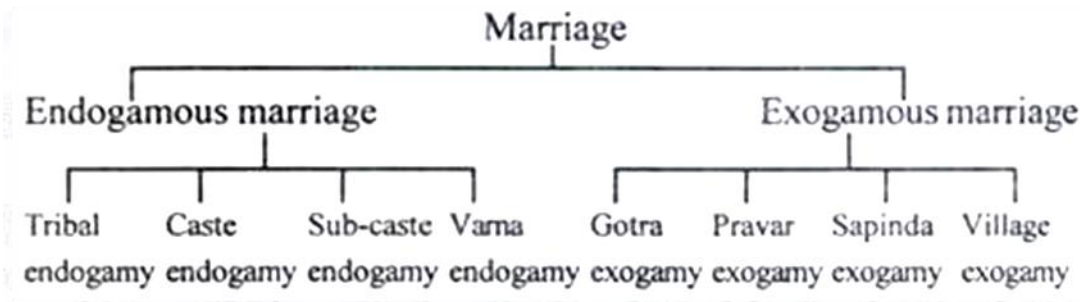

Polygamy promotes p e n u r y, destitution and street begging in a society.

(iii) Cenogamy or Group Marriage:
Cenogamy is otherwise known as group marriage. In this type of marriage a group of men marry a group of women at a time. Every woman is the wife of every man belonging to the particular groups. Sociologist, like Dr. Rivers call it as a kind of sexual communism. This type of marriage is found among some tribes of New Guinea and Africa.

1.6.   On the basis of choice of mate or on the basis of rules of mate selection:

Marriage may be divided into two types i.e. endogamous and exogamous marriages on the basis of choice of mate or on the basis of the rules of choice of mate. Endogamy is divided into four sub types such as caste, sub-caste, varna and tribal endogamy. Similarly exogamous marriage may be divided into four sub-types such as Gotra, Pravar, Sapinda and village exogamy. All this can be presented in the following diagram.

1.6.1. Endogamy or endogamous marriage:

Endogamy or endogamous marriage refers to the marriage within one's own group such as within one's own caste, sub-caste, varna and tribe. In other words there are several types of endogamous marriage such as caste endogamy, sub-caste endogamy, varna endogamy and tribal endogamy.

(i) Caste endogamy:
Caste endogamy is a type of endogamous marriage in which marriage takes place within one's own caste. In a caste based society endogamy is strictly followed. Members of each caste marry within its own caste group.

(ii) Sub-caste endogamy:
It is another type of endogamous marriage. In a caste based society each caste is divided into many sub-castes. Like caste each sub-caste is also an endogamous unit. In sub-caste endogamy marriage takes place within one's sub-caste only.

(iii) Varna endogamy:
Varna endogamy is another type of endogamous marriage. In the traditional Indian Society we found the existence of four varnas such as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. In varna endogamy the choice of mate is restricted to one's own varna only.

(iv) Tribal endogamy:
Tribe is a territorial group. Tribal endogamy is a type of endogamous marriage in which the choice of mate is restricted to one's own tribal group. Like caste, tribe is also an endogamous unit.

1.6.2. Exogamy or Exogamous marriage:

It is just opposite to the endogamy or endogamous marriage system. It refers to a system of marriage in which an individual has to marry outside one's own group such as gotra, pravara, sapinda or village. This is a sound marriage system which leads to the creation of healthy and intelligent children. However there are several forms of exogamy such as:

(i) Gotra exogamy:
Gotra refers to clan. Members of a particular gotra or clan supposed to have close blood relation among themselves. Hence according to gotra exogamy one has to marry outside one's own gotra.

(ii) Pravara exogamy:

Pravara means siblings. People originating from a common saint are said to belong a particular Pravara. According to Pravara exogamy one has to marry outside one's own pravara. Marriage within pravara is forbidden.

(iii) Sapinda exogamy:

Sapinda means lineage. People belonging to five generations from father side and three or seven generation from mother side are known as sapindas. They believed to belong a particular pinda. Hence according to sapinda exogamy marriage within one's own sapinda is forbidden. They are supposed to marry outside one's own sapinda.

(iv) Village exogamy:

According to this principle marriage within one's own village is forbidden.

1.7. On the basis of preference:

Each and every society prescribes certain rules relating to marriage. Some societies put several restrictions on marriage among kins whereas some other societies allow marriage between a limited numbers of kins.

Hence in those societies marriage is sanctioned on the basis of preference or priority. Accordingly socially sanctioned marriage among kins is known as preferential marriage. In other words on the basis of preference marriage may be divided into four types such as cross-cousin marriage, parallel cousin marriage, levirate and sororate.

(i) Cross-cousin marriage:

When marriage takes place between one's mother's brother's daughter/son with father's sister's son/daughter we called it as cross cousin marriage. The marriage of Abhimanyu with Sashikala is an example of this cross-cousin type of marriage. This type of marriage supposed to be practiced in some part of Orissa, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra etc. This type of marriage occurs to avoid payment of high bride price and to maintain one's family property.

(ii) Parallel Cousin marriage:

When marriage takes place between the children of either two sisters or two brothers it is known as parallel cousin marriage. This type of marriage is mostly found among Muslims.

(iii) Levirate:

It is otherwise known as 'Devar Vivaha'. When a woman marries her husband's brother after the death of her husband it is known as levirate. This type of marriage is found among some tribes like the Gond, the Munda or the Santal, the Oran and the Toda etc.

(iv) Sororate:

It is otherwise known as 'Sali Vivah'. When a man marries his wife's sister after the death of his wife or even when the wife is alive it is called as sororate. This type of marriage is found among some tribes like the Kharia and the Gond.

1.8. Anuloma or Pratiloma:

Sociologists have classified marriage into Anuloma or Pratiloma.

(i) Anuloma marriage or Hypergamy:

When a man of higher caste or varna marries a woman of lower caste or varna it is called as Anuloma or Hypergamy marriage. In traditional Indian society hypergamy is known as Anuloma. This was in practice among the nobles in the past. In Bengal it was found in the form of Kulinism.

(ii) Pratiloma marriage or Hypogamy:

Pratiloma or hypogamy marriage is just opposite of Anuloma or hypergamy. When a man of lower caste or status marries a woman of higher caste or status, it is known as pratiloma or hypogamy marriage. This is not an approved form of marriage. According to ancient Hindu law, Manu denounced Pratiloma, which is still in practice among the people.

1.9. The Sacramental nature of rural marriage:

Marriage is an essential part of social institution. It is century's old cultural tradition bonded by customs that enjoys social security as well as high respectability amidst the social milieu of which each spouse is a part. Tradition inculcates faith and a feeling of contentment that flows out of respect for life and marriage with blind devotion. The traditional value-system of Hindu society has for centuries taught the common people to face many a challenge with grit, dignity and grace. Human nature has always been wayward and individual aberrations are quite common but the corrective impulses of society as a whole have been over-powering. Law and legal procedures at macro and micro–level must recognize these social impulses and try to strengthen them to save the social institution of marriage.

1.9.1. Hindu Marriage: Concept, Types and Mate Selection:

Marriage is perceived by sociologists as a system of roles of a man and a woman whose union has been given social sanction as husband and wife. The equilibrium of the system requires adjustment between the two partners so that the role enactment of one partner corresponds to the role expectations of the other.

Indologists look upon Hindu marriage as a sanskara, having three objects of dharma (fulfillment of religious duties), rati (sex gratification), and praja (procreation). Marriage performed for dharma was called dharmik marriage, while one performed for sexual pleasure was regarded as adharmik marriage.

Marriage was considered sacred because of several reasons:
(i)   Dharma was the highest aim of marriage;
(ii)   Performance of marriage ceremony included certain rites (like havan, kanyadan, panigrahana, saptapadi, etc.) which were considered as sacred;
(iii) Rites were performed before sacred god Agni by reciting mantras from Sacred scriptures Vedas by a sacred Brahmin;
(iv)   Union (between man and woman) was considered indissoluble and irrevocable; and
(v)   Emphasis was on chastity of the woman and faithfulness of the man.

Even today, the sanctity of the marriage is recognised by Hindus in spite of the fact that marriage is performed for companionship and not for performing duties, and whenever found a failure, it is dissolved by divorce. Mutual fidelity and devotion to partner are still considered to be the essence of marriage.

Kapadia (1966) has said: "Hindu marriage continues to be a sacrament; only it is raised to an ethical plane." In simple words, marriage in Hindu culture is a spiritual union between a man and a woman for spiritual realization. Hindu culture also recognises (besides the above-mentioned Brahma marriage) seven other forms of marriage with lesser and lower ideals.

The four of these marriages—Gandharva (entering into sex before getting the social sanction of society), Asura (eloping with a woman), Rakshasya (forcibly abducting a woman from her home) and Paisacha (man molesting a girl when she is asleep or intoxicated or in a state of unbalanced mind)—had such a low ideal that they were termed as Adharmik marriages.

The remaining three —Daiva (woman is married to a priest, a man of intellect and money, belonging to an aristocratic class), Prajapatiya (entering wedlock for biological function of sex satisfaction and having children) and Arsha (woman marrying a man of intellect and character (sage) who is reluctant to enter marriage, so that she may get intelligent progeny and good homely environment)—were given the label of Dharmik marriages. The main reason for recognising the four Adharmik marriages as marriages was to confer the respectful status of a wife on the 'injured' woman.

The regulation of mate selection in Hindu society is subsumed under the concepts of endogamy, exogamy and hypergamy. Endogamy is a social rule that requires a person to select the spouse from within the caste and sub-caste; exogamy forbids selection from the same gotra and sapindas (i.e., cousins like chachera, mamera,

phuphera and mausera); and according to hypergamy, a boy from the upper caste can marry a girl from the lower caste and vice-versa.

In early society, caste endogamy was functional because it preserved the occupational secrets of the caste, maintained the solidarity of the caste and checked decrease in the membership or strength of the caste. In the present society, though it makes marital adjustment easier, yet it has proved to be dysfunctional in some ways since it creates inter-caste tensions which adversely affect the political unity of the country, makes field of mate-selection limited and circumscribed, and creates problems of dowry, child marriage, etc.

However, these arguments are not accepted today for the reasons that decay of lineage is not reported among non-Hindu communities (say, Muslims) who practise cousin marriages. Kapadia has said that the rule of sapinda exogamy was of the nature of a pious recommendation and remained so till the end of the eighth century. Today, though this rule is followed by and large by all Hindus, yet cases of cousin marriages are not unknown.

The mate selection today involves three important issues: party to selection, criteria of selection, and field of selection. While earlier mates for children were selected by parents, now children believe in joint selection by parents and children, though cases of individual selection (i.e., selection by children themselves) are not rare. The criteria of selecting mates by parents are quite different from those of children.

While parents give importance to family status, sanskaras, caste, dowry and so forth, children give importance to education, character, physical appearance, equipment and skills, etc. The joint selection today keeps in mind the needs of the family as well as the interests of the person acquiring a spouse. No wonder, studies of scholars like B.V. Shah, Margaret Cormack, Vimal Shah, etc. showed that a very large number of young boys and girls wanted to select their mates in consultation with their parents.

Changes in Hindu Marriage System:
Changes in marriage system among Hindus may be analyzed in seven areas: object of marriage, process of mate selection, form of marriage, age of marriage, economic aspect of marriage (dowry), stability of marriage (divorce), and widow remarriage. Of these, we have already discussed change in two areas in earlier pages, viz., change in the object of marriage (from dharma to companionship), and change in mate selection (party, criteria, and field of selection).

Change in the form of marriage refers to change from polygamy to monogamy and change in age of marriage points out change from pre-puberty marriages to post-puberty marriages. The remaining three changes may be examined by analyzing marriage legislation.

Marriage Legislation:
The laws enacted in India relate to:
(i) Age at marriage,
(ii) Field of mate selection,
(iii) Number of spouses in marriage,

(iv) Dissolving marriage,

(v) Dowry, and

(vi) Remarriage.

The important legislations relating to these aspects are:

The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 (amended in 1978, dealing with age at marriage), the Special Marriage Act, 1954 (dealing with age at marriage, freedom to children to marry without parental consent, bigamy, and dissolving marriage), the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 (amended in 1986, and dealing with age at marriage with parents' consent, bigamy, and annulment of marriage), Anti Dowry Act, 1961, and the Widow Remarriage Act, 1856.

The first three Acts (of 1929, 1954 and 1955) pertaining to the age of marriage prescribe the marriage age of girls as 18 years and for boys as 21 years. The difference in the Acts is that the 1929 Act (amended in 1978) does not invalidate the marriage for violating the provisions in the Act. It only prescribes punishment for the bridegroom, parents, guardians and the priest (but not for women).

The 1955 Act makes invalidation of the marriage possible for violation of the age provision. This (1955) Act covers marriages performed with the consent of parents but the 1954 Act covers marriages performed through courts, with or without the parental consent. Both these Acts (1954 and 1955) prohibit bigamy and permit divorce also on various grounds and put restrictions on marriage within the degrees of prohibited relationships, unless custom permits such marriages.

The Anti-Dowry Act, 1961, has made giving and taking dowry as a legal offence. The Widow Remarriage Act, 1856 permits widows to remarry but forfeits them the right of maintenance from the property of the first husband. The Hindu Succession Act, 1956, has given share to wife and daughters in man's properly equal to that of sons and brothers.

But can social legislation remove the problems of marriage and family like abolishing dowry and child marriages? Can it rescue from the exploitation of women and improve their social status? We agree that social legislation is necessary for providing new direction to culture and society and permitting change and removing evils by filling up the gap between social opinion and social needs of the people.

1.9.2. Marriage among Muslims:

Muslim society is stratified not only among Shias and Sunnis but also among Ashraf (Saiyed, Sheikh, Pathan, etc.), Azlab (Momins, Mansooris, Ibrahims, etc.) and Arzal (Halalkhor, etc.). The Ashrafs are the noble- born, the Azlabs are low-born, and the Arzals are the lowest of all. All these groups are endogamous and inter-marriages among them are condemned and discouraged.

Muslim marriage, called nikah, unlike the sacramental marriage of the Hindus, is considered to be a civil contract. Its important objectives are: control over sex, procreation of children and perpetuation of family, upbringing of children, and ordering of domestic life. S.C. Sarkar also maintains that marriage among Muslims

is a civil contract. But it will be wrong to say that Muslim marriage has no religious duty. It is devotion and an act of ibaddat. Jang (1953) is, therefore, more correct in maintaining that nikah, though essentially a contract, is also a devotional act. But it is surely not a sacrament like Hindus.

The Muslim marriage has five features:
(i) Proposal and its acceptance,
(ii) Capacity to contract marriage,
(iii) Doctrine of equality,
(iv) Preference system, and
(v) Mahar.

The proposal is made by the bridegroom to the bride just before the wedding ceremony in the presence of two witnesses and a Maulvi (priest). For recognising marriage as sahi (regular), it is necessary that both the proposal and its acceptance must be at the same meeting. Not doing so makes marriage 'fasid' (irregular) but not batil (invalid). Further, female testimony has been rejected in Muslim marriage.

Fasid marriage can be converted into sahi marriage but not the batil one. Examples of fasid marriages are absence of witnesses at the time of making and accepting the proposal, fifth marriage (allowed to maximum four) of a man, marriage of a woman during the period when she is undergoing iddat (period of seclusion for three menstrual periods after husband's death or divorce), and difference of religion between husband and wife. Examples of batil marriages are: marriage with a person who worships idol or fire, polyandry, and marriage with some consanguineous kin (say, father's sister, mother's sister, own sister or brother, sister's daughter, son's wife and so on).

The feature of capacity to contract marriage refers to not recognising child marriage or marriage of a person of an unsound mind. The Shia law gives the right to the guardian of a minor to contract his/her marriage. The marriage contracted by the fazuli relative of a minor gives the right to the minor to ratify the marriage on attaining puberty. The practice of ratification and option of repudiation is called khairul balig.

The doctrine of equality refers to marriage with a person of low status. Such marriages are looked down upon. Similarly, runaway marriages (called kifa) are also not recognised. The preferential system refers to giving preference first to parallel (chachera and mausera) cousin and then to cross-cousin (only mamera but not phuphera). But these days, cousin marriages are discouraged.

Mahr (dower) custom in marriage refers to money which a wife is entitled to get from her husband in consideration of marriage. Mahr can be specified (fixed) or proper (considered reasonable). It can also the prompt (payable on husband's death or divorce) or deferred. At one time, the Muslims had a practice of muta (temporary) marriage but that practice has been abolished now.

Divorce (talaq) in Muslim society can be given with or without the intervention of the court. A woman can divorce her husband only through the court but a man can divorce his wife without approaching the court and by making a single

pronouncement during one tuhr (one menstruation period, i.e., one month) (called Talaq-e-Ahasan) or three pronouncements in three tuhrs (called Talaq-e-Hasan) or three pronouncements in a single tuhr (called Talaq-e-Ulbidat).In addition to these three types of divorce, there are three other kinds of divorce too: ilia, zihar, and lian.

Divorce given by mutual consent of husband and wife is called khula (initiated at the instance of the wife) or mubarat (initiative coming from wife or husband). After divorce, the wife is not entitled to get maintenance allowance from her husband.

However, about fifteen years ago, the Supreme Court allowed maintenance allowance to one Shah Bano. Since this decision was questioned by the Muslim leaders, describing it as interference the Muslim Personal Law, the government had to amend the legislation. In February 1993, the Uttar Pradesh High Court also ordered the payment of maintenance allowance to one Hameedan and her two children. The All India Muslim Personal Law Board then filed a review petition in the High Court.

All these features point out the difference between the Hindu and the Muslim marriages in terms of aims and ideals of marriage, nature of marriage, characteristics of marriage, and dissolving marriage. It is now contended that the belief that Muslims practice polygamy and easy divorce in large numbers is a misconception. The number of Muslims who have more than one wife is negligible now.

1.9.3. Marriage among Christians:

As among Hindus and Muslims, we find stratification among Christians too. The two groups in which Christians are divided are: Protestants and Catholics. The latter are further subdivided as Latin and Syrian Christians. All these groups and sub groups are endogamous.

The main object of marriage among Christians, as among Hindus and Muslims, is to get social sanction for sex relations and procreation. Further, religion also has great significance in Christian marriage. Christians believe that marriage takes place because of the will of God, and after marriage man and woman submerge themselves in each other. The three objects of Christian marriage are believed to be: procreation, escape from fornication (sex relations without marriage), and mutual help and comfort.

The marriage partners are selected either by parents, or by children, or jointly by parents and children. However, in 9 out of 10 cases, selection is made and marriage is settled by parents. While selecting partners, the focus is on avoiding blood relations, and giving importance to social status of family, character, education, physical fitness, etc.

Restrictions on consanguinity and affinity among Christians and Hindus are almost the same. Christians have no practice of 'preferred persons' like the Muslims. After

the engagement ceremony, the formalities to be fulfilled before the marriage are: producing a certificate of character, and submitting an application for marriage in the church three weeks before the due date.

The church priest then invites objections against the proposed marriage and when no objection is received, marriage date is fixed. The marriage is solemnised in the church and the couple declares that they take each other as wedded partner in the presence of two witnesses and in the name of Lord Christ.

Christians do not permit polygamy and polyandry. The Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872, amended six or seven times since then, covers all aspects of marriage. Christians practice divorce too, though the church does not appreciate it. The Indian Divorce Act, 1869 refers to the conditions under which divorce may be obtained.

The Act covers dissolution of marriage, declaring marriage null and void, decree of judicial separation and restitution of conjugal rights. There is no practice of dowry or dower among Christians. Remarriage of widows is not only accepted but also encouraged. Thus, Christian marriage is not a sacrament like Hindu marriage but is a contract between a man and a woman like Muslim marriage in which there is greater stress on companionship.

It is necessary that till a uniform civil code is enacted, the Divorce Act of Christians, which is a century and a quarter old, be amended and certain new laws passed. For example, the grounds for divorce are too limited and harsh. Even as between husband and wife, there is discrimination in as much as the husband has simply to prove adultery whereas the wife has to prove another matrimonial offence along with adultery for getting relief.

Even when both parties wish on mutual consent basis to separate and the courts are convinced that living together is impossibility, no relief can be given. The wife is considered to be a property of the husband as the provision in the Divorce Act entitles a husband to claim damages from the wife's adulterer. The Divorce Act was first challenged in the Madras High Court in 1953 and again in the Supreme Court in 1995 for being gender discriminative but the petitions was turned down.

The Christian law as it exists today encourages perjury, collusion, and maneuvering. Christians need a law which should cater to the changing needs of time. The Law Commission had formulated the Christian Marriage and Matrimonial clauses Bill in 1960, but the Bill was allowed to lapse after the government promised to introduce it in the parliament. In 1983, the Commission again recommended changes in 1869 Act but in vain. In 1994, the Joint Women's Programmes (JWP) drafted Christian Marriage and Matrimonial Classes Bill and Christian Maintenance Bill but no measures were taken to get them passed.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answers.

    b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of this unit.

1) What are the types / forms of marriage?

Ans.

2) What are the features of Muslim marriage?

Ans.

1.10   Let Us Sum Up:

"Marriage" has always been an integral part of Social Institutions. It confers social legitimation to have sexual relationship and have children in the social life .The institutionalized form of sex relations is called **marriage**. But the term marriage or **vivaha** is a combination of two terms i.e. **'Vi'** and **'Vaha'** which means the ceremony of carrying away the bride to the house of bridegroom. In some society it is considered as a religious sacrament whereas in other society it is a social contract.

1.11   Key Words:

- *Monogamy:* Monogamy refers to a marriage of one man with one woman at a time.
- *Polygamy:* Polygamy is a type of marriage in which there is plurality of partners. It allows a man to marry more than one woman or a woman to marry more than one man at a time.
- *Endogamy:* Endogamy or endogamous marriage refers to the marriage within one's own group such as within one's own caste, sub-caste, varna and tribe.
- *Levirate:* When a woman marries her husband's brother after the death of her husband it is known as levirate.
- *Sororate:* When a man marries his wife's sister after the death of his wife or even when the wife is alive.

1.12   References:

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1.13 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

Check Your Progress I

1) On the basis of number of mates
   Monogamy
   Polygamy

   On the basis of choice of mate or on the basis of rules of mate selection
   Endogamy or endogamous marriage
   Exogamy or Exogamous marriage

2) The Muslim marriage has five features:
   (i) Proposal and its acceptance,
   (ii) Capacity to contract marriage,
   (iii) Doctrine of equality,
   (iv) Preference system, and
   (v) Mahar.

Unit – 2

Joint Family

Learning Objectives:

After completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- *Understand the nature of joint family system in India.*
- *Identify various features and functions in the joint family system in India.*
- *Enlist various demerits or disadvantages of Joint Family System in India.*
- *Explain various changes / disintegration in the Joint Family System in India.*

Structure:

2.1   Introduction
2.2   Definition of Joint Family
2.3   The Features or Characteristics of Joint Family System in India
2.4   The Functions of Joint Family System in India
2.5   Demerits or Disadvantages of Joint Family System in India
2.6   Changes / Disintegration in the Joint Family System in India
2.7   Let Us Sum Up
2.8   Key Words
2.9   References

2.10   Check Your Progress – Possible Answers

2.1.   Introduction:

"While American might teach Indians the higher standards of living they have to learn from Indians the standards of living together" – says Mrs.Gardner Murphy. Indeed, the art of living together is the typical characteristics of the joint family system in India. The joint family system, the caste system and the village system are often regarded as the pillars on which the whole of Indian social edifice is built up. Joint family is the opposite of nuclear family. A nuclear family consisting of husband, wife and their unmarried children. A joint family on the other hand, is a larger group composed of two or three or more generations.

2.2.   Definition of Joint Family:

(1) According to Smt. Iravati Karve, "A joint family is a group of people who generally live under one roof, who eat food cooked at one hearth, who hold property in common and who participate in common worship and are related to each other as some particular type of Kindred."

(2) According to K.M. Kapadia, "Joint family is a group formed not only of a couple and their children but also other relations either from father's side or from mother's side depending on whether the joint family is patrilineal or matrilineal."

(3) According to Henry Maine, "The Hindu joint family is a group constituted of known ancestors and adopted sons and relatives related to these sons through marriage."

(4) According to K. Davis, "The joint family consists of males having a common male ancestor female offspring not yet married and women brought into the group by marriage. All of these persons might live in a common household or in several households near to one another. In any case, so long as the joint family holds together, its members are expected to contribute to the support of the whole and to receive from it a share of the total product."

Thus we conclude that the joint family comprises of a large number of members which has greater generation depth and who are related to one another by property, income, household and mutual rights and obligations. It is organized on the basis of close blood ties.

2.3.   Features or Characteristics of Joint Family System in India:

Features or characteristics of joint family system in India are as follows:

1. Common Residence:
One of the most important features of the joint family system is common residence. Members of the joint family normally reside together in the same house or at one particular place. Some scholars like Iravati Karve regard co- residentiality as an essential ingredient of jointness.

2. Common Kitchen:
Living together is not the only ingredient of joint family. A group of persons living at one place or under one roof may not form a joint family. Therefore, the essential feature of a joint family is the common kitchen. The members eat food prepared jointly at the common kitchen. The undivided kitchen has been traditionally associated with the joint family system.

IOC told to supply three cylinders to joint family

Special Correspondent

Quashing an order of the Indian Oil Corporation, the Madras High Court on Friday directed the State-owned company to continue to supply three LPG gas cylinders to a joint family consisting of 13 members.

Justice D.Hariparanthaman was allowing a writ petition by T.Valsala and two others. Mrs.Valsala said she had three sons who were married and living together. They had a common kitchen. There were 13 members in the joint family. There were three LPG connections.

By an order dated January 13 this year, the IOC stated that the joint family could not have more than one connection.

Having such a connection was violative of the LPG (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order, 2000. The petitioners questioned the IOC's order.

Mr.Justice Hariparanthaman said he was of the view that the impugned order failed to take into account the proviso to Order 3 of the LPG Order 2000.

The proviso made it clear that keeping in view the difficulty and hardship experienced by households, more than one LPG connection could be provided.

3. Common property:

The members hold common property. As Milley writes, the joint family "is a cooperative institution similar to a joint stock company in which there is joint property." The head of the family manages the family property like a trustee.
The total earnings of the members are pooled into family treasury and family expenses are met out of that. According to old Hindu law givers, the nature of joint family consisted in the ownership of ancestral property. Daya Bhag and Mitakshara rules enjoin that during the life time of the father, the property of the family cannot be divided between the members of the family.

4. Depth of Generations:

The joint family is large in size in comparison to nuclear family. It consists of members of three or more generations including grandparents, parents and children. Sometimes, other kith and kin such as uncles, aunts, cousins and great grandsons also live in the joint family.

5. Common Worship:

The Hindu joint family derives its strength from religion. Hence, it is associated with various religious rituals and practices. It is. a feature of joint family system that there is a common mode of worship and common Gods and Goddesses. The reason for this might have been the practice of ancestor worship and the custom of Pinda Dana.
In ancient times, every family had its own deity or 'Kula Devata' who was worshipped throughout the ages. Thus, common worship of Gods and Goddesses has been associated with joint family system.

6. Co-operation and Sentiment:

Scholars like I.P. Desai and K.M. Kapadia point out that jointness should be looked in functional terms. A patrilineal joint family may consist of a number of households headed by males related through the father.
It may be located even at distant places and may not even have property in common. But what is common is that it identifies itself as members of a particular ' family',

cooperates in rituals and ceremonies, renders financial and other kinds of help, and cherishes common family sentiment and abides by the norms of joint living.

7. Ritual Bonds:

The ritual bonds of the joint family are considered to be important component of jointness. A joint family, thus, is bound together by periodic propitiation of the dead ancestors. The members perform a 'Shradha' ceremony in which the senior male member of the joint family propitiates his dead father's or mother's spirit offering it through the 'Pinda' on behalf of all the members.

8. Authority of Karta:

The Hindu family is usually patriarchal. In the patriarchal joint family, the eldest male member exercises authority. The authority of the head of the family is considered to be supreme.
The Hindu family, in theory and practice, enjoins the figure of the head of the family who is responsible for the management of the house, management of finances, bread winner and wage earner. The head of the family or the Karta enjoys the highest position in the family.
Majumdar has written, the Karta of the joint or extended family has the right to make decisions for his family, he is the working head, he is the judge and the jury, he decides family quarrels, he is the political head as every family has a place and is represented by the head of the family in the social, ceremonial and in community activities. "The power is traditionally given to the eldest male of the family and the head allows little individual freedom to the family members.
As opposed to it, in the matriarchal joint family the eldest female member in theory exercises the supreme authority.

9. Mutual Obligations:

The joint family consists of a number of relations who have a common residence and a common kitchen. Because of living together and enjoying property in common, the members of the joint family are also bound together by the ties of mutuality of obligations. It means that since they live together, they share the sorrows and joys together. On all important occasions like birth, death and marriage, they commonly share the burden of sentiments and emotions.

10. Co - operative Organisation:

Joint family is based on a family which means the subordination of individual interests to the interests of the family as a whole. This also means that goals or interests of the family must be the goals or interests of the individuals.

11. Filial Relationship:

In contrast to conjugal ties (i.e. between husband and wife), emphasis is laid on filial relationship (the father-son relationship) and fraternal relationship (the relationship between brothers) in the joint family system. In other words, the conjugal relationship is subordinated to filial and fraternal relationships.

12. Arranged Marriage:

In the joint family, the head considers it as his privilege to arrange the marriages of the members. The individual's right to select his / her life partner is not allowed. The younger members rarely challenge his decisions and arrangements.

13. Self-Sufficiency:

There was a time when the joint family was mostly self- sufficient. It used to meet the economic, recreational, educational and other needs of members. The rural agricultural joint families were mostly self-reliant.
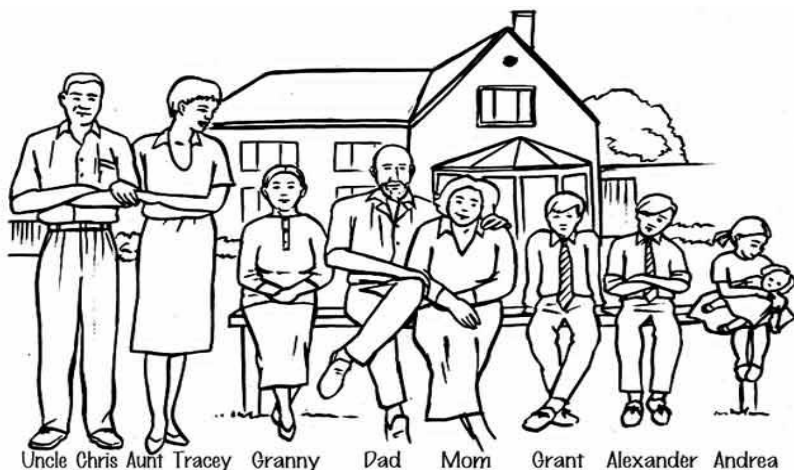
14. Segregation of Sexes:

In the traditional joint family, social life of women was largely confined to family and relatives. The segregation of sexes was accomplished in a variety of ways. There was separation of perspective sphere of work for men and women.
Men were looking after the major occupational activities and women were looking after the household works. Basically, the spheres of operation were separated. This separation of the sexes in the family tends to characterize social life as well. The women were forming their own social groups.

15. Kin Relationship between the Members:

We can say that a joint family may consist of members related lineally or collaterally or both. There is more or less a unanimous agreement that a family is essentially defined as "joint" only if it includes two or more related married couples. Also it has been observed that these couples may be related (i) lineally (usually in a father -son relationship or occasionally in a father- daughter relationship) or (ii) collaterally (usually in a brother-brother relationship or / occasionally in a brother-sister relationship). Both these types refer to the compositional aspect of the patrilineal joint family. In matrilineal systems, found in South-west and North-East India, the family is usually composed of a woman, her mother and her married and unmarried daughters. The mother's brother is also an important member of the family; he is the manager of the matrilineal joint family affairs the husbands of the female members live with them. In Kerala, husbands used to be frequent visitors in their wife's household and lived with their mother's household.

Composition of the Joint Family System

2.4. The Functions of Joint Family System in India:

Joint family is a peculiar and unique social institution of Indian Society. Joint family or extended family system is a peculiar characteristic of the Indian social life. Since its origin it has been instrumental in providing protection, economic support and recreation to its members. It also helps in fostering good qualities among the members. It nourishes and socializes its members. As an important social institution it has brought about the well being of its members in several ways. It performs many functions. Some of its important functions or advantages or merits are stated below:—

(1) Economic functions:

Joint family performs a number of economic functions. It guarantees food, clothing and shelter to its members. All the members of joint family works together on a cooperative basis and in that way it saves money that would have been spent on hired labour. Besides collective purchase of household articles also saves money. It avoids fragmentation of agricultural land and thereby helps in increasing productivity. By this way joint family ensures economic progress of the family as well as society.

(2) Protective functions:

Joint family performs a number of protective functions for its members. It acts as a safe home for the physically or mentally handicapped, sick, old members. It also acts as an asylum for the orphans. It also assures a proper living for the widows. Thus joint family acts as a social insurance company for the old, sick and destitute.

(3) Recreational functions:

Joint family performed a number of recreational functions for its members. It provides healthy recreation to all its members. By arranging feasts on different religious, social and festive occasions it provides recreation to its members. The joking relationships in the joint family are another source of amusement.

(4) Fosters social virtues:

Joint family fosters good social virtues like sacrifice, love, affection, cooperation, mutual help, selflessness, renunciation among its members and makes the family a cradle of social virtues. Under care and guidance of the elders the youths are prevented from being wayward. These social virtues are learned during the process of socialization.

(5) Socialism:

Socialism prevails in joint family because it believes in the socialistic principle i.e. "from each according to his ability and to each according to his necessity. Hence, Sir Henry Maine is right when he remarked that "the joint family is like a corporation where the father acts as its trustee". Earnings of all the members are kept in a common family fund from where the expenditures are met.

(6) Acts as a unique device of division of labor:

Joint family acts as a unique system of division of labor. All the advantages of modern division of labor are enjoyed by joint family. All the works of the family are equally distributed according to the abilities of its members. All the family members help during harvesting of crops. None is over burdened. It brought economic benefits to family.

(7) Provides leisure:

Joint family provides necessary leisure to its members. As all the works are divided among the members and it finish within a little time and the rest time is spent in leisure. Besides the sick and old member are provided with more leisure

(8) Agency of social control:

Joint family acts as an agency of social control. As an informal agency it controls the deviant behaviors of its members. The unsocial and anti-social activities of its members are suppressed within a healthy family environment.

(9) Agency of Socialization:

Joint family acts as an important agency of socialization. Family first socializes the child. Child learns a number of civic virtues in the family. The environment of family guides the growth of a child. The child gets his first lessons in the family. The family moulds the personality of the individual and continues to exercise its influence throughout life.

2.5. Demerits or Disadvantages of Joint Family System in India:

Although joint family is an important social institution and has been performing a number of functions is not free from criticism. Inspite of its instrumental role in preserving the Indian social structure it has many things to its discredit. However, joint family has the following demerits or disadvantages:

(1) Hinders the development of Personality:

Joint family hinders the development of individual personality. The karta or the head of the family enjoy absolute authority in the family. His decisions are binding in family matters. Such authoritative nature of joint family leaves little scope for the development of self-dependency and personality of the junior members. Individual autonomy is severely restricted.

(2) Encourages birth rate:

Joint family encourages birth rate. No individual member faces the problems of having more child birth. It is the responsibility of joint family to bring up the children and provide education to them. Besides irrespective of parental income all children are treated equally in a joint family. Hence no individual finds any cause to control reproduction. Thereby it encourages birth rate.

(3) Home for idlers:

Joint family gives stress on collective responsibility. Some members take advantage of this and became lazy. In a joint family some active members work harder while others become lazier. Because in a joint family there is no reward for the hard working members and no punishment for the lazy members. All are treated equally in every respect. This also lessens the interest of hard working members in doing hard work. As a result joint family became a home for idlers and family prosperity is impaired.

(4) Pitiable condition of Women:

Conditions of women are very pitiable in the joint family system. They are the worst sufferer. They toil for the family day and night and eat only after all the male members. They enjoy low status in the family. Very often the daughter in law faces different kinds of ill-treatment by the mother-in-law and sister-in-laws.

(5) Frequent Quarrels:

Because of large size in general and presence of many women in particular in the joint family quarrels occurs frequently. There is hatred, jealousy and constant bickering among the female members. There is always clash of ideas, interests, ideals and temperaments which makes the joint family a hotbed of quarrels. Quarrels became more severe when the male members got involved.

(6) Lack of Privacy:

Absence of privacy particularly to the newlywed couple impaired their personality in a joint family system. Due to the presence of large number of individuals and elders the newlywed couple could not meet each other during day time to discuss their problems. Hence joint family environment is not congenial for the newly married couple to enjoy their life in full.

(7) Absolute authority of the head:

In a joint family system the head or 'Karta' enjoys absolute and unquestionable authority. Being the eldest member, he is orthodox in his attitude and temperament. He normally does not allow new ideas and change to be introduced easily. Dynamic members do not find scope for utilization of their plan for development. Besides he insists on the practice of old customs, traditions etc. All this hinders the process of development of joint family.

(8) Low Standard of Living:

Standard of living in a joint family is very low due to number of factors such as pitiable condition of women, lack of privacy, frequent quarrels and litigation, improper care of common property, laziness of some members etc.

In spite of the above demerits, joint family system still continues to exist in modern day. Of course the system is breaking down in cities but it still prevails in rural areas. But we cannot say that the system has been completely abolished. It continues to exist in Indian Society withstanding the challenges of time. It still exists today in a renewed and modified form.

2.6. Changes / Disintegration in the Joint Family System in India:

Changes or Disintegration of Joint Family does not necessarily mean its elimination or disappearance it simply denotes that the percentage of joint family is decreasing. Milton Singer (1968) has identified five factors which have affected the structure, functions and stability of joint family. These are industrialisation, urbanisation, education, change in the institution of marriage and the legislative measures.

(1) Impact of industrialisation:

India today is on the way to industrialization. Industrialization has adversely affected the structure of joint family. The industrial centres pulled persons of different families out of the traditional peasant societies comprising of joint families. Agriculture has been replaced by factory and industries. Since factories and mills are scattered far and wide, people are compelled to leave their families and villages in search of jobs which breaks the joint family.

Moreover, with the dawn of industrial era, the village and cottage industries experienced adverse effects. The commodities produced in the village industry by village crafts man and artisan failed to compete with factory-made commodities in qualities or price. Consequently, the villages industry was closed down. The pressure on land became high and the villagers were forced to move out of the village to the towns and cities in search of jobs and the process of disintegration started.

(2) Urbanization:

Urbanization is also said to be responsible for the disintegration of the joint family. Various amenities of life concerning transport and communication, health and sanitation, better schooling facility for children and better employment opportunities provided by urban life attracted the villagers to the cities.

Since joint family can't be always maintained in the towns or cities, due to high cost of urban living and problem of accommodation, people afforded to live in the nuclear type of families. So the urban living weakened joint family pattern and strengthened nuclear family pattern. The extension of communication and transport enabled men to take up new occupation in the cities instead of binding with family occupation and established a new separate home in the city.

(3) Influence of Education:
Modern system of education introduced by the British Government affected joint family in several ways. It has brought about a change in the attitudes, beliefs, values and ideologies of the people. The educated men and women, after obtaining the requisite qualification, leave their families in search of suitable job in various urban and industrial centres. After getting jobs they settled down in the urban area. Subsequently their bond with joint family weakened leading to disintegration of joint family.
Modern education enlightened the women. It made them conscious of their rights and status in society. Increasing female education widened freedom and employment opportunity for women. After getting economic freedom, they were not prepared to remain in the four walls of the house hold in the traditional subordinate position. They resisted the oppression of joint family and wanted freedom from their husband's family of orientation. Moreover in-laws particularly mother-in-law, with their traditional attitude failed to adjust themselves with the modern educated women. As a result, conflict arose in the family leading to disintegration of joint family.

(4) Change in Marriage System:

Change in the marriage and freedom in mate selection have also affected our joint family system. Modern young men and women took their personal decisions in marital affairs. Parental role in mate- selection diminished. They changed their attitude and did not want to remain under the control of the superior authority of the family head. These attitudes of young mass weaken the bond of joint family.

(5) Legislative Measures:
The impact of legislative measures on the family cannot be ignored. Certain new social legislation in India has direct adverse effects on features like joint habitation joint property, social control of joint family etc. The civil marriage act (1957) gave the freedom to the young male and females to marry according to their own choice. The Hindu marriage Act (1955) helped the women to seek divorce on certain grounds.
Gains of learning Act, 1930 gave the right to young man and woman to retain personal earnings. The Hindu succession Act gave the right of equal inheritance to women. The special marriage Act 1954 gave the freedom of mate selection in any caste and religion after certain age permitted by young men and women. All these legislative measure modified interpersonal relations within the family, the composition of the family and the stability of the joint family.

Other than the above factors, there are three more influential factors responsible for change / disintegration in the Joint Family System in India:

(1) Over-Population or Rapid Growth of Population and Impoverishment:
Population increased due to unrestricted reproduction in the joint family. Rapid growth of population brought about corresponding increases of the pressure on land. Agriculture being the prime occupation of the villagers, the rural youth faced the problem of unemployment due to imbalance of man and land equation. People were forced to move to far-away placed in search of employment. Thus they had to leave their traditional families. This resulted in the breakdown of jointness.

(2) Influence of Western Values:
The western values relating to modern science, rationalism, individualism, equality, free life democracy, freedom of women etc. exerted a tremendous influence at the traditional Hindu family system. The modern educated youth under the influence of these values wanted to be free from the tight grip of the joint family by adopting nuclear family. B.B.Saha remarks that individualism as a gift of western culture has given rise to a separate tendency for which the joint family is fast declining.

(3) Family Quarrels:
Differences in the interest of members of a joint family disparities relating to earning of the members and clash of personalities caused quarrels. Conflicts also occurred due to unequal distribution of work at house, extra economic burden and emotional strain and same type of treatment to the lazy members. Family quarrel caused dissatisfaction among the members of the family and many a time it became so intolerable that the breakdown of joint family appeared to be the only way out.

Thus the joint family system under modern influence is weakening. But Hindu sentiments are even today in favour of joint family. Compromise and mutual adjustment are the key notes of the Indian joint family system. The joint family is not a place where individuality is crushed but it is a co-operative institution where every member does his duty under the guidance of the eldest members. The social virtues of joint family make man a good citizen and teach him to live, for all. So the effort and co-operation of rulers and eminent social scientist are required to retain this joint family system in India.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answers.
   b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of this unit.

3) What are the features or characteristics of joint family system in India?
Ans.

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4) What are the functions of joint family system in India?

Ans.

5) What are the disadvantages of joint family system in India?

Ans.

6) What are the changes / disintegration in the joint family system in India?

Ans.

2.7. Let Us Sum Up:

The joint family system, the caste system and the village system are often regarded as the pillars on which the whole of Indian social edifice is built up. Joint family is the opposite of nuclear family. Its features and functions have justified its importance in the development of human society. Although joint family is an important social institution and has been performing a number of functions is not free from criticism. Inspite of its instrumental role in preserving the Indian social structure it has many things to its discredit. However, there are some factors which have affected the structure, functions and stability of joint family leading to disintegration of the joint family. These are industrialisation, urbanisation, education, change in the institution of marriage, legislative measures. over-population or rapid growth of population and impoverishment, influence of western values and family quarrels.

2.8. Key Words:

- ***Industrialisation:*** Industrialization is the development of social and economic change that transforms a human group from an agrarian society into an industrial one, involving the extensive re-organisation of an economy for the purpose of manufacturing or production.

- ***Urbanisation:*** Urbanisation is a dynamic process of migration of people from rural areas (countryside) to urban areas (towns and cities). This has became an important agent of disintegration of joint family.

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2.10.   CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

Check Your Progress II

3)   (1). Common Residence
(2). Common Kitchen
(3). Common property
(4). Depth of Generations
(5). Common Worship
(6). Co-operation and Sentiment
(7). Ritual Bonds
(8). Authority of Karta
(9). Mutual Obligations
(10). Co-operative Organisation

(11). Filial Relationship
(12). Arranged Marriage
(13). Self-Sufficiency
(14). Segregation of Sexes
(15). Kin Relationship between the Members

4)   (1) Economic functions
(2) Protective functions
(3) Recreational functions
(4) Fosters social virtues
(5) Socialism
(6) Acts as a unique device of division of labor
(7) Provides leisure
(8) Agency of social control
(9) Agency of Socialization

5)   (1) Hinders the development of Personality

(2) Encourages birth rate

(3) Home for idlers

(4) Pitiable condition of Women

(5) Frequent Quarrels

(6) Lack of Privacy

(7) Absolute authority of the head

(8) Low Standard of Living

6)   (1) Impact of industrialisation
(2) Urbanization
(3) Influence of Education
(4) Change in Marriage System

(5) Legislative Measures
(6) Over-Population or Rapid Growth of Population and Impoverishment
(7) Influence of Western Values
(8) Family Quarrels

Unit – 3

Caste System

Learning Objectives:

After completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- *Understand the basic concept of Caste System in India.*
- *Illustrate various features and functions of Caste System in rural India.*
- *Classify the changes developed in the caste system of rural India.*

Structure:

3.1.   Introduction:

Caste system is the pivot of Indian Hindu Society. It is not the individual but the caste that has been the primary unit of Indian society. Caste is not only the fundamental institution of Hindus, but is also found among Muslims, Christians, Jains and Budhists. The word "Caste" is derived from the Portuguese word "Casta" which means breed or lineage or race. In India caste is popularly known as "Jati" which means acquired by birth.

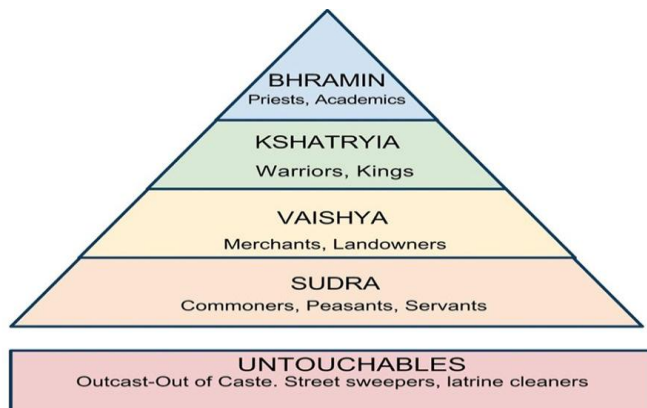## 3.2.   Features of Caste System in India:

Its principal features are as follows:

1. Segmental Division of Society:

The society is divided into various small social groups called castes. Each of these castes is a well developed social group, the membership of which is determined by the consideration of birth. The children belong to the caste of their parents. Caste membership is an indisputable and unalterable fact by which a man's position in the social structure is wholly determined. The membership of an individual does not undergo any change even if changes in his status, occupation, education, wealth etc. take place. Since membership is normally life long, there is practically no social mobility.

2. Hierarchy:

Hierarchy is a ladder of command in which the lower rungs are encompassed in the higher ones in regular succession. The castes teach us a fundamental social principle of hierarchy. Castes form a hierarchy, being arranged in an order of superiority and inferiority. At the top of this hierarchy is the Brahmin caste and at the bottom is the untouchable caste. In between are the intermediate castes, the relative positions of which are not always clear. As such disputes among the members of these castes over the social precedence of their respective castes are not very uncommon.

BHRAMIN
Priests, Academics

KSHATRYIA
Warriors, Kings

VAISHYA
Merchants, Landowners

SUDRA
Commoners, Peasants, Servants

UNTOUCHABLES
Outcast-Out of Caste. Street sweepers, latrine cleaners

Caste System And Dalit

Hierarchy is viewed as the principle by which the elements of a whole are ranked in relation to the whole, it being understood that in the majority of societies it is religion which provides the view of the whole. Hence, ranking assumes religious dimension.

3. Endogamy:

The most fundamental characteristic of the caste system is endogamy. All the thinkers are of the opinion that the endogamy is the chief characteristic of caste, i.e. the members of a caste or sub-caste should marry within their own caste or sub-caste. The violation of the rule of endogamy would mean ostracism and loss of caste. Although endogamy is the common rule for a caste, Anomie and Pratiloma marriage, i.e. hypergamy and hypogamy were also prevalent in exceptional cases.

4. Hereditary Status:

Generally speaking, the membership of a caste is determined by birth and the man acquires the status of a caste in which he is born. In this connection, Ketkar has written that the caste is limited to only those persons who are born as the members of that caste. Thus, membership in the caste is hereditary and once membership does not undergo any change even if change takes place in his status, occupation, education and wealth etc.

5. Hereditary Occupation:

The traditional caste system is characterized by hereditary occupation. Members of a particular caste are expected to follow the occupation meant for the caste. Traditionally a Brahmin was allowed to function as a priest. In some casts the name of caste is dependent upon the very occupation as for instance, Napita (barber), Dhobi, Mochi, Mali etc.

6. Restriction on Food and Drink:

There are rules, for example, what short of food or drink can be accepted by a person and from what castes. Usually a caste would not accept cooked food from any other caste that stands lower than itself in the social scale. A person belonging to a higher caste believes that he gets polluted even by the shadow of a person belonging to the low caste or by accepting food or drink from him.

7. Cultural Difference:

Since each caste has its own set of rules and regulations with regard to endogamy or occupational specialization, each caste develops its own subculture since the behaviour of the individual is governed by the requirements of his caste. The doctrine says that it is better for a person to follow the 'dharma' (religious obligation) of his own caste, no matter how low, than the 'dharma' of another caste, no matter how illustrious. The result has been different 'style of life' for different castes.

8. Social Segregation:

Social segregation is an aspect of caste differentiation. According to Ghurye;"Segregation of individual castes or of groups of castes in village is most

obvious mark of civil privileges and disabilities, and it has prevailed in a more or less definite form all over India". Segregation is more severe in South than in the North. In some parts of the county such as Marathi, Telugu and Kanada speaking regions it is only the impure castes that are segregated and made to live on the outskirts of villages. In the Tamil and Malayalam regions, very frequently different castes occupy distinctly different quarters or sometime the village is divided into three parts occupied by the dominate caste or by Brahmins, allotted to the Shudras and the third reserved for the Panchamas or untouchables.

9. The Concept of Pollution:

The concept of pollution plays a crucial part in maintaining the required distance between different castes. "A high caste man may not touch a low caste man, let alone accept cooked food and water from him. Where the two castes involved belong to either extreme of the hierarchy, the lower caste man may be required to keep a minimum distance between himself and the high caste man". The pollution distance varies from caste to caste and from place to place.

10. A Particular Name:

Every caste has a particular name though which we can identify it. Sometimes, an occupation is also associated with a particular caste. We can know the profession or occupation of a caste with the help of the name of the caste.
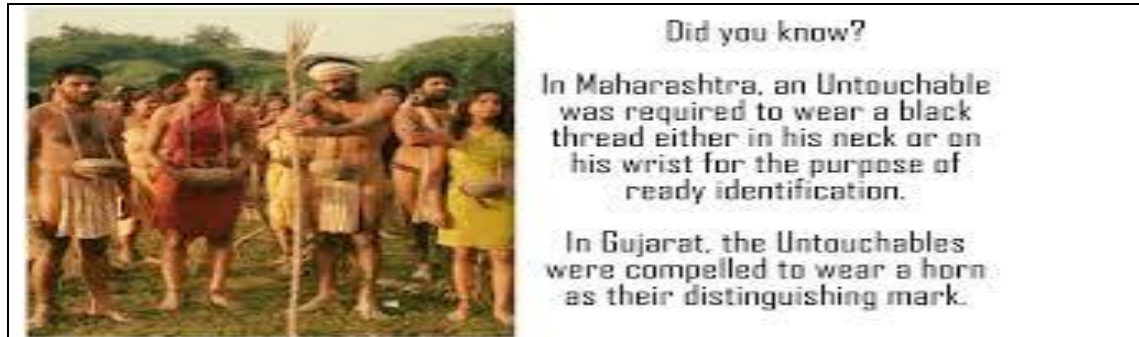
11. Jati Panchayat:

The status of each caste is carefully protected, not only by caste laws but also by the conventions. These are openly enforced by the community. In every region of India there is a governing body or board called Jati Panchayat. These Panchayats in different regions and castes are named in a particular fashion such as Kulriya in Madhya Pradesh. Some of the offences dealt with by it are adultery, violation of any of the prescribed taboos, insulting a Brahmin and the punishments awarded are out casting, fines, feasts to be given to the caste men etc.

12. Taboo:

Another important characteristic of the caste system is the taboo (prohibition) by which the superior castes try to preserve their ceremonial purity and endeavour to neutralize the potentialities for evils believed to exist in every person. These potentialities are supposed to be more active and harmful to others at certain crises of life. The most current taboos whose observance by the orthodox Hindus often entailed a number of cumbersome observances are the following: the food taboo, which prescribes the kinds of food that a man may eat. The cooking taboo, which defines the persons who may cook the food. The eating taboo which may lay down the ritual to be followed at meals. Finally, the taboo which has to do with the nature of the vessel (whether made of earth, copper or brass) that one may use for drinking or cooking.
A particular name, a particular occupation, hereditary membership, of commensality etc. are the essential features of a caste group. There are sociologists who have defined caste in terms of closed social system which means that there is no freedom of mobility.

Caste has been described both as a ritual and an ideology which means that we are referring to the cultural aspect of castes. Caste is not a social group but also a cultural group in the sense that the caste is a distinct style of life which marks off one caste from another.

3.3. Functions of caste system in India:

1. It helped in maintaining purity of blood:
A useful function of the caste system is that it has helped in maintaining the purity of blood. Members of each caste follow endogamic restrictions in marriage and as such purity of blood is maintained. This is perhaps the reason that even today pure Aryan race is found in India.

2. It resulted in efficiency:
In the caste system, members of a particular caste followed their ancestral occupation. Therefore, from the very beginning a person tried to attain utmost efficiency in his occupation, which he was to follow throughout his life. Furthermore, he enjoyed the benefit of accumulated experience which the ancestors had acquired after being engaged in the occupations for a very long period of time.

3. It helped preserving culture:
Each caste had its own customs, rituals, traditions and ceremonies etc. and took pride in maintaining those cultural aspects. The cumulative effect of it was that the nation was in a position to preserve its culture and civilization. It will not be wrong to say that if India is today in a position to preserve its ancient culture, it is primarily due to the caste system.

4. It created division of labour:
The rationale behind the origin of the caste system which will be very close to scientific theories about the origin of the caste system is that it helped in the division of work. Each caste was required to perform the work assigned to it. The Brahmins were engaged in teaching, the Kshatriyas in defending the land, Vaishyas in trade and commerce and the Sudras in serving all higher castes.

Thus, division of labour was the mainstay of the caste system, which greatly helped the smooth functioning of the traditional social system. The lower castes had to be contented with their occupation due to the doctrine of Karma which held that one's deeds in the previous life was responsible for his present birth in a particular caste.

5. It enforced discipline:
The caste system resulted in the maintenance of social and professional discipline. Thus was the apprehension that if social discipline was violated, one would earn the displeasure of difference castes. Again the members were afraid of the fact that if professional discipline was not cared for, they might earn the wrath of the professional community. Due to this reason they had to abide by the disciplinary regulations and the caste system, thus, helped in enforcing social as well as occupational discipline.

6. It provided a basis for civilized society:
Prior to the introduction of the caste system, there was no discipline in the society. It was only due to caste system that discipline prevailed. The people began to lead a regulated life with respect for proper conduct. Thus the caste system laid the basis of a civilized society which ultimately became responsible for the growth of disciplined and well-established order in the social system.

7. It developed the spirit of cooperation:
The members of each caste developed a sense of unity for their own caste group. The feeling that any invasion by other castes on their superiority or any attempt at degrading their customs, rituals and traditions etc. will be disastrous for the caste urged them to work in close cooperation with one another. In this manner the caste system developed a sense and spirit of cooperation and this provided the infrastructure for the advancement and betterment of the society.

8. It produced good citizens:
It made an individual well- behaved, well-disciplined, and cooperative. It instilled in him the spirit of mutual help and made him ready to perform his work and discharge his responsibilities properly. Thus it provided all the attributes of a good citizen.

9. It preserved the society:
Due to the rigidity of the caste system the members of different castes did not like to take a risk either by mixing with outsiders or by having contact or communication with them. Establishing relations with outsiders was avoided. Thus the system checked infiltration of all outside cultures and preserved our social system despite many invasions and pressures on our culture and society.

10. It saved wastage resulting from competition:
In order to be established in a better vocation or profession, people waste much time in competitions. In the like manner time is also wasted in adjustment of life. But the caste system conferred a fixed social status on the members of different castes and thus one was well-established in accordance with one's birth in a particular caste. Hence no one

was required to decide the occupation to follow in future life. As such no time was wasted in competition and the energy so saved was used for constructive purposes.

11. It raised the standard of living:
Due to the caste system, members belonging to different castes made great efforts to maintain their superiority and position and thereby the caste system raised the standard of living of the people belonging to a particular caste. This, in turn, raised the standard of living of each caste which was of great help to the society.

12. It generated the panchayat system:
Under the caste system, each caste had its own panchayat and a disputes arising among the members of a particular caste were decided by caste panchayat. In course of time this system became very stable and contributed to the evolution of the panchayat system. Even today, this panchayat system has been accepted as the ideal system in India due to its agrarian and rural structure.

13. It maintained political stability:
The caste system acted as the political stabilizer in the sense that despite several changes and political upheavals, no significant influence could be exerted on the Hindus. The cultural pattern was preserved irrespective of the changing political set up and S.C. Hill has said in this regard that the caste system prescribed and determined a form of social order which was entirely independent of the form of political government. Another reason for political stability was the fact that there was no motive on the part of the ruled to seek an alternation.

14. It fixed the social environment:
Another advantage of the caste system was that it provided a fixed social environment wherein one's own behaviour was controlled by permanent association. It also helped the selection of the life partner within one's own caste. Moreover, the caste system provided employment by fixing up the traditional occupation and thus fulfilled the economic needs. In to the system fixed the social environment and generated a feeling of security for the individual.

3.4. Dominant Caste in India:

The concept of dominant caste has been used for the first item in sociological literature by an eminent Indian Sociologist M.N. Srinivas in his essay social system of a Mysore Village, which was written after his study of village Rampur. The concept occupies a key position in the process of 'Sanskritisation' as propounded by the same sociologists in his book, Religion and society among the Coorgs at south India.

It is held by some sociologists like Domont and Peacock that Srinivas transplanted the notion of "dominance" form the African society to the Indian Society. It may be true to some extent. Srinivas himself writes that I used the term dominant caste for the first time in my essay 'Social System of a Mysore village' and it is probable clean and dominant lineage in the contemporary anthropological literature on Africa. But in a

sense, Coorg book is also about a dominant caste and it was but a step from it a formulation of the idea of the dominant caste.

The term dominant caste is used to refer to a caste which "yields economic or political power and occupies a fairly high position in the hierarchy." These castes are accorded high status and position in all the fields of social life. The people of other lower castes look at them as their 'reference group' and try to imitate their behavior, ritual pattern, custom and ideology.

In this way, the dominant caste of a particular locality plays an important role in the 'process of cultural transmission' in that area. The members of a dominant caste have an upper hand in all the affairs of the locality and enjoy many special opportunities as well as privileges.

3.5. Factors contributing towards dominance:

There are different factors that make a caste dominant in a particular locality or region. As Srinivas tells "a caste to be dominant, it should own a sizable amount of arable land locally available, have strength or numbers and occupy a high place of local hierarchy". New factors contributing towards dominance are "western education, jobs in administration, and urban source of income." Let us discuss these factors in brief to have a clear understanding of their role in making a caste dominant.

i) Land Ownership:
Land is the most precious possession in rural area since it is the principal source of income. Uneven distribution of locally available cultivable field is a regular phenomenon of Indian Society. A vast area of land is concentrated in the hands of rich minority generally the big landowners coming from higher castes. These land owners employ the people of other castes as their laborers. They also give land on rent to the people. As a result, the entire population of the locality remains obliged to the few land owners of a particular caste.

These few landlords of a caste exercise considerable amount of power over all other castes and become the dominant caste of that locality. Srinivas cites the examples of landowning Jats treating Brahmins as their servants in Punjab. Thakur landlords denying accepting cooked food from all Brahmins accept their gurus and religious teacher.

ii) Numerical Strength:
The numerical strength of a caste also contributes towards its dominance. The more the number, the greater the power. In many areas, the Kshyatriyas due to their large population are able to exercise their control and power even over the few rich Brahmins of a locality and are able to dominate the socio-political situation.

iii) High place in local hierarchy:
Indian Society has been stratified into various groups on the basis of Caste System organised according to the beliefs and ideas of purity and pollution. In every locality

certain caste is accorded high status owing to its ritual purity. They always enjoy social superiority to all other castes in every aspects of social life.

All the factors described above contributed towards the dominance of a caste in traditional society. With the onset of modernization and change in the attitude and belief of people the new factors have come up overshadowing the old ones, they are:

iv) Education:

The caste, member of which are highly educated, is naturally looked up by the members of others castes. Due to their high education, they win the morale of others. The illiterate people have to take their help in many occasions owing to the complexities of modern social life. The educated people, due to their well information and knowledge about various developmental activities, plans and programmes, are also in a better position to utilise them which aids to their prosperity making them dominant in a particular area.

v) Job in administration and urban sources of income:

The caste, the majority members of which is in government bureaucracy or has sound economic strength, always finds itself in an advantageous position. Its members held legal and administrative powers by virtue of their being government officials. They help their other caste fellows to have different sources of urban income like supplying of food grains to urban dwellers, doing various types of business.

In this way they strengthen their economic position and become comparatively rich then, the members of caste who are engaged only in agricultural activities. All these aid to the higher position of that caste in a locality and make it dominant.

vi) Political involvement:

The dominant place of politics in contemporary Indian Society can hardly be undermined. The caste being more involved in political affairs of the state or locality, automatically raises its position and exercises control in all fields of social life. Till now we have been emphasizing on the point that a caste becomes dominant in a locality due to its attributes as discussed above. But dominance is no longer a purely local phenomenon.

The caste may or may not have attributes of dominance in a particular locality or village but till it can contribute to be a dominant caste, if the same caste occupies a dominant position in that wider region. In such a case, the network or relationship and friendship ties of the members of locally unimportant caste with the dominant relatives of that region, makes them dominant**.**

3.6. Caste and Politics in Rural India:

Caste has always played a vital role in modern Indian politics. Even the power structure of medieval India was based on caste. Caste also functioned as the key standard in the distribution of power and material resources in the colonial period. Colonialism in India created a democratic and modernist space; nevertheless this space was also predominantly captured by upper-caste groups. The nationalist struggle against the imperial power was targeted at establishing the caste-class hegemony. Non-Brahmin and low-caste movements were active during the colonial era, broadly pursuing two aims: achieving upward caste-class mobility and annihilation of caste. The caste system

played a noteworthy role in determining the content and direction of the processes of political socialization, political mobilization and institutionalization within the framework of modern democracy. The dynamics of caste and class were at the root of the intricacy of Indian politics in its functioning. Behind the apparently religious and communal movements in post-independent India, it was the dynamics of caste-class supremacy that was the real operational factor. Both the anti-caste and the upwardly mobile caste movements are directing the pro-reservation movement, which aspired at upward class mobility of the hitherto excluded castes. The pro-imperialist bourgeois policies of the ruling class and the struggles against these policies are also influenced and shaped by the tensions and contradictions in caste-class dynamics. In the subsequent year's independence, the traditional upper castes continued to rule in most parts of India. For example, until 1977, upper castes continued to hold important elected positions in Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state in the Indian union. Until 1962, as many as 63% of ruling Congress members of the Legislative Assembly came from elite castes. Soon, however, long-established peasant castes such as Ahirs, Kurmis, Koeri, Lodh Rajputs, and Jats began to rule the political space of northern India. In the southern state of Tamilnadu, the Vanniyars and Thevars became confident, and in Karnataka, control was wrested in the mid-1950s from the traditional rural elite within the Congress party by the Vokkaligas and Linagayats. In the North Indian Hindi speaking belt, upper caste members of parliament fell below 50% for the first time in 1977. The challenge to the established Congress was mounted in Uttar Pradesh rather effectively in the late 1960s by a coalition of peasant castes led by Charan Singh. In Bihar, also, there was a considerable fall of upper caste members of the legislative assembly after 1977.

Dominance of Caste over politics in India

3.7. Social Status of Dalits in India:

India's caste system is a social structure that divides different groups into ranked categories. Members of "higher" castes have a greater social status than individuals of a "lower" caste. Indian law prohibits discrimination by caste, although caste identities remain of great significance at the local level, especially in relation to marriage. A survey in 2005 found that only 11 per cent of women had married a man of different caste.

The system appears to have had ancient roots. Sanskrit texts from the second millennium BC refer to a practice of dividing individuals into social groups called "varnas"—the term's precise meaning is unclear, but is seems not only to suggest classification, but also colour. The Varnas, which are associated with early Hinduism, are the first recorded manifestation of India's caste system. Four principal classes emerged, in descending order of prestige: the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras. Myth holds that these groups were created from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of an ancient character called Purusha.

Over time, the caste structure became more complex, coalescing into a system known as "Chatuvarnya," which in turn was reinforced by the authorities of the British Raj. The categories set down by colonial administrators persist today. There are now more than 3,000 castes in India, and an even greater number of sub-castes. Here are six of the most significant:

Brahmins

The highest of all the castes, and traditionally priests or teachers, Brahmins make up a small part of the Indian population. The British colonial authorities gave Brahmins influential clerical jobs. They now dominate the key positions in science, business and government.

Kshatriyas

Meaning "protector[s] of the gentle people," Kshatriyas were traditionally the military class. They are now predominantly a land-owning caste and are diminished in power.

Vaishyas

A caste that is influential in trade, the Vaishyas were traditionally cattle-herders, agriculturalists, artisans and merchants. They are now associated with the middle-class and social advancement and make up around one fifth of India's population.
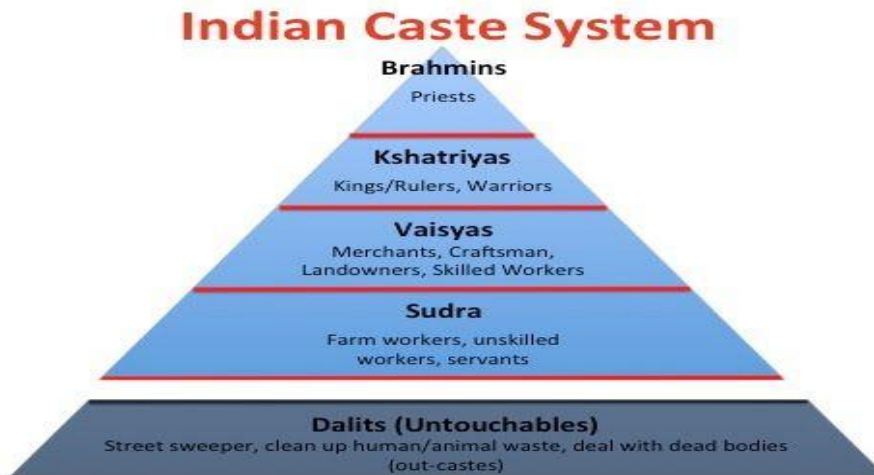
Shudras

The lowest of the four ancient social classes, or Varnas-, the Shudras were considered so low as to be prohibited from the study of the "Vedas," the earliest texts of sacred Indian literature. Shudras are now considered to be a "scheduled caste" by the Indian Government, meaning that they are historically disadvantaged. The government's 2011 census showed that over 200m Indians belong to a scheduled caste.

Adivasi

The term is used to refer to a collection of ethnic and tribal groups regarded as India's aboriginal people. More than 95 per cent of Adivasis live in rural areas. Sixty-eight per cent do not reach high school. More than half of all Adivasi are dependent on forest produce, especially the tendu leaf, used in the production of Indian cigarettes, for their livelihoods.

Dalits

The word "Dalit," derived from Sanskrit, means "ground," "suppressed" or "crushed." Considered the lowliest people of all the castes, Dalits are typically associated with occupations regarded as ritually impure, such as those involving waste or carcasses. They are a people traditionally regarded as "untouchable."

3.8. Dalits in Rural India:

Caste discrimination is often thought of as a purely rural phenomenon, but official slum data alone show that this is not the case. 79.8% of Dalits live in rural India. Their over-representation in rural India means that they only account for 11.78% of India's urban population. However, they are highly over-represented in the 'official' slums of Indian cities, where they make up 17.4% of the population, or 7.4 million Dalits. Since Dalits are not highly present in the recognised slums of Mumbai, if we look at some of the major cities of India we see even greater disproportions in the number of Dalits living in slums with almost one third of slum dwellers in Chennai, Delhi and Bangalore being Dalits.

The term has been remodified as "*Harijan*" (children of God) that Gandhi used for them as they consider it too patronizing. They would rather be known as "Dalits," or the oppressed. Ambedkar was the first to use this term to designate the Scheduled Castes for its apparent combative edge.

3.9. Present Scenario of Dalits in India:

Even after the enactment of SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989, the scenario has not changed so much. The documentary "India Untouched" by Stalin K has shown the plight of Dalits in present India. Most shocking part is that people after getting higher education too they do not change their behaviour towards the Dalits. The said documentary has shown that the student in Jawaharlal Nehru University also has to face caste discrimination. The untouchables who converted to other religion like Islam and

Christianity to escape from the vicious cycle of caste discrimination are still treated badly in their new religion as well. Caste based discrimination is still continuing in full swing. The Dalit children being forced to clean the toilet of the school or giving them separate food during mid-day-meal are everyday business in India present India. A few months ago a Dalit youth was killed by the alleged upper caste Hindus in Tamil Nadu for marrying a upper caste Hindu girl. The incident also triggered violence and the perpetrator set Dalit village into fire. The inhuman practice like Devadasi is still continuing in some part of the country.

3.10. Social Exclusion:

3.10.1. Meaning of Social Exclusion:

Let us know what does the term 'social exclusion' actually mean or who is socially excluded or even what is the basis of social inclusion? The society offers a bundle of essential rights to the individual to explore his/her potentials or to enjoy his or life to its fullest. In other words, we can say that the process which helps the individuals to attain the full membership of the society. Those basic social rights or process can be access to power, status, wealth and income. Without the access of those social rights the individual can't be the full member of the society and thus in absence of any of those rights he/she gets excluded from the society. There are numbers of occasions where the member of any society is denied to access power, status, wealth and income. We can divide those occasions into segments like caste, class, ethnicity, gender etc. Denial to those rights on the ground of those segments leads to an inequality in the society and the social inequality eventually social exclusion. **Amartya Sen, renowned Nobel laureate** has classified the social exclusion into active and passive forms. In case of active social exclusion the individual is directly debarred from taking part in any social process or his/her right is revoked by the state. We can take the example of migrant workers; their civil and political rights are directly denied by the state. And thus they are not eligible to be the full member of the society. On the other hand passive social exclusion comes through a process where no deliberate attempt is made to exclude the individual from the society or denied to be the full member of the society. But the existing set up nullifies his/her right to become a full member of the society. We can take the example of poverty. Due to poverty the individual remains outside the political and other civil rights.

3.10.2. Social Exclusion in Indian Society:

The Hindu social system itself debarred some its members to access those rights as discussed in the previous paragraph and thus fuels the social exclusion. The deep rooted caste system only debars the members to access the right to be the full member of the society; but it also nullifies even the human rights of some the castes. As far as India is concerned there are a number of groups of people who are being deprived to get their full membership in the society. We can take the example of dalits, tribal, minorities,

women and children etc. These groups are discriminated in name of caste, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, language etc. This continued for ages in the society and continued in the post independent Indian society as well. Under the leadership of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar certain measures were taken while adopting the constitution of independent India to mitigate the menace of caste system and thus social exclusion. But it still it continued, social groups like tribal, minorities and women are still excluded from the ambit of mainstream society on multiple grounds.

3.11. Changes in Caste System in India:

It is indisputable that the caste system has been changing. Change has always been present, though its rate in the different aspects of the system has not been uniform. Changes in the caste system entail three types of changes such as structural change, functional change and attitudinal change.

3.11.1. Structural Changes:

(i) Decline in the supremacy of the Brahmins:
There has been a sharp decline in the supremacy of the Brahmins in society. In the past, the Brahmin occupied the topmost position in the caste hierarchy. But today consequent upon the process of modernization the dominance of the Brahmins has been relegated to the background. He does not enjoy the same social status, which he once used to.

(ii) Changes in the Caste hierarchy:
The caste system is no longer a clearly demarcated system of hierarchically-ordered caste groups. As a result of certain factors such as occupational diversification, migration to urban areas, mechanisation of agriculture, boundaries between caste groups are tending to blur or break down. There is an increasing degree of interpenetration between different groups, classes and categories. A gradual lessening of the congruence between caste, class and power is visible.

(iii) Protection of the Harijans:
The governmental policy of protective discrimination has gone a long way in improving the socio -economic conditions of the Harijans. Consequently, their social status has improved to a considerable extent.

3.11.2. Functional Changes:

(i) Change in the fixation of status:
In a caste society, birth was taken as the exclusive basis of social status. But in the changing social scenario, birth no longer constitutes the basis of social prestige. Criteria such as wealth, ability, education, efficiency etc. have become the determinants of social status.

(ii) Change with regard to occupation:

So far as caste system is concerned, the individual had no choice but to follow the occupation ascribed to him by his caste. But today occupation is not the hereditary monopoly of any caste any more. One is free to take up any occupation he likes according to his ability and interest. Mahatma Gandhi's movement preaching dignity of labour has drawn higher castes to dirty-hand callings while education has opened white-collar occupations for members of lower castes.

(iii) Changes in marriage restrictions:

Under the caste system endogamy was the basis of mate-selection. The members of a caste or sub-caste were forbidden by an inexorable social law to marry outside the group. But at present the Special Marriage Act, 1954 and the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 have removed endogamic restrictions and declared inter-caste marriages as legally valid.

Of late, several factors such as impact of western philosophy, coeducation, 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 marriage, love-marriage and late-marriage.

(iv) Change in commensality:

In the traditional system, the unit of commensality was defined fairly rigidly in terms of caste affiliation. In recent times, there has been a gradual expansion of this unit. Today, Brahmins are inter dining with 'clean' Shudras. They do not hesitate to take kachha food from other clean castes. Furthermore, they do not hesitate to accept food and water from the members of the lower castes for fulfillment of their political ends.

(v) Change in the concept of purity and pollution:

Kapadia stated that the Hindu concept of purity and pollution was very extensive in its scope and mandatory in its observance till the twenties of this century. Under the caste system occupations were ranked in accordance with their ritual purity. For example, a person coming into contact with a barber was supposed to become impure. Meat, fish, wine etc. were regarded as ritually impure.
A menstruating lady was considered impure and as such the food cooked by her was considered impure. In the twenty first century the importance of these ideas of purity and pollution in Hindu social life has considerably decreased.
Religious sanction no more constitutes the basis of pure and impure. The rules of hygiene have formed the criterion of pure and impure at present.

(vi) Change in the life style:

In the past, every caste had its own life style. It was the differences in the styles of life that made the people of different castes appear distinct from one another. But today differences between the life styles of castes are gradually being eliminated and there is a marked tendency towards the evolution of a common style. The standardization of life styles is due to the twin processes of sanskritization and westernization.

(vii) Change in inter-caste relations:

Of late, the pattern of inter-caste relations has undergone profound changes. The mutual rights and obligations characterizing inter-caste relations have crumbled down. Members of the low castes no longer obey the orders of the members of high castes. They do not come forward to perform forced labour for the members of the upper caste. Further, efforts made by the lower castes to rise in the social ladder have annoyed the upper castes. All these factors have led to inter-caste conflicts. Such inter-caste conflicts are gradually increasing. However, these are more for achieving power than on grounds of ritual status.

(viii) Change in the power of caste Panchayats:

So far as caste system was concerned, each caste had a caste Panchayat. The caste Panchayat played the role of a judicial body. But today Jati Panchayats are on the decline. Law courts and village factions have taken over most of their roles.

(ix) Restrictions on education removed:

Today education is no more confined to the higher castes. Anybody belonging to any caste can prosecute study in educational institutions. Of late, the Government both at the Union and State levels has adopted several measures for the spread of education among the lower castes by way of giving them stipends, scholarships, free study materials, reservation of seats etc.

(x) Changes in the system of power:

The notions of democracy and adult franchise have affected the caste system in several ways. The new political system attacks the very roots of hierarchization. In the past politics was regarded as the sole preserve of the higher castes. But today people belonging to all castes are becoming conscious that they can play an important role in the political processes and can be benefitted from them.

(xi) Growth of caste consciousness:

Casteism has increased. It has affected political issues and political decisions.

(xii) Weakening of the Jajmani system:

The Jajmani system in the villages has weakened, affecting inter-caste relations. Several reasons like laxity in the performance of rites and rituals on the part of the members of various castes, decline of Brahminical supremacy, development in the field of transport and communication, intergenerational educational mobility etc. may be attributed to the decline of Jajmani system in rural India.

3.11.3. Attitudinal Changes:

(i) Loss of faith in the ascriptive status:
Under the sway of rapid social transformation taking place in Indian society, following processes of industrialization, urbanization, westernization, secularization and modernization, the attitude of the people towards caste system has undergone considerable changes i.e. to a particular caste or social group.

They are not psychologically prepared to accept the fixed status of an individual solely on the basis of birth. They attach importance to ability, efficiency, talent and aptitude. Hence it is quite natural that they repose their faith in achieved status. As such, the very foundation of the caste system has been shattered.

(ii) Change in the philosophical basis:
M .N. Srinivas holds the view that the law of karma and the doctrine of transmigration of soul are responsible for the acceptance of caste system by the people. But such an attitude towards caste does not exist at present. People do not believe that caste is divinely ordained. They have begun to doubt the very philosophical basis of caste system.

However, the traditional Indian caste system does not find favour with modern sociologists. The reason is not that it is intrinsically unsound but that it is wholly out of tune with the prejudices of modern sociology. Industrialization, urbanization, secularization, modernization have brought about the aforesaid significant changes in the caste system. M. N. Srinivas has rightly observed that caste has taken the shape of an incarnation in modern India.

3.12. Factors Responsible for Change in Caste System in India:

Caste system under the impact of certain powerful factors is undergoing rapid transformation in modern India. The factors responsible for such a change in the system are as follows:

1. Modern education:

Modern liberal education introduced into the country by the British has played a crucial role in undermining the importance of caste in Indian social life.

Modern education is based on such democratic values like equality, liberty and fraternity. It is also grounded on such scientific values like reason and observation. Hence it is quite natural that with the spread of modern education, the people's belief in the divine origin of caste, Karma and Karmaphala has received a severe setback.

As modern education is usually imparted in co-educational institutions, it encourages inter-caste marriage and inter-caste mixing. Moreover, it acts as a powerful force towards the removal of untouchability.

2. Industrialization:

The process of industrialization has affected caste structure to a remarkable extent. Industrial growth has provided new sources of livelihood to people and made occupational mobility possible. Factories, mills and offices are agog with activity.

In the midst of all this, the people belonging to various castes consider it medievalistic to go into the question of one's caste. In a factory a Brahmin works side by side with a Shudra. He cannot avoid his touch or shadow.

3. Urbanization:

Industrialization has given rise to the process of urbanization. New townships have emerged. The ruralites migrate to these towns in order to avail better employment opportunities.

With the coming up of big hotels, restaurants, theatres, clubs and educational institutions it is not at all possible to observe communal inhibitions and taboos against food-sharing. Kingsley Davis rightly observes that the anonymity, congestion, mobility, secularism and changeability of the city make the operation of the caste virtually impossible.

4. Modern means of transport and communication:

Modern means of transport and communication are instrumental in increasing spatial mobility of the people and thereby put an end to the caste system. Means of transport like train, bus, tram, airplane etc. cannot provide for distinctions between castes, and a leveling effect has been brought into the society.

It is absurd for any transport authority to reserve berths for Brahmins to the exclusion of the Shudras. During travel, too, one must of necessity take his meals without questioning the propriety of doing so in the company of low-caste persons.

5. Increase in the importance of wealth:

Under the caste system, birth was taken as the basis of social prestige. But today, wealth has replaced birth as the basis of social prestige. Occupations are now no longer caste-based. People while choosing their occupations attach greater importance to income rather than anything else.

It is because of this reason a high-born may be ill-placed in society while a man of low caste with ample wealth at his disposal has a room at the top. With this change of emphasis, the Indian caste system is in the process of being replaced by the system of social classification as prevails in western countries.

6. The new legal system:

The new legal system, introduced by the British Government, has given a severe blow to the caste system in India. Equality before law irrespective of castes has been firmly

instituted. Consequently, the age old discrimination against the lower castes has been removed.

Further, with the establishment of law courts, the traditional castes Panchayats have lost their power and effectiveness to punish the deviants. Not only that a number of Acts like the Untouchability Offences Act of 1955 and the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 have abnegated the evil effects of the caste system.

7. Sanskritization:

Srinivas defines sanskritization as "the process by which a low Hindu caste or tribal or any other group changes its customs, rituals, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high and frequently 'twice-born' caste". The members of the lower castes leave their own traditional ideals and behaviour patterns and accept the ideals and standards of higher castes.

The caste system being a closed one, sanskritization does not entail structural change. It entails positional change. Hence through sanskritization the lower caste people move up slightly in the scale of "Jatis' within a particular varna.

8. Westernization:

The term 'Westernization' was coined by Srinivas to signify the changes in the Indian society during the British rule. By promoting education, egalitarianism, rationalism, humanism and above all a critical outlook towards various social issues and problems, westernization has gone a long way in undermining the influence of the caste system.

It has given severe blow to practices like child marriage, purity and pollution, commensality, untouchability etc. The effects of westernization are prominently visible in the form of inter-caste marriages, intercommunity marriages, inter-religious marriages, occupational changes etc. In this way westernization has brought about profound changes in the Indian society.

9. Secularization:

The role of secularization in weakening the caste system is great. By legitimizing secular ideologies and formal legal doctrines and promoting rationality, scientific attitude and differentiation, secularization has affected certain characteristics of the caste system especially the concept of purity and pollution, commensality, fixity of occupation etc.

10. Socialistic ideas:

Caste system is based on the ideas of high birth and low birth. On the other hand, socialists say, "the differences between human beings have been created by society; hence the society only can remove them." As a result of such socialist thought, caste system is breaking.

11. New social movements:

Some social movements have also attacked the caste system. The Brahmo Samaj movement led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy rejected the barriers of caste divisions and stood for universalisation and brotherhood of man. The Prarthana Sabha movement supported by Justice Ranade brought about certain social reforms like inter-caste marriage, inter dining and remarriage of widows, etc.

The Arya Samaj movement founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati and Ramakrishna Mission movement raised voice against the hereditary caste system based on birth and stood for its abolition. In this way all these social movements succeeded, in no small measure, in affecting some of the structural features of the caste system.

12. Rise of new social classes:

Industrialization has given rise to the emergence of new social classes. These social classes are replacing the traditional castes. Trade Unions, Merchants' Associations and Political Parties are replacing the old caste loyalties. An increase in class consciousness leads to a decrease in caste consciousness.

13. Influence of Indian Constitution:

Indian Constitution bestows some fundamental rights on the citizens irrespective of caste, creed, colour or sex. It offers equal opportunities to all. Para 15(2) of the Constitution, which declares all citizens as equal, directly justifies the Hindu social order based on inherited inequality. No wonder that caste system is withering away.

Thus, such factors have vitally affected the caste system. But it is highly improbable that the system will altogether be eliminated from the Indian social scene. It may assume new forms and perform new functions in the changed conditions of modern society.

3.13. Emergence of Indian Class System:

The class formation in India took place as a result of the creation of new economy in British India. This was reflected in the agriculture sector, in the form of introduction of private property in land, new revenue system and the increasing commercialization of agriculture which was a consequence of Agrarian Reforms introduced after independence.

The other spheres of this new economy were the growth of trade and commerce, extension of industrial enterprises the development of State and administrative system. System added to all this modern education was the other important social force which shaped the new classes in India.

The impact of British rule in India has brought about far reaching changes in Indian society .Some of these changes are discussed below.

1. Change in Agriculture:

The emergence of classes is the direct result of British rule in India. The production relation in rural India underwent transformation in the British period resulting in the emergence of new classes due to introduction of private property, right over land, and making crops a commodity. The private property in the form of Zamindari and Ryotwari system was recognized and as a result two new classes, the Zamindars and the peasant proprietors, came into existence.

The British appointed a Zamindar with the specific right to get commission on the land revenue to be collected for the British. A new form of local power structure emerged with these Zamindars at the top. Below the Zamindar were the raiyats (Proprietary Cultivators) and the landless labourers.

In traditional India there were big land owners, the middle and poor peasants, and the landless labourers. The traditional agrarian hierarchy and the caste hierarchy, though not identical, land owners constituted the highest caste. The middle and poor peasantry came primarily from the traditional caste of cultivators. The landless labourers belonged mostly to untouchable castes, the Harijans. Thus broadly two systems coincided. Of course there were exceptions to it because the caste system was relatively stable and class system was subject to change.

However, there is a broad correspondence between the agrarian classes and caste hierarchy. The Brahmins, Kayasthas and Vaidyas in Bengal, the Rajput and Brahmins in Uttar Pradesh, for example, were rich land-owning class.

The Sadgope, Kurmi, Jat, Ahir ,Patidar ,Reddy and other middle order castes were the peasants belonging to the middle class. In Uttar Pradesh bulk of agricultural workers was recruited from the untouchable Chamars.

After independence Changes in class structure and landownership have taken place. There are instances of structural change particularly during the early years of our independence. In several parts of India, the Jagirdars and Zamindars lost their land tenure. The tenants of these landlords were benefited by these reforms as proprietary rights were granted to them to own the land holdings earlier owned by their masters.

These changes only implied structural process of change. Thus, in Independent India land ownership is not confined to higher castes only. Ownership of land has shifted from the old renter class to the emerging class of farmers and owner -cultivators' .Now significant change is evident in the traditional congruence between caste and class.

2. Trade and Commerce:

Trade and commerce were centered on two things .Supply of raw material for industries in Britain was one. Procuring of the British manufactured goods for consumption in India was another. The latter had a disastrous effect on town and village handicrafts. Village and town handicrafts could not stand the competition brought about by import of goods from Britain and got disintegrated. Meanwhile there was lack of sufficient

industrial development. The result was that the emerging industry could not absorb the displaced population which eventually was a burden on an already stagnate agriculture.

3. Development of Railways and Industry:

Alongside the growth of trade and commerce, there was rapid development of the transport system in India. The railways expanded on an increasing scale from the middle of the 19th century. These developments were, undertaken with a view to meet the raw material requirements of industries in Britain.

The construction of railways and roads also gave scope for investment of British capital in India. It led to better mobility of troops and establishment of law and order. Investment of British capital found an outlet initially in such spheres as plantations (indigo, tea), cotton, jute, and mining industries. This was the beginning of the industrialization process in India. By then, there was accumulation of sufficient savings on the part of Indian traders and merchants. This served as capital and made possible the creation of Indian owned industries.

4. State and Administrative System:

Even before these developments, the British Government had organised a huge and extensive state machinery to administer the conquered territory. A large number of educated individuals were required to staff this machinery. It was not possible to secure the staff of educated people from Britain for running such huge administrative machinery. Therefore, the foreign rulers felt that there was a need for the introduction of Western education in India and to cater to the needs of the expanding economy and growing State machinery. As a consequence of the impact of British rule in India, the Indian society experienced an uneven growth of social classes.

Besides Zamindars and Jagirdars etc, there were also classes of administrative officers of various ranks, of merchants, artisans and specialists of various kinds. The colonial rule in India proved to be a turning point in the Indian history. It introduced new elements which led to some radical changes in Indian society.

The process of the rise of new social classes was an uneven one. It did not develop uniformly in different parts of the country and also among various communities. This was due to the fact that the social forces which developed during the British rule spread both in time and tempo unevenly.

This was in turn, dependent on the growth of political power in India. For example, it was in Bengal that two social classes, Zamindars and tenants, came into existence. Again it was in Bengal and Bombay that the first industrial enterprises started. This led to the emergence of the class of industrialists and workers in this region. It was for this reason that the British established a complex administrative system and introduced modern education first in Bengal and then in Bombay.

The process of the rise of new social classes among different communities was also uneven. This was due to the fact that certain communities were already engaged in definite economic, social or educational vocations in pre -British period. For example,

Baniyas were traders by vocation in our traditional social structure. Hence they were the first to take up modern commerce banking and industrial enterprises.

Similarly, Brahmins were the first to take up modern education and enter the professional classes. These communities took up the new challenges and entered these spheres of activity because they were already having the basic disposition towards these occupations. Thus, on the eve of independence we find that Indian social structure was made up of innumerable castes and classes. In some cases, these coincided with each other but in some they did not.

3.14.   Difference between Caste and Class:

Caste	Class
Membership of a caste is hereditary and no amount of struggle or change is required.	A person is placed in a class by virtue of his acquisition of education, wealth or other achievement.
There is no social mobility.	Social mobility is possible, i.e. it is possible to improve social status.
Members are normally not conscious of their social status.	Members are generally conscious of their social status.
Caste system expects members to follow certain customs, folkways, rituals etc.	Social class has no prescribed customs rituals and folkways.
Inter-caste marriage is not possible, because it will earn wrath of society.	Marriage between two individuals belonging to different classes is possible without earning displeasure of the society.
Caste system is based on inferiority or superiority of human beings. Therefore, does not promote democracy.	Social classes are based on superiority or inferiority of social status of an individual. Social classes help in working of democracy.
In caste system the members must follow a particular religion.	Members of social classes may follow any religion.

Caste system is a closed class system in which hereditary status is the life time status.	Social classes are open class system in which movement from one class to another is completely unrestricted.
In caste system, there is no occupational mobility, i.e. one has to follow occupation of ancestors and it cannot be changed.	As a member of social class one can adopt any occupation and change it at will.
Social gap between members of different castes is too wide.	Social gap is not so wide as in caste system.
Caste system is supported on religious grounds as a manifestation of God's will.	Social classes have no such religious a support.

3.15. Kinship in Rural India:

Within the village, a group of families tracing descent from a common ancestor with knowledge of all the links constitute a lineage; and the children of the same generation behave as brothers and sisters. They form a unit for celebrating major ritual events. Sometimes the word Kul is used to describe these units. Usually these families live in closeness and a guest of one (e.g. a son-in-law) could be treated as such in all these families. These bonds of families may go back to 3 to 7 generations. People do not marry within this group. Beyond the known links, there are further connections but people know the common ancestor but are incapable to map out each connection. Such families use a more general phrase like being "bhai-bandh" of one another. They are also exogamous. The word Gotra or clan may be used for them.

Check Your Progress IV
Note: a) Use the space provided for your answers.
   b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of this unit.

11) Classify the Caste System in India in hierarchical order?

Ans.

12) What do you mean by "Social Exclusion"?

Ans.

13) What are the types of changes found in Caste System of India?

Ans.

14) What are the factors responsible for change in Caste System in India?

Ans.

15) How Indian Class System has emerged?

Ans.

16) Differentiate between Caste and Class System in India?

Ans.

3.16.   Let Us Sum Up:

A "caste" is a social category whose members are assigned with a permanent status within a given social hierarchy and whose relationships are restricted accordingly. It is the most rigid type of social stratification. It is considered as the closed class system. But a class is having flexibility in the social hierarchy and it is in the form of open class system.

The concept of "Dominant Caste" is referred to a caste which "yields economic or political power and occupies a fairly high position in the hierarchy." These castes are accorded high status and position in all the fields of social life.

3.17.   Key Words:

- **Dominant Caste:** The term dominant caste is used to refer to a caste which "yields economic or political power and occupies a fairly high position in the hierarchy." These castes are accorded high status and position in all the fields of social life..
- **Dalit: Dalit**, means "oppressed" in India and South Asian countries .Though the name Dalit has been in existence since the nineteenth century, the economist and reformer B.R.Ambedkar (1891–1956) popularised the term signifying "Untouchables". The term has been remodified as "Harijan" (children of God) by Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation as they consider it too patronizing.
- **Sanskritization:** Sanskritization means "the process by which a low Hindu caste or tribal or any other group changes its customs, rituals, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high and frequently 'twice-born' caste".
- **Westernization:** The term 'Westernization' was coined by Srinivas to signify the changes in the Indian society during the British rule. By promoting education, egalitarianism, rationalism, humanism and above all a critical outlook towards various social issues and problems, westernization has gone a long way in undermining the influence of the caste system.
- **Secularization:** Secularization refers to the historical process in which religion loses social and cultural significance. As a result of secularization the role of religion in modern societies becomes restricted.

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3.19. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

Check Your Progress III

7)   1. Segmental Division of Society

2. Hierarchy

3. Endogamy

4. Hereditary Status

5. Hereditary Occupation

6. Restriction on Food and Drink

7. Cultural Difference

8. Social Segregation

9. The Concept of Pollution

10. A Particular Name

11. Jati Panchayat

12. Taboo

8)   1. It helped in maintaining purity of blood
2. It resulted in efficiency
3. It helped preserving culture
4. It created division of labour
5. It enforced discipline
6. It provided a basis for civilized society
7. It developed the spirit of cooperation
8. It produced good citizens
9. It preserved the society
10. It saved wastage resulting from competition
11. It raised the standard of living

12. It generated the panchayat system
13. It fixed the social environment
14. It maintained political stability

9) The term dominant caste is used to refer to a caste which "yields economic or political power and occupies a fairly high position in the hierarchy." These castes are accorded high status and position in all the fields of social life. The people of other lower castes look at them as their 'reference group' and try to imitate their behavior, ritual pattern, custom and ideology.

10) i) Land Ownership
ii) Numerical Strength
iii) High place in local hierarchy
iv) Education
v) Job in administration and urban sources of income
vi) Political involvement

Check Your Progress IV

11) Brahmins
Kshatriyas
Vaishyas
Shudras
Dalits
Adivasi

12) The basic social rights or process can be access to power, status, wealth and income. Without the access of those social rights the individual can't be the full member of the society and thus in absence of any of those rights he/she gets excluded from the society. The complete process leads to social exclusion.

13) **Structural Changes:**
(i) Decline in the supremacy of the Brahmins

(ii) Changes in the Caste hierarchy

(iii) Protection of the Harijans

Functional Changes

(i) Change in the fixation of status

(ii) Change with regard to occupation

(iii) Changes in marriage restrictions

(iv) Change in commensality

(v) Change in the concept of purity and pollution

(vi) Change in the life style

(vii) Change in inter-caste relations

(viii) Change in the power of caste Panchayats

(ix) Restrictions on education removed

(x) Changes in the system of power

(xi) Growth of caste consciousness

(xii) Weakening of the Jajmani system

Attitudinal Changes

(i) Loss of faith in the ascriptive status

(ii) Change in the philosophical basis

14)   1. Modern education

2. Industrialization

3. Urbanization

4. Modern means of transport and communication

5. Increase in the importance of wealth

6. The new legal system

7. Sanskritization

8. Westernization

9. Secularization

10. Socialistic ideas

11. New social movements

12. Influence of Indian Constitution

13. Rise of new social classes

15) The class formation in India took place as a result of the creation of new economy in British India. This was reflected in the agriculture sector, in the form of introduction of private property in land, new revenue system and the increasing commercialization of agriculture which was a consequence of Agrarian Reforms introduced after independence.

16) Differentiate Caste and Class System in terms of:

Membership, social mobility, social status, customs, marriage, religion, class system, occupation, social gap, etc.

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