

UNIT – IV

Caste, class and social reform

Caste · Class · Change · Reform movements · Non-Hindu caste

Explanatory Lecture Slides

Indian Society: Continuity and Change · Minor-II-2 · Semester II

INDIAN SOCIETY: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Topics covered in this unit

01

Define caste and its traditional features

02

Trace evolution of caste

03

Distinguish caste and class

04

Place caste in modern India

05

Social reform movements

06

Caste among non-Hindus

How this unit is organised

01

Caste — features

02

Evolution

03

Caste v class

04

Modern India

05

Reform

06

Non-Hindus

Caste — traditional features

Segmental division, hierarchy, commensality, occupation, endogamy, pollution, birth (Ghurye's list is the exam list).

- PYQ: traditional characteristics of caste (2021).
- Endogamy is the reproduction mechanism; pollution is the ritual language; occupation was the economic face.
- It is a system, not a set of 'communities' in the NGO sense.

Caste — traditional features

GHURYE'S MARKS

- Segment.
- Hierarchy.
- Pollution.
- Occupation.
- Endogamy.

WEBER

- Closed status group.

Evolution of caste

PYQ: evolution in different periods; in modern India (2021, 2023, 2025).

- Vedic varna as model (ideal, not a photograph of 1500 BCE society).
- Jati proliferation; colonial census froze and politicised; 20th-century associations; post-Mandal politics.
- From a ritual ladder toward a political bloc — Srinivas and Kothari (one line).
- Law: 1950 Constitution tries to delink public office from birth, then re-links it as remedy (reservation).

Evolution of caste

THEN

- Ritual ranking.
- Local jati.
- King as umpire.

NOW

- Vote bank.
- Association.
- Court + commission.

Caste and class

PYQ: differences between caste and class (2022).

- Caste: ascribed, closed, ritual, endogamous. Class: achieved-in-theory, open-in-theory, market, not necessarily endogamous.
- In India they interpenetrate: class-in-caste, caste-in-class (Beteille).
- A 10-mark table plus one sentence: class did not wash caste away in the mill.

Caste and class

CASTE

- Birth.
- Purity.
- Endogamy.

CLASS

- Market.
- Income/education.
- Theoretically open.

Caste in modern India — and among non-Hindus

PYQ: role of caste in modern India; dominant caste; caste among non-Hindus (2021, 2022).

- Modern: politics, marriage ads, riots, reservations, campus, khap.
- Non-Hindus: stratification among Muslims (ashraf/ajlaf/arzal), Christians (caste churches), Sikhs — the Constitution's SC list is religion-sensitive (a legal fact, not a rant).
- Dominant caste: local power even without ritual supremacy.

Caste in modern India — and among non-Hindus

MODERN USES

- Elections.
- Marriage market.
- Atrocity and counter.

NON-HINDU

- Stratified; not a caste-free zone.

Social reform movements

PYQ: impact of social reform movements (2021).

- 19th–20th: Brahmo, Prarthana, Arya, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, Jyotiba Phule, Narayana Guru, Periyar, Gandhi's anti-untouchability, Ambedkar's movement.
- Impact: a public language against sati, child marriage, untouchability; a new middle class; also new orthodoxies.
- Law followed: Bengal Sati, Widow Remarriage, Age of Consent, Temple Entry, Art. 17.
- Five names + two statutes is a complete 10-mark.

Social reform movements

WEST/INDIA MIX

- Colonial public sphere + Indian critics of caste.

LIMIT

- Reform often stopped at the elite. Annihilation needed politics + law.

Westernisation (Srinivas) as change of caste society

PYQ: concept of Westernisation (2024).

- Not 'becoming English'; a chain of changes from British rule: technology, dress, education, secular law, new jobs.
- Can ride with Sanskritisation (a caste westernises and sanskritises in different zones of life).
- The Constitution is the largest westernisation in Srinivas's sense — and also an Indian document. Say both.

Westernisation (Srinivas) as change of caste society

EXAMPLES

- IIT + HMA in the same family.

NOT

- A moral insult. It is a technical term.

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Cases a KSLU answer should name

CASE

Indra Sawhney

(1992) Supp (3) SCC 217

Caste as a measure of backwardness — and the 50% debate.

CASE

E.V. Chinnaiah v State of A.P.

(2005) 1 SCC 394

Sub-classification fights — caste is not one block; later revisited in 2024 Constitution Bench — mention the live debate, not a fake holding.

CASE

State of Madras v Champakam Dorairajan

AIR 1951 SC 226

The First Amendment's caste-and-education origin.

Provisions & materials to quote

Art. 15–17

Non-discrimination and abolition.

Art. 340 / NCBC

Counting backwardness.

PoA Act 1989

Atrocity.

HMA s.5 / SMA

Endogamy is social, not always legal.

Preamble — fraternity

The anti-caste moral of the text.

10 / 16-mark frames from this unit

Q1

Define caste. Explain its traditional features and its evolution.

Q2

Distinguish caste and class with Indian illustrations.

Q3

Explain the role of caste in modern India. Write a note on caste among non-Hindus.

Q4

Impact of social reform movements on Indian society.

Unit recap

- 1 Ghurye's features are the caste 6-mark.
- 2 Caste $\neq$ class; they intertwine.
- 3 Sanskritisation $\neq$ annihilation.
- 4 Reform movements + Art. 17 = the legal-social story.
- 5 Non-Hindu India is not caste-free.