



RAS MAINS

Rajasthan Public Service Commission (RPSC)

Volume - 1

Sociology and Behaviour



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Sociology is **Part A of Unit 3** in GS Paper 1 of the RAS Mains exam. Unit 3 also includes **Management (Part B)** and **Accounting & Auditing (Part C)**. The entire unit carries **70 marks**, comprising **14 questions of 5 marks each**, as per the updated syllabus.

1 Unit III- SOCIOLOGY, MANAGEMENT, ACCOUNTING & AUDITING

Part A- Sociology

Sociological thought in Indian Society:

- Concept of Caste & Class, Changing dimensions of Caste and Class in Indian Society.
- Changes in Contemporary Indian Society and Culture: Secularisation, Urbanisation, Modernisation and Globalisation.
- Concepts related to Indian Social system: Doctrine of Karma, Dharma, Purushartha and Ashram system.
- Issues related to Family & Marriage, Elderly people and Disabled in present Indian Society. Impact of Cyber crime and Social Media on Indian Society.
- Challenges and Issues before Indian Society: Dowry, Divorce, Corruption, Poverty, Prostitution, Unemployment and Drug addiction.
- Problems related to weaker sections of Indian Society (with special reference to Rajasthan): Women, Marginalised groups, Dalits, SC&ST and their Welfare schemes.

Previous Years Questions:

Year	Question	Marks
2024	What is 'Secularization of Caste'?	2
2024	What is 'Separatist Communalism'?	2
2024	What do you mean by 'Socio-Cultural Ageing'?	2
2024	What is the reinforcement theory of drug abuse ?	2
2024	What do you understand about 'Globalisation of Ethnicity'?	2
2024	In present context, mention the role of Caste in Indian Politics.	5
2024	Mention various initiatives for tribal welfare taken by the Government of India regarding empowering tribal communities.	5

Year	Question	Marks
2023	What do you mean by Westoxication?	2
2023	Mention the forms of Cultural Flow discussed by Arjun Appadurai regarding Global Society.	2
2023	Casual Employment	2
2023	Culture of Poverty	2
2023	Demerits of Dowry System	2
2023	How does the Caste system represent segmental division of society?	5
2023	Present the socio-economic profile of the Garaṣia Tribe.	5

Year	Question	Marks
2021	What is 'Sharda Act'?	2
2021	Why is the caste system an example of inequality?	2
2021	What is Global Village?	2
2021	Define political corruption.	2
2021	What is the eligibility of 'old age pension' in Rajasthan?	2
2021	Which attributes have been given for the dominant caste by M.N. Srinivas?	5
2021	Write five major problems of the tribal community of Rajasthan.	5

Caste & Class in India

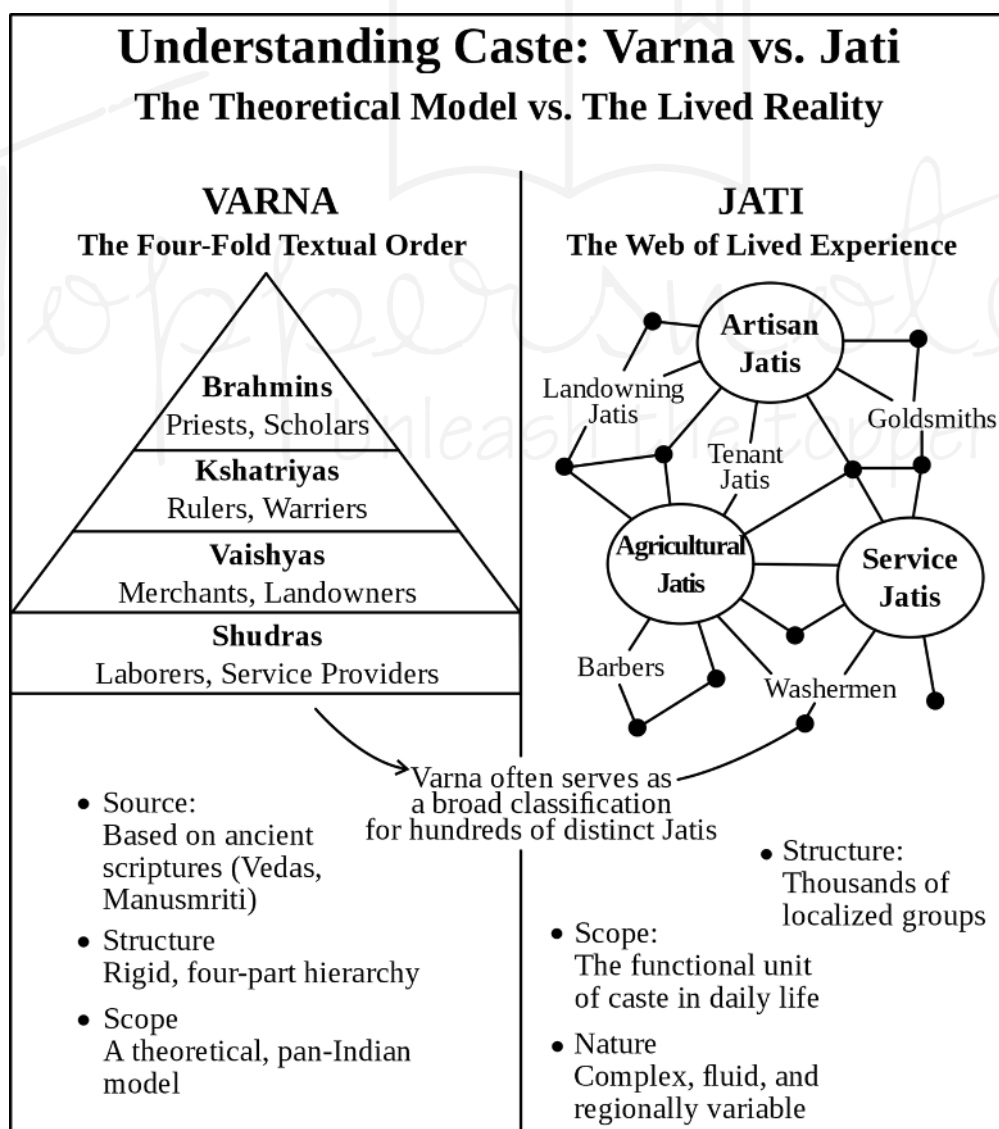
Caste System in India

- The institution of caste in India is a complex social arrangement that has evolved over thousands of years, serving both as a social structure and an ideology that legitimizes inequality. Caste is a hereditary, endogamous group with a common name, common culture, and a rigid but socially recognized position in society.

The Meaning of Caste

The word "**caste**" is derived from the Portuguese word *casta*, meaning "**pure breed**". In Indian languages, this institution is captured by two distinct concepts:

- **Varna:** Literally meaning "**colour**," it refers to a broad, four-fold social division (Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra) used as an all-India aggregative classification.
- **Jati:** A generic term for "**species**" or "**kinds**" of things. It is the term most commonly used for caste in Indian languages and refers to the thousands of regional or local sub-classifications that form the actual hierarchy people live in.



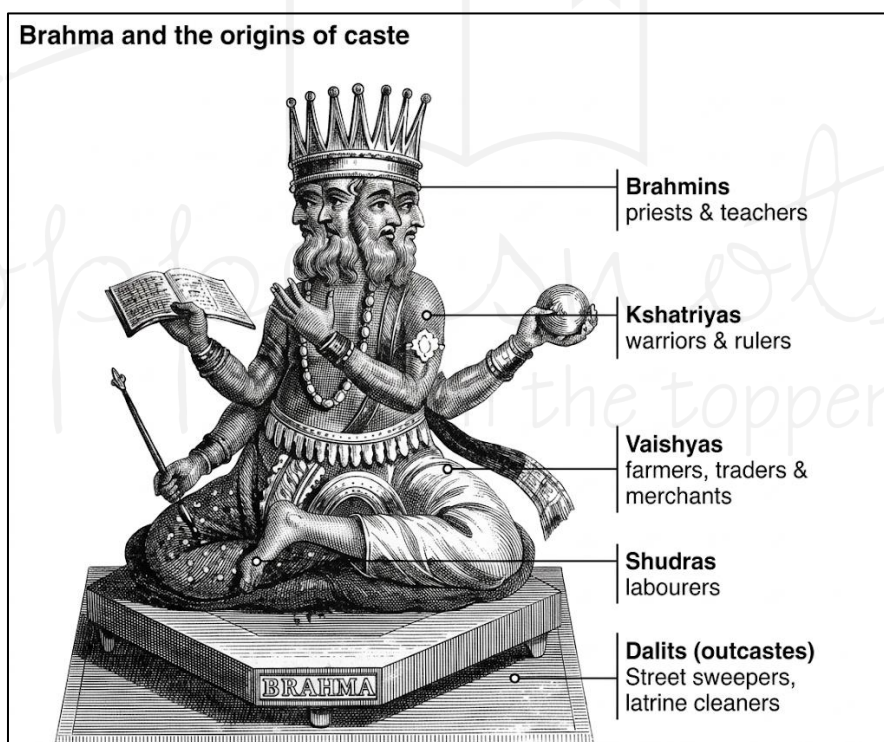
Perspectives from Different Thinkers and Groups

- **G.S. Ghurye:** Caste is a segmental division of society with hierarchy, endogamy, hereditary occupation, and restrictions on social interaction.
- **M.N. Srinivas:** Viewed the varna scheme as a hierarchy based on **ritual purity and pollution**. He also contributed concepts like "**Sanskritisation**" (how lower castes change rituals to move up) and "**dominant caste**" (castes with land rights and political power) to explain how the system changes over time.
- **Max Weber:** Caste is a status group, meaning social rank is inherited and tied to lifestyle, ritual standing, and social honour rather than only wealth.
- **British Administrators:** During the colonial period, they often viewed caste as a "**closed system**" of status-rigidity, contrasting it with the "open" class systems of the West.
- **Nationalist Leaders:** Many, including **Mahatma Gandhi**, viewed caste as a social evil and a colonial ploy to divide Indians, while simultaneously working for the "upliftment" of lower castes and the abolition of untouchability.

Theories of Origin

The sources suggest several theories regarding how the caste system began:

- **Scriptural/Divine Origin:** According to the **Rig Veda**, different castes emerged from **different parts of God's body**: Brahmins from the mouth/head (scholars/priests), Kshatriyas from the arms (warriors), Vaishyas from the thighs (merchants), and Shudras from the feet (labourers).



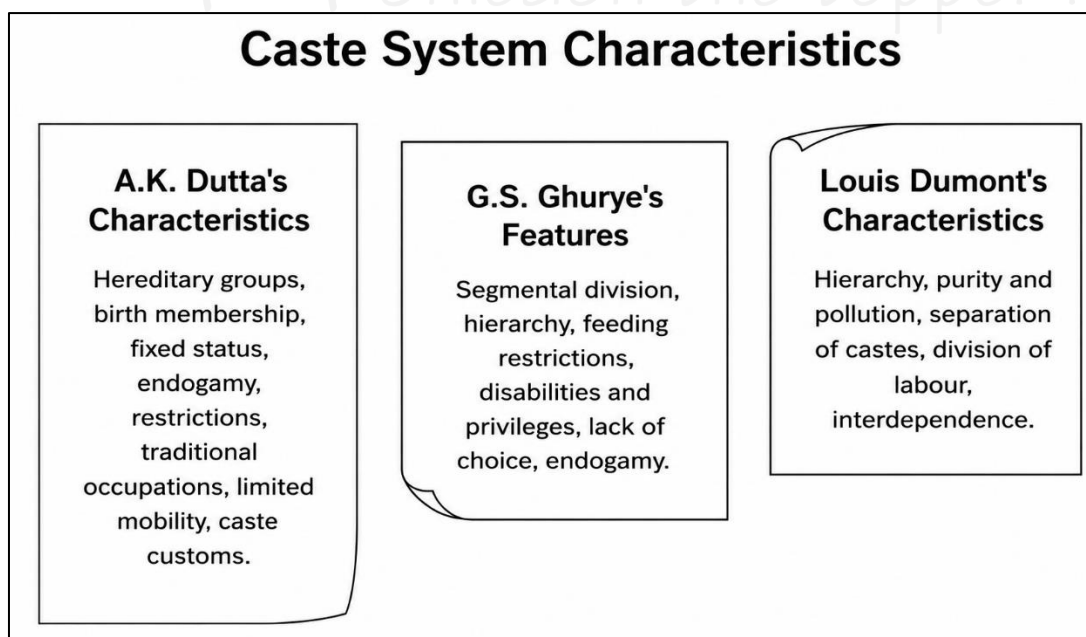
- **Historical Evolution:** In the early **Vedic period (900–500 BC)**, the system was a less rigid *varna* system where movement between categories was common and not determined strictly by birth. It only became a rigid, hereditary institution in the **post-Vedic period**.
- **G.S. Ghurye (1950):** He associated the origins of the term *varna* with the **racial distinction** between the "**Arya**" and the "**Dasa**" in ancient India. He believed those **defeated in wars** were often assigned low-caste status. Economic and military power were closely associated with high status, which then became entrenched as ritual status.

- **K.M. Pannikar:** He proposed a theory of **Political Usurpation**, suggesting that many who became "Kshatriyas" were originally from lower castes who **usurped power** and then claimed the social position of warriors.
- **M.N. Srinivas (1962):** He emphasized the **Ritual Purity and Pollution Theory**, arguing that the hierarchy is a **macro-structural scheme** based on these ritual criteria.
- **Herbert Risley (1901):** As the director of the **1901 Census of India**, Risley is associated with the **Colonial Construction Theory**. His methodical attempt to officially record castes according to "social order of precedence" is believed to have made previous identities much more **rigid and permanent** which "gave caste a new life".

Key Characteristics of Caste System

The traditional caste system is defined by several core characteristics:

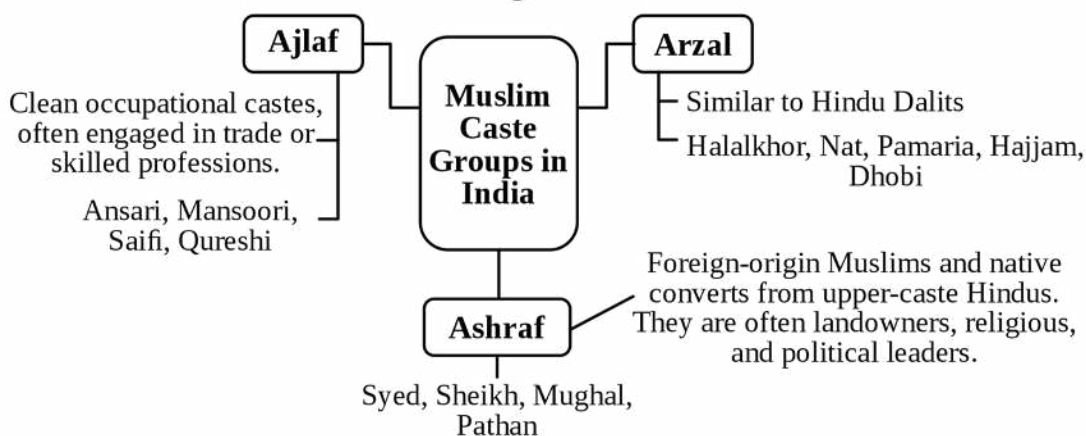
1. **Determined by Birth:** A person is "born into" their caste, and it is an **ascribed status** that cannot be changed, chosen, or left.
2. **Endogamy:** Strict rules require members to **marry only within their own caste** group.
3. **Hierarchy:** Every person and caste has a specified place in a **ladder-like rank of status**, ranging from the highest to the lowest.
4. **Purity and Pollution:** This is the logic behind the hierarchy. Ritual status is based on closeness to or distance from the "sacred". Activities considered "polluting" (like leatherwork or scavenging) result in low status, while "pure" activities result in high status.
5. **Occupational Linkage:** Castes were traditionally linked to specific **hereditary occupations**. In a village setting, castes are often complementary and non-competing, forming a social division of labour, like the **Jajmani system**.
6. **Layered Organisation:** Castes are not monolithic; they contain multiple sub-divisions (sub-castes).
7. **Restrictions on Food and Social Interaction:** Scriptural rules specify what kinds of food may be eaten and with whom it may be shared.
8. **Civil and Religious Disabilities:** Historically, lower castes faced severe restrictions, such as being barred from public roads, schools, or temples, while upper castes enjoyed specific privileges.



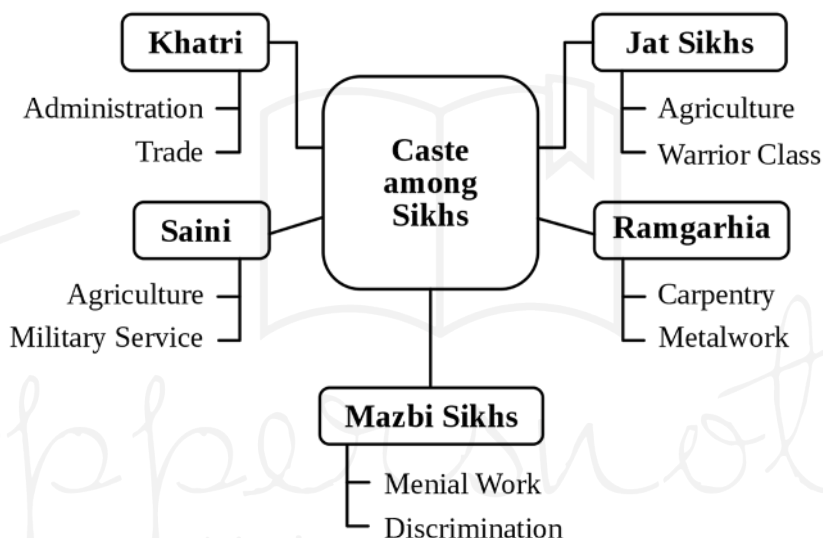
Caste Among Other Religions

Though colonial and orientalist narratives have framed caste as primarily a Hindu phenomenon, however, caste is also a feature of other religious groups.

Caste among Muslims



Caste among Sikhs



Functions of Caste

1. Individual Functions

- ✓ Provides a fixed social status from birth.
- ✓ Determines traditional occupation and economic role.
- ✓ Offers social security and support during crises.
- ✓ Shapes an individual's social identity and group belonging.
- ✓ Prescribes norms of behavior, customs (endogamy), and values.

2. Social Functions

- ✓ Maintains social order and stability in society.
- ✓ Facilitates division of labour among different groups.
- ✓ Promotes social cooperation and interdependence among castes.
- ✓ Regulates social conduct through caste norms and sanctions.

3. Economic Functions

- ✓ Facilitates occupational specialization and division of labor.
- ✓ Preserves hereditary skills and craftsmanship across generations.
- ✓ Provides employment opportunities within traditional occupations.
- ✓ Supports local production and economic organization.

4. Political Functions

- ✓ Acts as a basis for political mobilization and representation of each group.
- ✓ Influences voting behavior and leadership patterns.
- ✓ Serves as a channel for group interests and demands as Pressure Groups.

5. Cultural Functions

- ✓ Helps preserve religious practices and cultural heritage.
- ✓ Preserves cultural customs, rituals, traditional knowledge and skills across generations.
- ✓ Maintains community traditions, festivals, and ceremonies.
- ✓ Strengthens group solidarity and collective identity.

Dysfunctions of the Caste System

1. Social Dysfunctions

- ✓ Promotes social inequality and hierarchical discrimination.
- ✓ Encourages untouchability and social exclusion of lower castes.
- ✓ Creates social divisions and weakens social unity.
- ✓ Restricts social mobility by assigning status based on birth.
- ✓ Hinders the development of an egalitarian society.

2. Economic Dysfunctions

- ✓ Limits occupational mobility and individual choice of profession.
- ✓ Prevents efficient utilization of human resources and talent.
- ✓ Discourages innovation and economic competitiveness.
- ✓ Perpetuates poverty among lower caste groups.
- ✓ Creates barriers to skill development and modernization.

3. Political Dysfunctions

- ✓ Encourages caste-based politics and vote-bank mobilization.
- ✓ Diverts attention from real developmental and policy issues.
- ✓ Generates political conflicts and social tensions among caste groups.

4. Educational Dysfunctions

- ✓ Historically denied access to education for certain castes.
- ✓ Creates unequal educational opportunities and wealth creation.
- ✓ Reinforces social and economic disparities through educational exclusion.

5. Cultural Dysfunctions

- ✓ Promotes rigid social customs and conservative attitudes.
- ✓ Restricts inter-caste interaction and cultural integration.
- ✓ Encourages prejudice, stereotypes, and social distance between groups.

6. National Dysfunctions

- ✓ Weakens national integration by emphasizing caste identities.
- ✓ Creates obstacles to social justice and equality.
- ✓ Generates social unrest and caste-based conflicts.
- ✓ Undermines the principles of democracy, fraternity, and human dignity.

7. Sociological View

- ✓ According to modern sociologists, while the caste system historically provided social organization and occupational specialization, its rigid and hereditary nature has increasingly become a barrier to social equality, economic efficiency, and democratic development in contemporary India.

Current evolution in Caste System

- **Industrialization** → The rise of the factory system shifted employment from hereditary occupations to skill-based jobs, weakening traditional caste-occupation links.
- **Urbanization** → Cities promote anonymity, heterogeneity, and individualism, reducing caste visibility and rigidity. Metropolises like Mumbai and Bengaluru provide opportunities beyond caste identity.
- **Sports as a Social Leveler** → Talent and performance override caste barriers. Milkha Singh, from a socially disadvantaged background, emerged as a national sporting icon.
- **Digital Platforms** → Online workspaces and platforms reduce social boundaries, enabling pan-India and global collaboration beyond caste identities. Example: Meta and other technology platforms.
- **Modern Value System** → Rationality, merit, and professionalism increasingly replace traditional notions of hierarchy, purity, and pollution.
- **Constitutional Mandate** → Article 17 abolishes untouchability, providing a legal foundation for caste mobility and social equality.
- **Mandal Commission** → Recognized backwardness as social and educational rather than ritual, leading to greater political awareness and mobility among OBCs.
- **Political Reservations** → Reservation policies have enabled political assertion and leadership among Dalits and OBCs, reducing caste subordination.
- **Government-Led Social Reforms**
 - ✓ The Rajasthan Government provides ₹10,00,000 incentives for inter-caste marriages, under the Dr. Savitaben Ambedkar Antarjatiya Vivah Protsahan Yojana promoting social integration.
 - ✓ MHA's Communal Harmony Guidelines (2008) aim to prevent caste-based discrimination and conflict.
- **Cultural Icons Breaking Stereotypes** → Public figures like Rajinikanth, from a non-Brahmin background, challenge traditional caste stereotypes and inspire social mobility.
- **Land Ownership Changes** → Land reforms altered caste power structures. Jats in Punjab and Haryana gained economic and political dominance through post-land redistribution.
- **Emergence of New Castes/Identities** → Groups like Lingayats in Karnataka assert distinct religious and social identities, reflecting dynamism within the caste structure.
- **Global Indian Diaspora** → Indian communities abroad often minimize caste in social and professional life due to legal equality, multicultural environments, and merit-based systems.

Contemporary Dalit Movements and Caste Annihilation

- Contemporary Dalit movements are social, political, and cultural efforts by historically oppressed communities to assert their identity, claim rights, and challenge systemic discrimination. Inspired by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision of "**annihilation of caste**," these movements focus on empowerment, equality, and dignity. While they assert Dalit pride and rights, their ultimate goal aligns with dismantling caste hierarchies and promoting a more just and egalitarian society.
 1. **Assertion of Dalit Identity** → Emphasizing Dalit pride and history helps challenge the stigma of untouchability and caste inferiority.
Example: Ambedkarite literature, Dalit cultural festivals, and public celebrations of Ambedkar Jayanti.
 2. **Political Empowerment** → Representation through reservations, Dalit-led political parties, and leadership positions breaks traditional upper-caste monopoly in politics.
Example: Dalit Panthers movement, increased Dalit MPs in Parliament and State Assemblies.
 3. **Social and Cultural Reform** → Promoting Dalit heroes, religious reforms, and cultural reinterpretation strengthens social equality.
Example: Rejection of caste-based restrictions in temples, reinterpretation of folklore and history.

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4. **Education and Economic Empowerment** → Access to education, scholarships, and skill development reduces structural inequalities imposed by caste.
Example: Dalit-focused NGOs, government schemes for education and entrepreneurship.
 5. **Legal and Constitutional Safeguards** → Laws against untouchability and caste discrimination empower Dalits to assert their rights.
 6. *Example:* Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

Major Reformers Who Opposed the Caste System

1. Ayyankali (1863–1941)

- ✓ Social reformer from Kerala who worked for the upliftment of lower castes and Dalits.
- ✓ Led movements demanding the right of Dalits to use public roads.
- ✓ Fought for access to education for marginalized communities.
- ✓ Played a significant role in securing school admission for Dalit children.

2. Jyotirao (Jyotiba) Phule (1827–1890)

- ✓ Social reformer from Maharashtra who strongly opposed caste discrimination and untouchability.
- ✓ Founded the **Satyashodhak Samaj** in 1873 to promote social equality.
- ✓ Advocated education for lower castes and women.
- ✓ Authored the famous book **Gulamgiri (Slavery)**.

3. Savitribai Phule (1831–1897)

- ✓ Pioneer of women's education in India.
- ✓ Co-founded the first girls' school in Pune with Jyotiba Phule.
- ✓ Worked for the education of Shudras, Ati-Shudras, and women.
- ✓ Established night schools for farmers and labourers.

4. E.V. Ramasamy Naicker (Periyar) (1879–1973)

- ✓ Founder of the **Self-Respect Movement** in Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ Criticized caste hierarchy, Brahmanical dominance, and social inequality.
- ✓ Advocated rationalism, social justice, and equal rights.
- ✓ Played a leading role in the anti-caste movement in South India.

5. Sri Narayana Guru (1855–1928)

- ✓ Social and spiritual reformer from Kerala.
- ✓ Preached the message: **“One Caste, One Religion, One God for Mankind.”**
- ✓ Worked against caste discrimination and social exclusion.
- ✓ Promoted education, social reform, and inter-community harmony.

6. M.N. Srinivas (1916–1999)

- ✓ Renowned Indian sociologist who studied caste and social change.
- ✓ Introduced the concepts of **Sanskritization**, **Westernization**, and **Dominant Caste**.
- ✓ Authored **The Remembered Village**, a landmark study of rural Indian society.
- ✓ Analyzed the changing nature of caste in modern India.

Way Forward regarding Caste System

- i. **Value-Based Education without Ideological Colouration** → Schools and colleges should teach equality, empathy, and social justice, avoiding politically or ideologically biased interpretations of caste.
- ii. **Doing Away with Surnames** → Eliminating caste-coded surnames can reduce instant social classification and discrimination in education, jobs, and marriage.
- iii. **Inclusive Stakeholder Participation** → All caste groups should be involved in policymaking and social reform to ensure legitimacy, fairness, and community buy-in.

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- iv. **Judicial Implementation of Provisions** → Strong enforcement of constitutional safeguards (Articles 15 and 17) is necessary to prevent discrimination and uphold rights.
 - v. **Regular Review of Reservation Policy** → Periodic assessment (every 5 years) ensures that affirmative action remains targeted and effective for marginalized groups.
 - vi. **Fostering Empathy through Awareness Campaigns** → Social campaigns can challenge stereotypes, reduce prejudice, and cultivate solidarity across caste lines.
 - vii. **Revision of Textbooks** → Including anti-caste reformers and social movements helps students understand historical struggles and promotes a culture of equality.
 - viii. **Support Caste-Neutral Skill Development Programs** → Education and employment opportunities based on merit and skill rather than caste can reduce structural inequalities.
 - ix. **Caste Census for Evidence-Based Policy** → Conducting periodic caste-based data collection allows targeted interventions and equitable distribution of resources.
 - x. **Foster Caste-Neutral Public Spaces** → Parks, libraries, and community centers that are inclusive and accessible to all can reduce social segregation.
 - xi. The caste system in India has transformed but not vanished. Despite legal safeguards and social change, caste persists as a lived and political reality shaping everyday life. Its annihilation requires not only laws and policies but also a fundamental change in social attitudes and practices toward equality and dignity.

Class System in India

- **Class** represents an "open" system where status is achieved rather than assigned by birth. Unlike caste, class is not legally defined or religiously sanctioned; it is a social group whose members share a similar socio-economic position.

The Meaning of Class According to Different Thinkers

Different scholars have defined class based on varied economic and social criteria:

- **Karl Marx:** He viewed class as being defined by the **ownership or non-ownership of the means of production** (resources, technology, and land). For Marx, society is divided into two mutually opposed groups: the **ruling class** (owners) and the **service class** or proletariat (those who work for wages). He believed class control extends to ideas and ideology to justify the superior position of the ruling group.
- **Max Weber:** While agreeing that class is primarily economic, Weber argued that **status and power** are also essential principles of stratification. He noted that in market economies, individuals with **marketable skills** (like engineering or medicine) have better "life chances" than those without, regardless of property ownership.
- **Benedetto Croce:** Described social classes as a "nightmare of furies" that have haunted the world's social doctrine for the last century.
- **Prof. C.A. Mace:** Argued that class functions as a human motivation primarily seen in **marriage**, noting that marrying "out of one's class" was often considered a more serious matter than marrying into a different religion or nationality.
- **Prof. T.H. Pear:** Viewed class through a "**convivial test**", suggesting the real measure of class is whom a person would naturally entertain in their home or introduce to friends.
- **Gretton:** Defined the **Middle Class** specifically as the "independent" class, composed of **merchants, traders, entrepreneurs, and later, industrialists or factory owners**. He distinguished this "historical middle class" from the **salariat** (salaried employees).
- **Sombart:** Identified the "middle class" as the representatives of **local production and distribution**

Theories of Origin

The sources outline two major perspectives on how class systems originated:

- **Marxist Theory of Evolution:** Marx theorized that human societies began with "**primitive communism**," a state of complete equality where classes did not exist. Classes only emerged as private property and the division between owners and non-owners developed.
- **Colonial Impact in India:** In the Indian context, modern social classes had their **genesis during British rule**.
 - ✓ **Land Reforms:** British administrators introduced individual ownership rights (such as the Permanent Settlement), turning land into a marketable commodity and creating the classes of **Zamindars (landlords)** and **tenants**.
 - ✓ **Economic Change:** The development of railways, modern industry, and trade led to the rise of a **commercial middle class, industrialists**, and a **working class** formed from ruined artisans and peasants.
 - ✓ **Education and Bureaucracy:** The introduction of Western education to staff the state's administrative machinery led to the birth of the **professional classes** (doctors, lawyers, and bureaucrats).

The sources identify the following key reasons for the rise of this system:

1. Impact of British Land Reforms

- ✓ Prior to British rule, the "self-sufficiency of the village community" meant that there was little surplus and thus less marked class differentiation. The British introduced **individual ownership rights** in land through reforms like the Permanent Settlement, turning land into a private commodity that could be bought, sold, or mortgaged.
- ✓ This created the first distinct rural classes in India: **Zamindars (landlords)** and **tenants**.

2. Commercialisation of Agriculture

- ✓ The introduction of a new method for fixing land revenue and requiring **cash payments** stimulated the growth of trade and commerce. Agriculture was now geared toward providing raw materials for British industries, leading to the rise of a **commercial middle class** involved in the export-import business.

3. Development of Infrastructure and Industry

The rapid expansion of the **railways** and roads from the mid-nineteenth century onwards facilitated the movement of goods and capital.

- ✓ **Rise of the Industrial Classes:** The accumulation of savings by Indian traders led to the creation of Indian-owned industries, giving rise to the **industrialists** and a modern **working class** (proletariat).
- ✓ **Source of the Working Class:** This class was formed predominantly from pauperised peasants and ruined artisans who could no longer compete with cheap, machine-made British goods.

4. New State Machinery and Modern Education

To govern efficiently, the British established an extensive **state administrative machinery**.

- ✓ **Birth of Professional Classes:** The need for educated staff to man this bureaucracy led to the introduction of **Western education** and the establishment of schools and universities.
- ✓ **Outcome:** This resulted in the emergence of a new "salaried" or **professional middle class**, consisting of bureaucrats, management executives, doctors, lawyers, and teachers.

5. Urbanisation and Economic Growth

- ✓ Modern industry and cities created new jobs that were not governed by traditional caste rules. **Urbanisation** made the strict, caste-segregated patterns of the village difficult to maintain, allowing for an "open" class system based on **meritocracy, wealth, and occupation** rather than birth.

6. Uneven Growth and Community Specialisation

The class system did not emerge uniformly; it developed first in regions like **Bengal and Bombay**, where British political and economic power were first established. Furthermore, communities often entered classes based on their traditional roles:

- ✓ **Baniyas** (traditional traders) were the first to enter modern commerce and banking.
- ✓ **Brahmins** (traditional scholars) were the first to adopt modern education and enter the professional classes.

Key Characteristics in the Indian Context

Class in India is characterized by its relative flexibility and its complex relationship with the ancient caste system:

1. **Open System and Mobility:** Class is an "open" system where individuals can choose their occupations and move up the social hierarchy through wealth, income, and education.
2. **Uneven Growth:** The rise of classes was not uniform across India; it developed first in regions like **Bengal and Bombay** where British political and economic power were first established.
3. **Community-Specific Entry:** Certain communities entered specific classes based on their traditional vocations; for example, **Baniyas** were the first to take up modern commerce, while **Brahmins** were the first to enter professional classes through Western education.
4. **Rural vs. Urban Divisions:**
 - ✓ **Rural India:** Classes are divided into **landlords, peasant proprietors** (rich, middle, and poor), **tenants**, and **agricultural labourers**.
 - ✓ **Urban India:** Classes comprise **capitalists, the corporate sector, professional classes, petty traders**, and the **working class**.
5. **Caste-Class Nexus:** There is a strong overlap where **higher castes are generally the higher classes**, while lower castes comprise the lower classes. However, modern areas of social life are increasingly becoming "caste-free," allowing for a "nexus" where the two systems incorporate and influence each other.
6. **Invisibility for the Elite:** For the urban upper-caste middle class, caste has become relatively "**invisible**" because they have already consolidated the economic and educational capital necessary to maintain their status without explicitly relying on caste identity.

Global Thinkers and Theoretical Classifications

- **Karl Marx:** He proposed a seminal two-fold division based on the **means of production** (resources, land, and technology).
 - ✓ **The Ruling Class:** Those who own and control these resources, allowing them to exercise political power and control societal ideas.
 - ✓ **The Service Class (Proletariat):** Those who own no resources and must sell their labour for wages to survive.
- **Max Weber:** He refined Marx's view by arguing that classes also develop based on **marketable skills**. Individuals with high-demand skills (like doctors or engineers) have better "**life chances**" and facilities than the unskilled, even if they do not own property.
- **Gretton and Sombart:** These thinkers focused on the **Middle Class**. Gretton defined them as the "**independent**" class (merchants and entrepreneurs) who were capable of self-sufficiency. Sombart identified them as representatives of **local production and distribution**.
- **Matthew Arnold:** He used more descriptive terms, famously labeling the upper class as "**barbarians**" and the middle class as "**Philistines**".
- **Professor T.H. Pear:** He proposed the "**convivial test**" for class, suggesting that a person's true class is determined by whom they would naturally entertain in their home and introduce to friends.

- **Professor C.A. Mace:** He argued that class is a form of human motivation primarily visible in **marriage**, where marrying "out of one's class" is often viewed more seriously than marrying across nationalities or religions.

The "**Convivial test**" is a social measure of class-quality proposed by **Professor T.H. Pear**. Pear viewed this as a more accurate way to describe social differences than traditional markers, especially as the objective importance of class began to diminish. The test is based on **social routine and natural association** rather than antagonism or wealth alone.

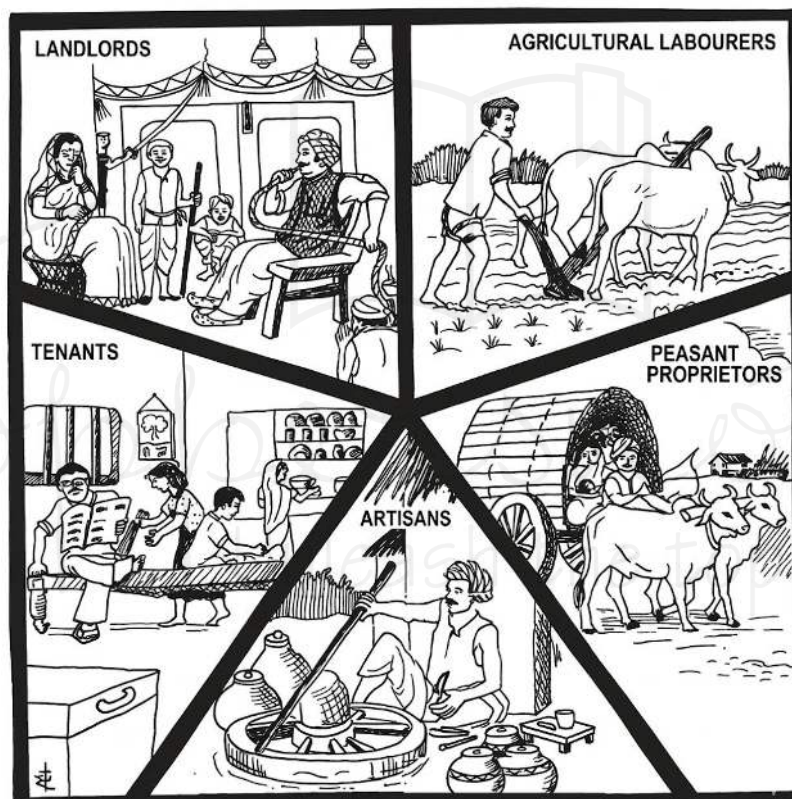
The test asks three specific questions about social interaction:

- **Entertainment:** Whom would you naturally entertain in your home if you could afford to do so?
- **Reciprocity:** Would you be unsurprised if the invitation were returned by them?
- **Social Introduction:** Would you introduce that person with pleasure to your other friends?

Classifications in the Indian Context

- In India, class formation was heavily influenced by British colonial rule, land reforms, and the pre-existing caste structure.

Rural Social Classes



The sources identify five principal classes in rural India:

1. **Landlords:** Following land reforms, many transitioned from tax extractors to active farm managers or rentiers.
2. **Peasant Proprietors:** Subdivided into three groups:
 - ✓ **Rich Peasants:** Large landholders who supervise but do not perform manual labour.
 - ✓ **Middle Peasants:** Medium landholders who are self-sufficient and use family labour.
 - ✓ **Poor Peasants:** Small landholders whose land is insufficient for family needs, forcing them to rent land or work as labourers.
3. **Tenants:** Includes various categories like sub-tenants and **sharecroppers**, the latter being the most prominent and politically weak group today.

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4. **Agricultural Labourers:** Landless or near-landless people who survive by hiring out their labour for very low wages.
 5. **Artisans:** Occupational groups such as carpenters (**Badhai**) and ironsmiths (**Lohar**).

Urban Social Classes

Urban classes are categorized into five main groups:

1. **Capitalists:** Divided into **commercial** (trading) and **industrial** classes.
2. **Corporate Sector:** Organizations owned and managed by private individuals or entities, which grew significantly after the 1990s.
3. **Professional Classes:** A "salaried" group of bureaucrats, managers, doctors, and lawyers who possess specific educational qualifications.
4. **Petty Traders and Shopkeepers:** The link between producers and consumers, ranging from shopkeepers to informal sector hawkers.
5. **Working Classes:** Formed mostly from displaced peasants and artisans working in industries and railways.

Indian Thinkers and Key Concepts

- **M.N. Srinivas:** He introduced the concept of the "**Dominant Caste**" to describe intermediate castes that acquired large landholdings and political power after Independence, effectively functioning as a powerful regional class.
- **K.M. Pannikar:** He noted a historical process of class movement through **political usurpation**, where lower-caste individuals took power and then claimed the social status of the Kshatriya (warrior) class.
- **Ayyankali and Jotirao Phule:** These reformers focused on the **oppressed and "depressed classes"** (Dalits and lower castes), leading movements for their human rights and social justice

Functions of the Class System in India

1. Economic Functions

- ✓ Facilitates division of labour based on skills, education, and qualifications.
- ✓ Encourages occupational mobility and career advancement.
- ✓ Promotes economic competition and productivity.
- ✓ Enables efficient allocation of human resources.

2. Social Functions

- ✓ Provides social identity and status based on achievement rather than birth.
- ✓ Encourages social mobility through education and economic success.
- ✓ Facilitates social interaction among individuals with similar lifestyles and interests.
- ✓ Promotes aspirations for upward social mobility.

3. Political Functions

- ✓ Influences political participation and representation.
- ✓ Acts as a basis for interest groups and pressure groups.
- ✓ Shapes voting patterns and policy preferences.
- ✓ Encourages demands for social justice and welfare measures.

4. Educational Functions

- ✓ Motivates individuals to acquire education and skills for higher social status.
- ✓ Promotes merit, talent, and achievement as criteria for advancement.
- ✓ Encourages professional specialization and expertise.

5. Cultural Functions

- ✓ Influences lifestyle, consumption patterns, and cultural preferences.
- ✓ Promotes the spread of modern values such as merit, achievement, and individualism.
- ✓ Facilitates cultural exchange among different social groups.

6. Integrative Functions

- ✓ Creates opportunities for interaction among people from diverse backgrounds.
- ✓ Reduces rigid social barriers compared to the caste system.
- ✓ Supports social change and modernization.
- ✓ Encourages a more open and dynamic social structure.

7. Sociological Perspective

- ✓ According to sociologists, the class system contributes to social organization by allocating roles, rewarding achievement, promoting mobility, and facilitating economic and social development in a modern society.

Dysfunctions of the Class System in India

Economic Dysfunctions

- Leads to unequal distribution of wealth and resources.
- Widens the gap between the rich and the poor.
- Concentrates economic power in the hands of a few groups.
- Limits access to quality education, healthcare, and employment for lower classes.
- Contributes to poverty, unemployment, and economic insecurity.

Social Dysfunctions

- Creates social stratification and status inequality.
- Generates feelings of superiority and inferiority among different classes.
- Encourages social exclusion and marginalization of weaker sections.
- Reduces social cohesion and solidarity.
- Promotes class-based discrimination and prejudice.

Political Dysfunctions

- Allows affluent classes to exert disproportionate influence on policymaking.
- Encourages elite domination in political institutions.
- Leads to unequal political participation and representation.
- Can result in policies favoring privileged groups over disadvantaged classes.

Educational Dysfunctions

- Creates unequal access to quality education.
- Perpetuates educational disparities between classes.
- Limits opportunities for skill development among lower-income groups.
- Reinforces existing social and economic inequalities.

Cultural Dysfunctions

- Promotes materialism and status competition.
- Creates lifestyle differences that may foster social distance.
- Encourages conspicuous consumption and social comparison.
- Weakens cultural integration among different social classes.

Psychological Dysfunctions

- Generates stress, frustration, and insecurity among lower classes.
- Creates feelings of deprivation and relative inequality.
- Leads to low self-esteem and reduced social confidence among disadvantaged groups.
- May increase social tensions and resentment.

National Dysfunctions

- Hinders inclusive growth and equitable development.
- Contributes to social unrest, protests, and class conflicts.
- Weakens social harmony and national integration.
- Creates barriers to achieving social justice and equal opportunity.

Sociological Perspective

- According to sociologists, while the class system promotes achievement and mobility, excessive class inequalities can lead to exploitation, social exclusion, unequal opportunities, and conflicts that hinder social cohesion and balanced development.

Comparative Analysis between Caste and Class

Feature	Caste	Class
Basis	Birth, hereditary	Economic status, education, occupation, achievement
Membership	Fixed at birth; cannot change	Can change through education, wealth, or profession
Social Mobility	Very limited; rigid hierarchy	Relatively flexible; mobility possible
Occupation	Traditionally assigned and hereditary	Based on skills, merit, and choice
Endogamy	Marriage within caste is mandatory	No formal restrictions on marriage
Hierarchy	Hierarchical and ritual-based	Hierarchy based on wealth, power, and education
Social Interaction	Restricted between castes; rules of purity and pollution	Less rigid; interaction influenced by lifestyle and status
Religion	Often linked with religious beliefs and rituals	Not directly linked to religion
Economic Function	Occupational specialization often traditional	Economic position determines lifestyle and access
Political Influence	Limited historically; now some caste-based politics	Influenced by wealth, education, and social networks
Education	Historically restricted for lower castes	Access largely depends on economic and social capital
Cultural Function	Preserves customs, traditions, and rituals	Reflects lifestyle, consumption patterns, and values
Change Over Time	Slowly changing, traditional rigidity remains	More dynamic; influenced by modernization and globalization

- Class and caste in India intersect as overlapping systems of stratification—caste defines identity while class reflects economic status—with **64% reservation** addressing historical disadvantages. Despite constitutional safeguards, **caste-based discrimination** and **economic inequality** persist, with upper castes dominating urban sectors while Dalits/Adivasis face continued marginalization. The path forward requires strengthening affirmative action, promoting education-driven mobility, eliminating discrimination, and ensuring **equal dignity** for all, embodying India's commitment to **social justice**.

Contemporary Changes in Indian Society

Changes in Contemporary Indian Society and Culture:

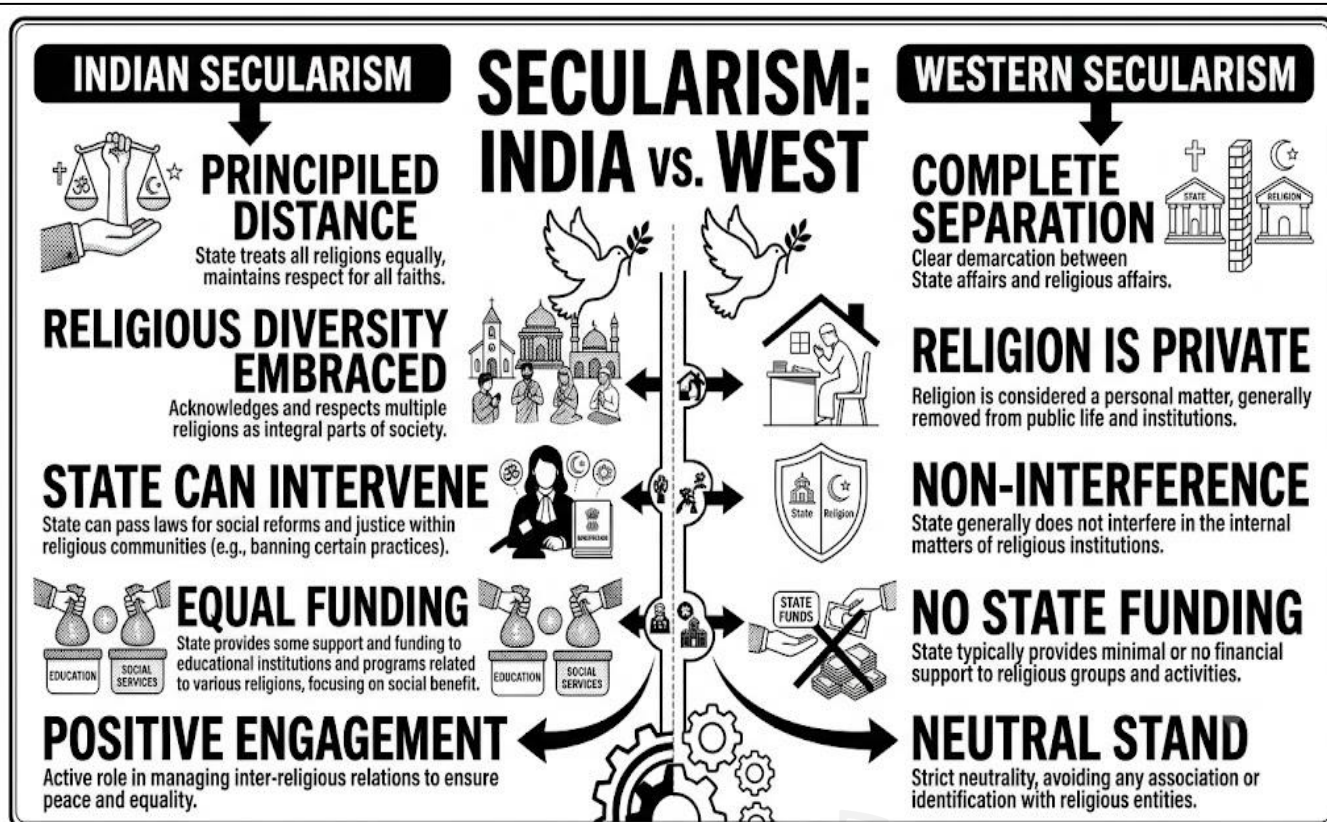
- Indian society and culture have undergone significant transformation due to urbanization, industrialization, modernization and globalization. Traditional social structures like caste, family, and community are evolving, with greater emphasis on individualism, education, and gender equality. Simultaneously, modern technology, media, and cultural exchange are reshaping values, lifestyles, and cultural expressions across the country.

Secularism

- Secularism, derived from the idea of being separate from religion, means that moral values are guided by reason rather than religious dictates. In India, **secularism** is defined not by a strict wall of separation between religion and state, but by the principle of *Sarva-dharma-sambhava*, which means equal respect for all religions.

Comparison of Secularism Models

Feature	Indian Secularism	USA Secularism (Separationist)	French Secularism (Laïcité)
Core Philosophy	Sarva-dharma-sambhava (equality of all religions).	Separationist: Politics and religion are kept separate.	Hard Secularism: Total separation of religion and state.
State-Religion Relationship	Principled Distance: The state is neutral but can intervene for social justice and equality.	Hands-off approach: The state neither promotes nor interferes in religious matters.	Arm's length principle: State keeps a distance while confining religion to the private sphere.
Public vs. Private Sphere	Religion is visible in public life; the state supports various religious needs (e.g., festivals, welfare).	Religion is treated as a private matter , but individuals have broad freedom to practice.	Religion is strictly private ; religious symbols and practices are restricted in public institutions.
Nature of Intervention	Positive Secularism: Proactive engagement to reform regressive practices.	Negative Secularism: Strict neutrality and non-interference.	Negative Secularism: Minimal state influence from religion in public life.
Equality Approach	Equal respect for all; states may provide support to ensure fairness among diverse faiths.	Neutrality; no preferential treatment or support for any specific religion.	Strict neutrality in public offices and schools; restricts religious expression in these spaces.
Examples of Practice	State-led reforms like the Triple Talaq ban or support for diverse religious festivals.	Strict church-state separation in government functions.	Prohibition of religious symbols (like hijabs or crosses) in government offices and schools



Instances of Secularism in India from History to Present

1. Ancient and Medieval Period

- ✓ **Buddhism and Jainism:** Promoted tolerance, non-violence, and coexistence alongside other faiths. Both emphasized moral living over rigid rituals, fostering social harmony.
- ✓ **Ashoka's Dhamma (3rd century BCE):** Emperor Ashoka propagated dhamma, a policy of ethical governance, tolerance, and respect for all religions, encouraging peaceful coexistence.
- ✓ **Sanatan Dharma (Hinduism):** Historically accommodated multiple religious paths and welcomed diverse philosophical and spiritual traditions.
- ✓ **Bhakti and Sufi Movements:** Saints and poets emphasized love, equality, humanity, and devotion beyond caste or religion, fostering interfaith understanding and social harmony.
- ✓ **Akbar's Din-i-Ilahi (16th century):** Attempted a syncretic faith blending elements of various religions to promote tolerance and unity.

2. Colonial and Pre-Independence Era

- ✓ **Nehru Committee (1928):** Proposed provisions emphasizing religious equality and minority rights in governance, laying groundwork for secular principles in independent India.

3. Post-Independence: Constitutional Secularism

- ✓ **Constitution of India:** Guarantees secularism through key provisions:
 - **Article 27:** Freedom from compulsory religious taxation.
 - **Articles 29–30:** Protect cultural and educational rights of minorities.
 - **Articles 25–28:** Ensure freedom of religion while allowing state intervention for social reform.
- ✓ **Principled Distance (Rajiv Bhargava):** The Indian state maintains distance from religion but can intervene to ensure equality, social justice, and humanism.

4. Contemporary Examples

- ✓ **Indian Army:** Operates as a secular institution where personnel of all faiths serve together, emphasizing national identity over religious identity.
- ✓ **Popular Culture & Music:** Songs like "Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Isai — aapas mein hai bhai-bhai" reflect interfaith harmony and national unity.

- ✓ **Space and Science Achievements:** Organizations like ISRO showcase collaboration among scientists across states, religions, and languages, highlighting national integration.
- ✓ **Civil Services & Bureaucracy:** Officers from varied backgrounds work together, ensuring governance reflects unity in diversity.
- ✓ **Festivals and Public Holidays:** National celebrations like Republic Day, Independence Day, Gandhi Jayanti, and regional festivals observed nationwide reinforce shared national identity.

Indian Secularism: An Outcome of Tolerance, Assimilation and Pluralism

➤ Indian secularism has evolved in a deeply religious and culturally diverse society, drawing upon values of tolerance, assimilation, and pluralism rooted in India's historical and constitutional experience.

1. Role of Tolerance

- Historically visible in coexistence of multiple religions and philosophies since ancient times.
- Promoted peaceful cohabitation but implies passive acceptance, not necessarily equality.
- Forms the ethical base of Indian secularism but is insufficient on its own.

2. Role of Assimilation

- India absorbed diverse religious influences (Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Judaism).
- Assimilation occurred without forced homogenization; communities retained distinct identities.
- Helped create a shared cultural space while respecting diversity.

3. Role of Pluralism

- Constitutional recognition of religious diversity (Articles 25–28).
- The state maintains engagement for all religions rather than strict separation.
- Ensures equality, minority rights, and scope for social reform.

Advantages of Indian Secularism

The Indian model of secularism offers several unique benefits for a diverse society:

1. **Cultural Enrichment:** Preserves diverse religions, languages, and traditions; fosters harmony through shared festivals and collaborative institutions like the Army and ISRO. It fosters a "**salad bowl**" society where distinct identities are preserved rather than merged into a single "**melting pot**".
2. **Peace and Stability:** Promotes tolerance, prevents dominance of a single religion, and protects minority rights.
3. **Strengthening Democracy:** Ensures equality, prevents theocracy, and supports fair governance.
4. **Social Reform:** Enables positive state interventions like the Triple Talaq ban to protect rights and justice.

Threats to Indian Secularism

Despite its advantages, several factors currently challenge the secular fabric of India:

- **Communal Politics:** Religious polarization can cause unrest (e.g., Ram Janmabhoomi, Nuh violence).
- **Minority Underrepresentation:** Bureaucratic and political exclusion persists (Muslims 2.5% in bureaucracy).
- **Rising Intolerance:** Vigilantism and punitive measures target specific communities.
- **Pseudo-Secularism & Fundamentalism:** Political misuse and extremist ideologies threaten pluralism.
- **Media & Radicalization:** Fake news and youth radicalization erode social cohesion.

Challenges to Cultural Practices in the Name of Secularism

The intersection of secular governance and religious tradition often leads to friction:

- **Judicial vs Tradition:** Court rulings (Sabarimala) clash with customs.
- **Institutional Regulations:** Dress codes and public space rules (Hijab row, loudspeaker limits) affect religious expression.