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Q2(a)

Is caste system changing, weakening or disintegrating in India?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · Sociology GS 2 · 20 marks · Caste System

Caste System: Perspectives (G.S. Ghurye, M.N. Srinivas, Louis Dumont, Andre Beteille); Features of caste system; Untouchability - forms and perspectives.

Core demand of the question

- Is caste system changing, weakening or disintegrating in India?
- Cover ritual rank, dominant caste, politics, and **endogamy**

Revision summary

Caste has changed through **Sanskritization**, land, city work, and elections.

Ritual service and occupation rules have weakened in many public settings.

Endogamy, honour, and atrocity show that the system has not disintegrated.

Politicisation of caste is mobilisation, not disappearance.

Treat change and weakening as real, disintegration as a false comfort.

Flow diagram

Sanskritization vote job -> Weaker ritual service

Endogamy atrocity -> System continues

Dominant caste -> Sanskritization vote job

Conclusion

- Dipankar Gupta's distinction of discrete communities competing is useful. Competition is not disintegration.

Caste is changing in work and politics and weakening as a total village ritual order. It is not disintegrating while **endogamy** and graded inequality organise life chances.

Facts & figures**Sanskritization**

Srinivas's path of ranked mobility that changes position inside caste, not outside it.

Sripuram

Beteille's case of caste, class, and power no longer fully aligned.

Politicisation of caste

Kothari's point that democracy uses caste as an interest, which transforms rather than kills it.

Endogamy

The marriage rule that keeps jati as a reproductive boundary.

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