

# **NEHRU GRAM BHARTI DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY**

**Department of Sociology  
For U.G & P.G**

**Subject- Sociology  
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# CASTE

## MEANING

CASTE MEANS A GROUP WHICH MEMBERSHIP IS BASED ON BIRTH.

The term 'caste' is origin from the

'Portuguese 'word 'CASTA' in 1862 which  
is

Given by Greysida D. Ourenta.

# Definition

“When a class is somewhat strictly hereditary.  
We may call it caste.”

- C.H. Cooley

“Caste is a system of stratification in which  
mobility up and down the status ladder at least  
ideally may not occur”

- Green

“ Caste is a close class”

- Mazoomdaar and madan

# Principles of origin of caste

## 1- Traditional theory-

This theory is mainly based on ancient texts. Rigveda the oldest text of hindu religion. There is a mantra in the Purushsookt of Rigveda, which means the Brahmin is born from the mouth of the Brahma, Kshatriyas from the arms, Vaisyas originated from the thighs/ abdomen, Shudras from the feet.

## **2- Occupational theory**

This theory is given by 'Nesfield'. This theory is based on the underlying assumption that there is a occupational origin of caste. He holds that in India occupational differences the basis on which the whole caste system is built. The technical skills of the occupation was passed on hereditarily and over long years occupational guide came into existence which later on come to be known as caste.

### **3- Racial theory**

Risley is propounder of this theory. According to this theory the caste system developed and crystallized in India through the clash of cultures and the contact of races.

Risley state that the main reason for the origin of caste is species mixture , and hypergamy marriage

## 4- Political theory

Supporter of this theory Abbe dubious and G.S Ghureye. According to this theory the formulation of the caste is the clever tactic of Brahmins.

The brahmins were considered to be an eminent group in the society, they wanted to maintain their reputation for long time, therefore they made some rules and prohibitions related to social, religious and marriage and these laws were approved in the society through religious books, the other of which brahmins themselves. So that G.S. Ghureye said that the formulation of caste is the manipulative politics of brahmins.



## **5- Religious theory**

Hocart and Senart advocated the religious theory. Hocart holds that social stratification originated due to religious principles and customs.

Religion was very important in ancient society. Kings were considered incarnations of god. The king was representative of religious activities. He divided the society into many groups on the basis of rank, prestige to perform other activities. These groups formed on religious ground later developed into caste. Senart explained the origin of caste on the basis of prohibition related to food, marriage and social cohabitation.



# Characteristics

There are basically 6 characteristics of caste which are-

- 1- Segmental division of society
- 2- Hierarchy
- 3- Social and religious prohibition
- 4- Occupational restrictions
- 5- Concept of purity and impurity
- 6- Endogamy marriage