



# Demystifying Caste

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# Overview

- **Why are Hindus defensive about Caste 1 to 3**
- **Different nomenclatures for Backwards**
- **Tit bits on caste 1 to 2**
- **Why China does not have a Private Sector**
- **Pointers on Caste 1**
- **What can you Do**
- **Look forward to your Feedback**

# Why are Hindus Defensive about Caste 1

- **Earlier caste system was an integrating principle, provided economic security**
- **India had 4 castes per Hsuan Tsang, not as many as in British rule 2,378 main caste and 43 races**
- **1891 Census said there 1156 sub-caste of Chamars**
- **J.S. Mill said that occupational groups in Europe were almost equivalent to castes**
- **With Muslim invasion it was a question of survival for followers of Dharma**
- **Caste became defense shields, rigid and acquired traits like untouchability**
- **Source Ram Swarup article Sept 1996 Indian Express**

# Why are Hindus Defensive about Caste 2

- **Christians wanted to divide and rule India**
- **Caste gave India unity and continuity**
- **Thomas Monroe 1826 report Madras Presidency schools 50% Sudras**
- **SME's run by Sudras were killed due to import of European goods**
- **Earlier 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of Village Revenue assigned to social & cultural causes. Increased land revenue & centralization broke local support system, killed social balance between communities**
- **Backwardness a post 1800 phenomena**
- **1891 Census Index of Caste created divisions**
- **Word caste is of Spanish origin Indian equivalent is Jati community**
- **Source Dharampal's writings**

# Why are Hindus Defensive about Caste 3

- **Swami Vivekandana ‘This caste made walls, around which all sorts of invasions rolled and surged but found it impossible to breakthrough.’**
- **S Gurumurthy ‘caste based clusters lead the nations development’ eg Goundar caste entrepreneurs export knitwear from Tirupur over \$ 2 billion. Caste based communities cooperate and compete to prosper.**
- **Gurcharan Das ex CEO P&G India “In the nineteenth century, British colonialists used to blame our caste system for everything wrong in India. Now I have a different perspective. Instead of morally judging caste, I seek to understand its impact on competitiveness. I have come to believe that being endowed with commercial castes is a source of advantage in the global economy”**

# Different nomenclatures for Backwards

- **1890 The Depressed Classes**
- **1930's Gandhi gave the name 'Harijan' to Untouchables**
- **Govt of India Act 1935 introduced the word Scheduled Caste for first time**
- **1990 onwards word Dalit used to describe OBC, Maha OBC etc**
- **Dalits are not Untouchables**
- **Jats are backward in Rajasthan but rule Punjab. Now Punjabi Jats too want to be declared OBC – all want government benefits**
- **In Maharashtra Dalits adopted Buddhism called Neo Buddhist. They also observe Hindu customs, have Buddha pic at home, go to Chaitanyabhoomi on Ambedkar Jayanti as a show of solidarity**

# Titbits on Caste 1

- **Author of Ramayana Valmiki was a hunter**
- **Author of Mahabharata Vyasa was the son of a fisherwoman**
- **Lord Krishna was a Yadav so Backward in todays terms**
- **Probably India's greatest emperor Chandragupta Maurya was born to a Sudra mother**
- **Ancestors of Madhavrao Scindia of Gwalior was Mahaji Shinde an OBC and probably belonged to shepherd community**
- **Baba Ramdev is learned Yoga teacher and Yadav so a OBC**
- **Narendra Modi is a OBC**
- **Vasundhara Raje Scindia has a daughter-inlaw who is a Gurjar an OBC**

# Titbits on Caste 2

- **The problem starts because the West defines who we are for eg**
  - **Criticize Dowry system without telling u that the Portuguese gave Mumbai in dowry to the English in 1662**
  - **British Parliament granted its women franchise in 1918 unlike Indian women**
  - **% of women victims of Spousal Killings in the U.S. not talked about although % of women victims from dowry is comparable**



# The third Varna is Business Community

- **Birlas** - **Aditya Birla Group**
- **Bajaj** - **Bajaj Auto**
- **Ruias** - **Essar**
- **Anil Agarwal** - **Vedanta**
- **Dhoot** - **Videocon**
- **Lalbhai's** - **Arvind Mills**
- **Ambanis** - **Reliance**
- **Mahindras** - **M & M**
  
- **Business runs in the blood of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Varna. That explains why India has a large vibrant private sector unlike China.**

# Some Pointers 1

- **Indian Sub-continent Muslims can be divided into**
  - Ashraf (Nobles) of foreign origin and upper castes
  - Ajlaf (low category) artisans and backward castes
  - Arzal (marginilised or degraded Muslims) untouchables
- **It is widely known that Ashraf's exploit and dominate the other two classes.**
- **Some famous Muslims with details of their Hindu ancestry are**
  - Tansen was son of Makrand Pande his petname was Tanna and Guru Swami Haridas
  - Farooq Abdullah great grand father was Ragho Ram Kaul
  - M J Akbar's grand father name was Prayaga a Hindu Bengali
  - Muhammad Iqbal's father was a Kashmiri Pandit Sahaj Ram Sapru
  - Jinnah's grandfather was Poonja Gokuldas Meghji a Bhatia
  - A R Rehman name before conversion was Dilip Kumar Mudaliar
  - Actor Imran Khan father name is Anil Pal

# What can you Do

- **Caste is independent of Hinduism exists in Islam, Christianity as well**
- **Section of Goan Brahmin converts marry only Brahmin converts**
- **Continuously seek to state who we are based on Dharma standpoint**
- **Research and write about various sects, divisions in Islam and Christianity. So also Mythology exists in all religions.**
- **Be factual at all times**
- **Communicate through short articles with links to research paper**
- **Post your comments on every biased article that appears in Media**
- **A Xtan friend asked me what was my caste. I asked him what was his caste before his forefathers converted to Christianity**
- **Treat all human beings compassionately should be thy motto**

# Look forward to your Feedback

- **This is not intended to be an exhaustive paper on Caste but gives you a quick overview.**
- **You might have a different point of view, are welcome to write in with your thoughts. If there is any error in what I have stated willing to stand corrected.**
- **If you have any facts that have missed out do write in would include in the next update of this presentation.**