

## Sociology Daily Answer Writing

Week 4 - Day 4

### Model Structures

**1. Analyse the contemporary forms of untouchability practiced in India and posit the factors that have the potential to change the dimensions of such practices. 20**

#### Model Structure

##### Introduction

- Define untouchability
  - Untouchability is a set of social sanctions and social disabilities which are ascriptive in nature within the ritual framework of caste system
  - Dimensions: Exclusion, humiliation-subordination and exploitation

##### Main Body

- Untouchability - IHDS 2012, NCAER
  - Who is practicing untouchability
    - 27% of the sample HH continue
    - Rural - 30% Urban - 20%
    - Among Religious groups: Jains & Hindus - highest; Followed by Sikhs & Muslims
- Ghansham Shah, Harsh Mander and Sukhdev Thorat have concluded that untouchability is still practiced in 80% of the villages in various forms
- Though at Manifest levels its reduced, at latent level it's been observed in various forms
- More prevalent latent form
  - Secular institutions
  - Protest Dalit cooks
  - Employment - recent incident against CISCO -
    - CISCO incident - allegation of Dalit discrimination.
  - Payal Tadvi suicide case - alleged case of suicide due to casteist slurs.
  - Even at PDS - separate days
  - 2018 -- Shravanabelagola -- cleaning jobs workers from Uttar Pradesh

- Rohit Vemula case
- Anger in the minds of upper castes towards lower caste due to reservations
  - Mostly due to lack of awareness about the concept of positive discrimination
- Manifest forms
  - Prevalence of endogamous marriage and sanctioning of caste exogamy (khap panchayats, honour killings, etc.)
  - Dalits still form the majority of the workforce in cleaning and other such jobs. (Occupational segregation) Eg. In 2016, 98% of manual scavengers were from lower castes.
  - Separate ghettos.. Especially in rural areas (eg. Maharwada for SCs)
  - Ritual segregation - eg. certain rites like upnayana are reserved only for twice born castes
  - Political segregation - upper caste peoples often create troubles for Dalit sarpancha.
  - Violence as an extreme manifestation of untouchability. According to NCRB data, 45000+ crimes were registered against Dalits in 2015.
- Untouchability based on gender
  - Menstruation, a biological act given regressive social connotations
    - Women not allowed to perform sacred acts during menstruation
- Factors that have the potential to change the dimensions of such practices
  - Ensuring strict implementation of laws
    - 1989 Prevention of atrocities act full implementation
    - Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955
  - Value education
  - Emancipation from dirty occupations
  - Rationalisation of reservation system - so that all sections of Dalit community gets an opportunity to be uplifted.
  - Economic independence

## Conclusion

- Thus, despite various social and legal efforts, untouchability persists in some form or other
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**2. “Caste is not a form of stratification, but a special form of inequality and hierarchy is the central tenet of this system.” Examine Louis Dumont’s notion of caste in the light of this statement.**

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### **Model Structure:**

#### **Introduction:**

- Louis Dumont in 'Homo Hierarchicus' Caste system and its implications formulated theory on caste system.

#### **Main Body:**

- In his seminal work he argues that ideology/values are basic principles of social organization. Also, he stated that traditional values are fundamentally different from modern values.
- Traditional values like collectivism and hierarchy are different from modern values like individualism and equality.
- According to him hierarchy present in society leads to religious ranking
- And these hierarchies are ritual hierarchy and are considered as purest type of hierarchy
- Further hierarchy is based on division of society based on purity and pollution. This division further results in separateness, and division of labour.
- Some occupations were considered as pure and were reserved for upper castes on the other hand polluted occupations are restricted to lower castes.
- Criticism:
  - Biased Views: His concept was largely derived from the classical Hindu texts which were produced by the upper caste Brahmins. His views are proponents of the views of the upper caste.
  - Faulty Rank System: He established a definite rank of individual caste groups on an all-India basis. But practically these ranks were the result of Stereotype. The

actual status of a particular caste differs according to local rules of pollution. The notion of 'who pollutes and when it pollutes' are highly variable from region to region.

- His view has been criticised as a deterministic view of caste as per Andre Beteille. According to Beteille, the caste system is dynamic and continually changing.
- Further his theory has been criticized as a Brahmanical view of the caste system. Few scholars considered his work an ideal theory.
- According to Mckim Marriott ritual hierarchy is indirectly influenced by political and economic hierarchy. Hence his theory is away from empirical reality.

**Conclusion:**

- But in spite of all these criticisms his theory has enriched the village study and caste system in India. Later researchers have used his theory in studying the Indian caste system.

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